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OVER 900 TREATED IN PUNJAB VILLAGES AS FLOODS WORSEN

BSF mounts medical relief in flood-hit Punjab as north India reels under monsoon fury.



BSF doctors and troops continuing relief support in villages of Punjab.

ASHIQ MIR/
ABHINANDAN MISHRA
SRINAGAR/NEW DELHI

Flood-hit villages in Punjab have become the latest focus of large-scale relief operations as the Border Security Force (BSF) set up medical camps to treat thousands cut off by swollen rivers. Across northern India, the Army, BSF and state authorities remain on high alert, battling relentless monsoon fury that has triggered evacuations, rescues and widespread damage. In Punjab, BSF medical teams fanned out across

Gurdaspur and Ajnala, treating more than 900 residents over two days. The highest numbers were reported at Gurdwara Chaharpur in Ajnala (350 people) and Jagdev Khurd (319). Free medicines and health check-ups were provided to border villagers left without access to healthcare. Officials said the relief effort, launched under Union Home Ministry directives, will continue until conditions stabilise. In Jammu, BSF doctors treated hundreds more in camps set up in districts including Poonch, Rajouri, Samba and Akhnoor. Over

P3

MONSOON MAYHEM: KEY NUMBERS	
DELHI	
■ Yamuna at 207.47m (danger mark 205.33m)	
■ NH-44 flyover section collapsed	
■ Civil Lines, Bela Road, Monastery Market inundated	
■ Relief camps in Mayur Vihar also flooded	
SOUTH KASHMIR	
■ Army's 50 RR reinforced embankments in Pulwama	
■ Dozens rescued from submerged homes in Anantnag, Shopian, Kulgam	
■ Drones & helicopters deployed for monitoring	
■ Relief shelters activated with food & medicines	
JAMMU & PUNJAB	
■ BSF set up mobile medical camps in flood-hit villages	
■ 2,000+ residents treated in 48 hours	
■ Highest footfall: Phallain Mandal (200), Jagdev Khurd (319)	
■ Free medicines & health awareness drives ongoing	
HIMACHAL PRADESH	
■ Nearly 500 pilgrims evacuated during Manimahesh Yatra	
■ 35 elderly and ailing devotees airlifted	
■ Revenue Minister supervising operations on ground	
■ 343 deaths since June monsoon onset (183 from landslides, flash floods, lightning)	

Congress slams ethanol policy

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday accused the government of pushing an "anti-people" ethanol-blended fuel policy, alleging it has reduced vehicle mileage, shortened engine life and raised costs for ordinary citizens. Congress media and publicity department chairman Pawan Khera said a government that won by "vote milawat" is now running the country on "fuel milawat". "After implementing 'vote chori', the biggest fraud on the Indian people, they are now implementing petrol chori. The latest being the E-20 policy to extort mon-



Congress leader Pawan Khera. ANI

ey," he said. Targeting Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Khera alleged a conflict of interest, claiming his sons profit from ethanol companies even as he drives the policy. "Cian Agro Industries Infrastructure Ltd, owned

by Nikhil Gadkari, and Manas Agro Industries, linked to Sarang Gadkari, are key players in the ethanol business," he said, pointing out that Cian Agro's revenue surged from Rs 18 crore in June 2024 to Rs 523 crore a year later, with its stock price jumping over 2,100 per cent. Khera recalled that in 2018 Gadkari promised ethanol production from wood waste and municipal refuse, predicting fuel would drop to Rs 50-55 a litre. "Not a drop has come from those sources and petrol has only become costlier," he said. Petrol prices have risen from Rs 71.41 in 2014 to Rs 94.77 in 2025, while diesel

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Haryana powers India's battery dream

MANOHAR KESARI
NEW DELHI

India is set to challenge China and other leading nations in the production of lithium-ion batteries, with Asia's first mega lithium battery manufacturing project inaugurated at IMT Sohna, Haryana. On Thursday, Japanese company ATL launched the facility with an investment of over 3,000 crore. The project is expected to create more than 5,000 direct jobs. Equipped with state-of-the-art technology, the unit is poised to redefine Haryana's industrial identity. Union Electronics and



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. ANI

Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw inaugurated the project in the presence of Haryana's Industry and Commerce Minister Rao Narbir Singh, senior TDK Group represen-

P3

Rahul flags FRA violations in Great Nicobar Project

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday wrote to Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram, expressing concern over alleged violations of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) in granting clearances for the Great Nicobar Project. He said tribals were not properly consulted and that the No Objection Certificate (NOC) was obtained under duress. Rahul Gandhi pointed out that many tribals displaced during the 2004 tsunami



Lok Sabha LoP and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi. ANI

have still not been able to return to their ancestral lands, and now fear that the project will further threaten their way of life and lead to marginalisation due to diversion of land. In his letter to Oram,

Gandhi, who is also the Lok Sabha MP from Uttar Pradesh's Rae Bareilly, wrote: "The Tribal Council of Little Nicobar and Great Nicobar has brought to my attention that the tribal communities, including the Nicobarese and the Shompens, were not properly consulted under the FRA." The former Congress chief said it has been alleged that the NOC was obtained with inadequate information and "subsequently withdrawn upon learning about the project's details". Highlighting the concerns of the communities, Gandhi

P3

Mamata targets Modi, Shah in West Bengal Assembly

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

The West Bengal Assembly descended into chaos on Thursday as Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched a blistering attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, repeatedly branding them as "chors". From the outset, Trinamool Congress (TMC) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislators clashed, triggering a chorus of "chor" (thief) slo-



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. ANI

gans that echoed through the House. The special session, convened to discuss alleged

atrocities against Bengali-speaking people in BJP-ruled States, quickly degenerated into a political slugfest. Banerjee accused the BJP's leadership of being "anti-Bengal" and blocking debate on the harassment of Bengalis outside the State. "BJP is a party of the corrupt, a party of vote thieves. They are the biggest dacoit party. We saw in Parliament how they used CISF to harass our MPs. Bangla-birodhi BJP hatao, desh bachao

P3

India, Singapore to expand cooperation in tech, trade, defence

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Singaporean counterpart Lawrence Wong on Thursday unveiled a comprehensive roadmap to expand bilateral cooperation, marking 60 years of diplomatic relations between the two nations. The two leaders held delegation-level talks at Hyderabad House, where they agreed to strengthen collaboration in advanced manufacturing, green shipping, civil nuclear energy,



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong during a Joint Press Statement, at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

urban water management, digital technologies, and defence cooperation. They also jointly inaugurated the

JN Port PSA Mumbai Terminal (BMCT) Phase-II, a project that will boost India's container handling capacity.

AT A GLANCE
■ Modi, Wong unveil future roadmap
■ Focus on digital tech, defence, green shipping
■ CECA, ASEAN trade pact to be reviewed
■ Skilling centre in Chennai announced
■ JN Port PSA Terminal Phase-II inaugurated
■ 60 years of India-Singapore ties marked

At a joint press conference, Modi said Singapore remained India's largest trading partner in Southeast Asia and a "key pillar" of New Delhi's Act East policy. He announced that the Bilateral Comprehensive Economic Cooperation

Agreement (CECA) and India's free trade pact with ASEAN would be reviewed in a time-bound manner. "Technology and innovation are strong pillars of our partnership. We have decided to enhance cooperation in AI,

P3

ASSAM BJP CALLS NEW DUAL-RATE GST ‘REVOLUTIONARY’; MAJUMDAR BACKS REFORM

TDG NETWORK
GUWAHATI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Assam has termed the newly announced Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates as “historic and revolutionary decision,” saying that with the newer slabs, people will have more money, increasing their purchasing power.

Assam BJP spokesperson Debojit Mahanta stated that nearly 99% of goods currently taxed at 12 per cent GST would now come under 5 per cent GST.

“As a result, more money will remain in the hands of the common people, thereby increasing their purchasing power,” Mahanta said, according to a statement.

He said further that GST, implemented on 1st July 2017, was a reform that



consolidated 17 different indirect taxes such as State VAT, Central Sales Tax, Additional Central Excise Duty, Entertainment Tax, Entry Tax, Purchase Tax, and Lottery Tax.

“At that time, the Congress had mocked the BJP, calling GST a “Gabbar Singh Tax.” But today, even Congress and states where the BJP is not in power are compelled to acknowledge GST reform

as a positive step,” he said.

Mahanta strongly criticised the Congress, saying that the GST, which they did not dare to implement during their rule, was finally implemented by the BJP-led government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Criticizing the Congress for allegedly distorting or ignoring history, Mahanta said that the idea of GST was first raised in Parliament by late

Finance Minister V P Singh during Rajiv Gandhi’s tenure in 1986.

“Later, in 1991, during Prime Minister Narasimha Rao’s tenure, Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh brought it to the winter session for discussion. In 2005, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh accepted the Kelkar Committee report recommending GST for simplifying indirect taxation,” Mahanta said.

“Even in the 2006-07 Budget, Finance Minister P. Chidambaram had proposed GST implementation and allocated funds for its rollout by 2010. However, despite years of deliberation, the Congress never had the courage to implement it. It was finally the Modi-led BJP government that introduced GST in the interest

of the people through the 101st Constitutional Amendment,” he added.

He claimed that the new version of GST would reduce tax rates on daily essentials such as sofas, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soaps, shaving cream, butter, ghee, cheese, snacks like bhujia and mixtures, baby napkins from the earlier 18% and 12% slabs to just 5%.

“The new version would also bring a major transformation in healthcare by completely removing the earlier 18% GST on premiums for personal health insurance and life insurance,” the statement added.

Similarly, all education-related essentials such as books, notebooks, paper, pencils, erasers, etc., which previously carried 12% GST, would now be fully exempt.

Shivraj Chouhan walks in flood water in Amritsar, Gurdaspur

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday physically walked in Flood water to check damaged crop while touring flood-affected areas of Punjab’s Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts, where he met villagers and farmers reeling under crop losses.

Chouhan, accompanied by Union minister Ravneet Singh Bittu, Punjab BJP chief Sunil Jakhar, BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh and senior party leaders, first visited Ajnala in Amritsar district. He interacted with farmers in waterlogged fields and later travelled to Dharamkot Randhawa village in Gurdaspur, where he rode a tractor driven by Jakhar before wading through knee-deep water to inspect submerged paddy.

“Loss is visible. The crop is completely damaged, fields are inundated and silt



brought by the Ravi river has been deposited in farmland, which will affect the next sowing too,” Chouhan said. He assured that the Centre stands with the people of Punjab in this crisis. “I have been sent here by the prime minister to take stock of the situation and talk to people. The government will do everything for farmers and villagers,” he added.

The minister also announced that two central teams are visiting Punjab to assess flood damage and will submit reports to the

Centre. Earlier in the day, Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria handed over a detailed report on the impact of floods in Amritsar, Pathankot, Gurdaspur, Tarn Taran and Ferozepur to Chouhan at the Amritsar airport. The Governor’s assessment outlined the damage to life, crops, infrastructure and property, along with ongoing relief efforts by the state government, Army, NDRF and district administrations.

Later, Punjab agriculture minister Gurmeet Singh Khuddian and Ajnala MLA Kuldeep Dhaliwal met Chouhan and submitted a memorandum seeking Rs 2,000 crore as immediate financial assistance for losses in Ajnala constituency. They also demanded release of Punjab’s “pending” Rs 60,000 crore from the Centre.

CAPTION: Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan walked in Flood water to check damaged crop.

Terror funding case: SC refuses interim bail to Kashmiri separatist

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday declined interim bail to Kashmiri Separatist Leader Shabir Ahmed Shah in a terror funding case.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta also issued notice to the NIA and sought its response in two weeks.

Shah has approached the top court, filing an appeal against the Delhi High Court’s June 12 order, which denied him bail in an alleged case of terror funding.

Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, appearing for Shah, sought interim bail, saying that he was very sick. However, the bench refused to grant him interim bail and posted the matter for hearing after two weeks.

Observing the possibility of Shah carrying out similar unlawful activities and influencing witnesses couldn’t be ruled out, the High Court refused to grant him bail in



Supreme Court. FILE PHOTO

Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, appearing for Shah, sought interim bail, saying that he was very sick.

the case. Shah was arrested by the NIA on June 4, 2019.

In 2017, the NIA registered a case against 12 persons on allegations of conspiracy for raising and collecting funds for causing disruption by way of pelting stones, damaging public property and conspiring to wage war against the government of India.

SC expresses concern about floods in Himalayan states

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday expressed serious concern about the floods in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir and observed that there is illegal felling of trees in the hills.

A bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran said it was a serious matter while referring to videos of vast numbers of timber logs washed down the hills by flood waters in Himachal Pradesh.

The bench issued notices to the Centre through Ministries of Environment and Jal Shakti, National Disaster Management Authority, NHA, states of

Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir.

The apex court posted the matter for hearing after two weeks.

“We have seen unprecedented landslides and floods in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Punjab. From the media reports, it is also noted that during the flood, a huge number of wooden logs were flowing around. Prima facie, it appears that there has been illegal felling of the trees, which has been going on up hills,” observed CJI Gavai.

We are seeing the pictures of Punjab; the entire fields and villages are eradicated. Development has to be balanced, said the bench.

The apex court also asked

Kuki-Zo Council agrees to open NH-2 in Manipur

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a significant decision, the Kuki-Zo Council on Thursday decided to open the National Highway-2 for the free movement of commuters and essential goods in Manipur.

The move follows a series of meetings in New Delhi over the past few days between officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and a delegation of the Kuki-Zo Council. The discussions were aimed at addressing the prolonged blockade that had disrupted the movement of goods and vehicles, causing hardships to residents across the state.

“Kuki-Zo Council has given a commitment to cooperate with security forces deployed by the Government of India to maintain peace along NH-



The Kuki-Zo Council agreed to reopen National Highway-2,” MHA said in a statement.

NH-2, a crucial lifeline connecting Manipur with Nagaland and other parts of the Northeast, had been blocked amid the ethnic tensions that erupted in the state in May 2023. The conflict, primarily between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities, has led to widespread violence, loss of lives, displacement of thousands, and a deepening humanitarian crisis.

The reopening of the highway is seen as a confidence-building measure and a step towards restoring normalcy in the violence-affected state. Officials in both Imphal and New Delhi believe easing access to essential commodities will help reduce the hardships faced by displaced families and civilians living in relief camps.

Criminal complaint filed against Sonia over electoral roll entry

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A criminal complaint has been filed in the Rouse Avenue Court against former Congress president Sonia Gandhi, alleging that she forged documents to obtain Indian voter status before acquiring citizenship.

The complaint, moved by advocate Vikas Tripathi, seeks an inquiry into how Gandhi was able to cast her vote even before she became a citizen of India in April 1983.

The matter came up before Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Vaidh Chaurasia, who heard detailed submissions from the complainant’s side. The court noted that arguments from the petitioner’s side were complete and has listed the matter for further hearing on September 10.

Senior Advocates Anil Soni and Pawan Narang appeared for the complainant. Advocate Narang argued that the issue at hand is not political but legal, emphasising that the alleged acts constitute a “cognizable offence” that warrants a police investigation.

According to the complaint, Sonia Gandhi, origi-



Sonia Gandhi. FILE PHOTO

nally an Italian citizen, became an Indian national on April 30, 1983, under Section 5 of the Citizenship Act. However, her name appeared in the New Delhi parliamentary constituency voters’ list as early as 1981-82, raising questions about the documents submitted to the Election Commission at the time. Advocate Narang pointed out that Gandhi’s name, along with that of her late brother-in-law Sanjay Gandhi, was later deleted from the rolls in 1982. He argued that such a deletion indicates that her earlier entry in the electoral rolls was irregular, as only Indian citizens are eligible to be enrolled as voters.

Citing documents, Narang submitted that forged or falsified documents may have been used to secure her inclusion in the voters’ list before her citizenship was

granted. “A public authority has been misled, and a fraud appears to have been committed,” he told the court.

He further argued that despite approaching the Delhi Police and senior officers with a complaint, no action was taken, leaving the petitioner with no option but to approach the court. The plea, therefore, seeks a direction for registration of an FIR and investigation into the alleged offences.

The complaint also relies on a 1985 Allahabad High Court judgment in Rakesh Singh vs Sonia Gandhi, which had examined the issue of her citizenship in the context of an election petition. While the court had then held that she became an Indian citizen on April 30, 1983, by registration, the present plea argues that any voter enrollment prior to that date was illegal.

The petitioner has urged the court to direct the police to investigate, requisition records, and examine the documents submitted to the Election Commission during that period. The court will take up the matter again on September 10, 2025.

300 workers expected, says Ambekar on RSS all-India coordination meet

TDG NETWORK
JODHPUR

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Akhil Bharatiya Prachar Pramukh Sunil Ambekar on Thursday said that around 320 workers will attend the organisation’s all-India coordination meeting in Jodhpur, which is going to be held from September 5 to 7.

He also added that RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale will also attend the meeting.

Speaking at the press conference, Sunil Ambekar said, “320 workers are expected to be here at the meeting. We will receive the guidance of Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat and Sarkaryavah Datta-



RSS Akhil Bharatiya Prachar Pramukh Sunil Ambekar

treya Hosabale here. All Sah-Sarkaryavah of Sangh will be here at the meeting.”

This year, the Akhil Bharatiya Samnvay Baithak will be held on September 5, 6 and 7, 2025 (Vikram Samvat 2082, Bhadrapad Shukla Trayodashi, Chaturdashi and Purnima) in Jodhpur, Rajasthan. The three-day annual coordination meeting of the Rashtriya Sway-

amsevak Sangh (RSS) takes place every year. Last year, the meeting was held in Palakkad, Kerala, in September 2024.

In this national coordination meeting, selected office-bearers of 32 organisations inspired by the RSS will participate. These organisations work positively in different spheres of social life in line with the ideas of the Sangh. They remain committed to bringing about social transformation and improving systems through democratic means in public life.

During the meeting, representatives of all organisations will present assessments of current circumstances based on their field experiences.

‘Growth of Civil Aviation infra, enhanced connectivity giving wings to North East’

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The North East Region (NER) Ministers’ Conference on Civil Aviation 2025, along with the 3rd North East Aviation Summit, was held on Thursday in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.

The event was organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

In the inaugural, Pema Khandu, Chief Minister, Arunachal Pradesh, emphasised that transportation connectivity is the most critical sector for the development of the NER. In the last 10 years, aviation infrastructure and connectivity status of NER has seen unprecedented growth, said Ministry of Civil Aviation. Having airports in

Radico Khaitan in Pandora papers: Offshore trusts, hidden assets, family links

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

It has been disclosed in the Pandora papers that the owners of Radico Khaitan (Lalit Khaitan and Abhishek Khaitan) have their assets in the offshore trusts. For those who don’t know, the Pandora Papers are nearly a leak of 12 million documents released in 2021. These documents have incriminated many

wealthy elites across globe for tax avoidance and corruption. The documents of the Trident Trust, British Virgin Islands, a trust deed for Timberlane Trust was settled between Timberlane Group Foundation, Panama (settlor), and Trident Trust, BVI (trustee), in 2012. In this deed, Lalit Khaitan and Abhishek Khaitan were mentioned as the “beneficiaries” of

the trust. The Chairman and Managing Director of Radico Khaitan Limited is Lalit Khaitan while his son Abhishek Khaitan is the managing director.

Lalit Khaitan became billionaire two years after the Pandora papers revelation

Barely two years after the disclosure of the his assets in the offshore trust by the Pandora papers, Lalit Khaitan joined the elite three-



Pandora Papers reveal Radico Khaitan owners held offshore trusts in Panama and BVI linked to hidden assets.

comma club. He joined this club at the age of 80.

The data sourced from Forbes states that Lalit Khaitan, the chairman of Delhi-based Radico Khaitan has become India’s newest billionaire, after the shares of his publicly traded company jumped more than 50% in 2023. The 2023 news reports states that he had an estimated net worth of \$1 bil-

lion. What do we know about Lalit Khaitan?

Lalit Khaitan is the chairman of Radico Khaitan. Radico Khaitan is popularly known for the manufacturing of alcoholic beverages like Magic Moments vodka, 8 PM whiskey, Old Admiral brandy and Rampur single malt.

Earlier, Radico Khaitan was known as as Rampur Distillery & Chemical Com-

pany Ltd. Lalit Khaitan’s father, GN Khaitan, had purchased this loss-making company in the early 1970s. He inherited the distillery from his father in 1995 when GN Khaitan had divided the family businesses between his four sons.

Lalit Khaitan pursued his education at prominent institutions such as Mayo College in Ajmer and St. Xavier’s College in Kolkata.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON GST REFORMS IMPACT

51 % respondents said that this government decision will counterbalance the impact of American tariffs.

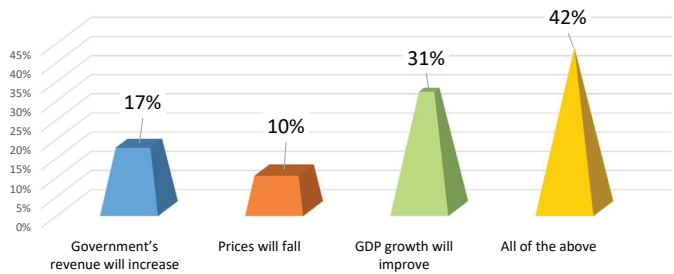
A new India News Survey on GST reforms shows overwhelming public support, with 83 percent expressing satisfaction. Over 70

percent believe reforms will benefit all sections, especially reducing inflation and boosting growth. More than half feel the move will offset

American tariffs. The findings suggest confidence in the government's economic strategy and reform agenda.

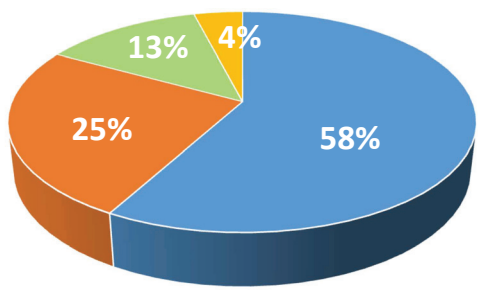
Q1.▶

What is your opinion on the decisions taken by the government regarding GST reforms?



Q2.◀

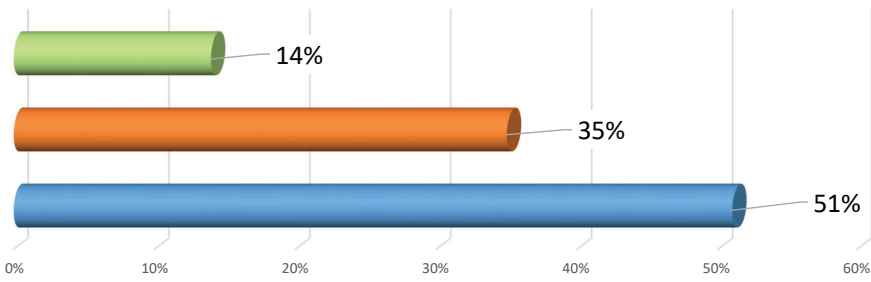
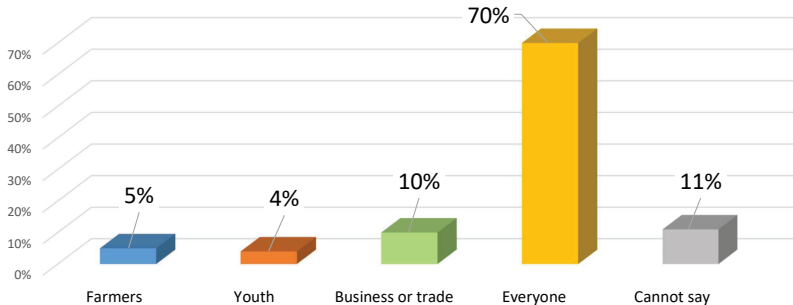
How much will GST reforms impact the life of the common man?



- Inflation will come down
- Employment opportunities will increase
- Small industries will benefit
- Cannot say

Q3.▶

Which section of society will benefit most from the changes in GST slabs?



Q4.◀

Do you think this government decision will counterbalance the impact of American tariffs?

- Yes absolutely
- Yes to some extent
- No not at all

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON MUMBAI HALAL TOWNSHIP PROJECT

Majority deems project unconstitutional, fuels extremism concerns

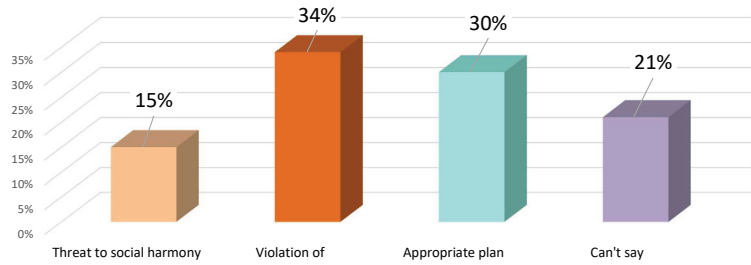
An India News Survey dated 4 September 2025 captured opinions on the Halal Lifestyle Township near Mumbai. Among 187 respondents (95%

male, 5% female), 34% called the plan a violation of constitutional principles, 30% saw it as appropriate, 15% feared harm to social harmony, and 21% were

undecided. Asked about religion-based projects in general, 78% said they are absolutely wrong, 18% absolutely right, and 4% could not say.

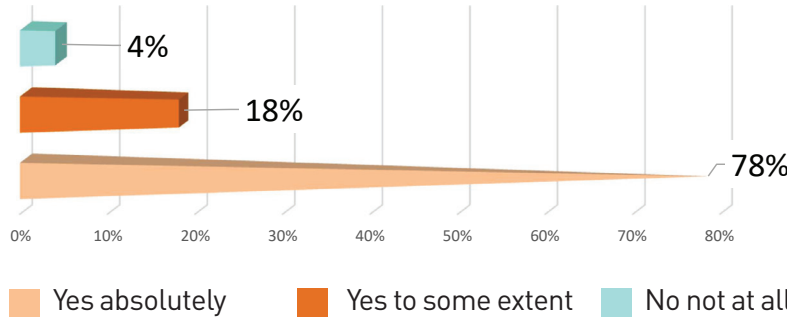
Q1.▶

What is your opinion on the Halal Lifestyle Township being built near Mumbai?



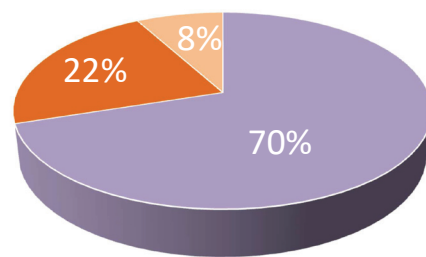
Q2.◀

Based on religion, your view on any such project?



Q3.▶

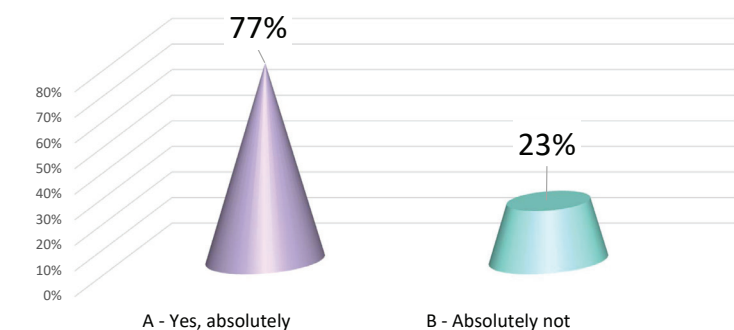
Does a Halal Lifestyle Township aim to promote religious extremism?



- Yes, absolutely
- Absolutely not
- Cannot say

Q4.◀

Is licensing a religion-based colony a violation of the Constitution?



Over 900 treated in Punjab...

CONTINUED FROM P1

2,000 residents in total have received medical aid from the BSF in the past 48 hours.

Meanwhile, the Indian Army stepped in across South Kashmir, where heavy rainfall caused flash floods in Anantnag, Shopian, Kulgam and Pulwama. Troops of 50 Rashtriya Rifles reinforced embankments near Lethpora's Khanibug village, averting a breach of the Jhelum. Dozens stranded in submerged homes were rescued, while drones and helicopters were deployed to locate those trapped. Relief shelters have been activated to distribute food and medicines.

In Himachal Pradesh, the Chamba district administration, supervised by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, evacuated nearly 500 pilgrims stranded during the Manimahesh Yatra. While most were moved by road convoys, 35 elderly and ailing devotees were airlifted. The State Disaster Management Authority reported that 343 lives have

Omar Abdullah blames post-2014 govts for flood neglect

AJAY JANDYAL
SRINAGAR

Former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday criticised successive governments after the 2014 deluge, accusing them of failing to dredge the Jhelum and its flood channel. Visiting flood-hit Lasjan, he said the "wasted 11 years" had left Kashmir vulnerable again.

While timely evacuation averted casualties, Abdullah noted significant property loss that he termed "avoidable". He said he would urge Union Home Minister Amit Shah to extend the Centre's flood damage assessment to Kashmir valley districts.



J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah visiting flood-hit Lasjan.

been lost since June's monsoon onset, including 183 in landslides and flash floods.

In the national capital, the Yamuna River remained above the danger mark at 207.47 metres on Thursday morning, inundating parts of Civil Lines, Bela Road and Monastery Market. Relief camps in Mayur Vihar also reported flooding. A section of the NH-44

flyover collapsed following heavy downpours, while the IMD forecast further rain and thunderstorms through the week.

As Punjab, Delhi, Kashmir and Himachal grapple with the crisis, the coordinated response of security forces and state administrations has so far prevented further loss of life, even as property damage mounts.

GST 2.0 shake-up brings relief

CONTINUED FROM P1

to a "formality". AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi warned states could face revenue shortfalls of up to 10,000 crore each. In contrast, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath called the reforms "a decisive step" for global leadership, and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said they would "accelerate growth".

Industry welcomed the move. Mukesh Ambani

termed the rationalisation a "big booster" for consumption and pledged to pass on benefits through Reliance Retail, while trade voices in handicrafts and pharma said the cuts would protect jobs and improve affordability.

According to an exclusive government brief reviewed by The Daily Guardian, GST 2.0 will slash costs across food, housing, autos and healthcare, while simplifying registration and refunds for MSMEs.

Haryana powers India's battery dream

CONTINUED FROM P1

tatives Sato and Shashida, Chief Minister's Foreign Cooperation Advisor Pawan Chaudhary, and Pankaj Mahendru from ICWA. Several dignitaries from the Japanese Embassy, Fufie TDK, and the industry also attended.

Vaishnav emphasised that just as Japan is synonymous with quality manufacturing, the same standards will now be reflected in Haryana. "In modern India, all electronics-related goods are being made, directly benefiting both consumers and the youth through better products and employment opportunities," he said.

Industry Minister Rao Narbir Singh hailed the day as historic for Haryana's industrial journey. "Under the visionary leadership of

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Naib Singh Saini, Haryana has become a symbol of self-reliance, innovation, and global cooperation," he remarked.

He added that ATL Group (TDK Corporation, Japan) has taken a landmark initiative by setting up a cutting-edge lithium-ion battery unit in the state. "Ten new industrial cities will soon be developed in Haryana," he announced.

The project is being seen as a significant step towards realising the vision of *Developed India 2047*.

Notably, India currently imports the bulk of its lithium-ion batteries, with 70-75% coming from China and Hong Kong. Additional imports also arrive from Vietnam, Australia, Argentina, and Japan.

Rahul flags FRA violations

CONTINUED FROM P1

stressed that any development initiative must be grounded in constitutional values of justice, equality, and respect for human dignity.

He urged the minister to examine the issues raised by the Tribal Council and ensure adherence to due process. "I hope the government will implement the FRA in its true spirit," he added.

Mamata targets Modi, Shah

(remove anti-Bengal BJP, save the country)," she declared amid loud protests.

Warning of BJP's downfall, she said: "Mark my words, a day will come when not a single BJP MLA will sit in this House. People will throw you out of power. The Modi and Amit Shah-led Government at the Centre will collapse soon."

BJP legislators shouted down the TMC's motion on migrant workers, demanding answers on the suspension of Leader of the Opposition Suvedu Adhikari.

Amid the uproar, Speaker Biman Banerjee suspended

BJP chief whip Shankar Ghosh for the day. When he refused to leave, marshals dragged him out; he reportedly fainted and was taken to hospital.

Later, BJP MLA Agnimitra Paul was also suspended for persistent sloganeering and escorted out by women marshals. BJP members alleged water bottles were hurled at them.

Outside, Adhikari—already suspended earlier in the week—accused Mamata of "killing democracy" and called her the "biggest thief of Bengal". He claimed TMC members had behaved like

"gundas" and assaulted Ghosh. The TMC's resolution under Rule 169, meant to highlight alleged persecution of Bengalis in BJP-ruled States, was overshadowed by adjournments, suspensions and sloganeering.

Thursday's bedlam underscored the sharpening hostility between the TMC and BJP as Bengal heads into an election year. With "chor" slogans reverberating and marshals stationed between benches, legislative debate gave way to raw political theatre in one of the stormiest sessions in Bengal's history.

India, Singapore to expand...

CONTINUED FROM P1

quantum and other digital technologies," he said, adding that UPI-PayNow linkages would now include 13 more Indian banks.

The two sides also discussed exploring defence co-development and co-production opportunities, with both leaders acknowledging defence ties as a growing area of partnership. The Ministry of External Affairs confirmed that cooperation in defence technology is un-

der active consideration.

Singapore, which has invested nearly \$175 billion in India since 2014, will also help set up a National Centre of Excellence for Skill-ing in Chennai, focused on advanced manufacturing. GIFT City in Gujarat has already become a bridge for stock market connectivity between the two countries.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and BJP chief J.P. Nadda also held discussions with Wong

earlier this week. Wong, on his first official visit to India as Prime Minister, paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat and met members of the Singaporean community in India.

The visit, which coincides with the diamond jubilee of bilateral ties, saw both leaders reaffirm their commitment to enhancing trade, connectivity, sustainability, and people-to-people relations, while jointly working towards peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

India mentioned in Trump's SC...

CONTINUED FROM P1

European Union where they are paying us almost a trillion dollars. These deals are all done. But if we lose this case, we might have to unwind them," he said, insisting that the outcome could determine whether the US prospers or suffers economically.

The appeal follows months of legal wrangling after the federal circuit court in Washington declared that Trump's use of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to im-

pose tariffs went beyond presidential authority. The court noted that while the law permits a range of actions in response to national emergencies, it does not explicitly grant powers to impose taxes or duties.

The ruling covered two sets of tariffs introduced by Trump earlier this year — one on the grounds of "reciprocal" treatment in April and another in February aimed at China, Canada and Mexico. Other tariffs, such as those on steel and aluminium under different provisions, remain unaf-

ected.

Critics of the duties maintain that the measures have inflicted severe damage on small businesses, threatening their viability. They argue that a swift resolution is needed to safeguard thousands of companies grappling with rising costs.

Trump's legal move has now set the stage for a high-stakes confrontation at the Supreme Court, where the outcome will not only shape US trade policy but could also influence the country's leverage in global geopolitics.

Congress slams ethanol policy

CONTINUED FROM P1

has gone from Rs 55.49 to Rs 87.67.

The Congress leader also questioned the government's claims of success in achieving 20 per cent ethanol blending ahead of schedule. "This is the first time in history that a policy has met its target early, but the result is higher costs and broken promises," he said.

He warned that ethanol blending (E20) was linked to reduced engine life, higher maintenance expenses and mileage losses far greater than official estimates. "Although NITI Aayog admits

to up to 6 per cent mileage reduction, real-world experience shows a 25 per cent hit," he said.

Khera further alleged that ethanol plants are buying cheap grain from the Food Corporation of India (FCI) instead of purchasing at Minimum Support Price, hurting farmers' incomes and draining food reserves. "The FCI sells rice at Rs 22.50 per kg while the economic cost is Rs 39.75. Corn too is being diverted from food to fuel, forcing India to import," he said.

"Did Modi's 2021 promise of farmer prosperity through

ethanol blending turn into a betrayal of the middle class with reduced mileage, higher costs, and no relief at the pump?" he asked, adding that only BJP-RSS leaders and their associates were benefitting.

Khera also demanded whether the Lokpal would probe the allegations before the 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill is passed. He said the BJP, which has collected nearly Rs 39 lakh crore from fuel cess since 2014, was using ethanol blending as "a new blueprint for plunder at the expense of common Indians."

‘HUGE BOOST TO COUNTRY’S ECONOMY,’ MAHA CM LAUDS GST REFORMS

Fadnavis on Thursday welcomed the GST reforms, calling them second-generation changes that will ease the tax burden on people

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday welcomed the GST reforms, calling them second-generation changes that will ease the tax burden on people and give a major boost to the country’s economy.

Speaking to the reporters, Devendra Fadnavis said, “Second generation reforms were much needed and the Prime Minister has initiated second generation reforms. This will reduce the burden of taxes on consumers and increase trade, demand, production and employment. This will give a huge boost to the country’s economy... The Maharashtra government supports these

REFORMS

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced sweeping GST cuts, merging 12% and 28% slabs into two main rates: 5% and 18%.
- Essential goods, farm equipment, handicrafts, and medical supplies fall under the 5% slab, while most goods and services, including automobiles and electronics, are at 18%.
- A 40% GST rate applies to luxury and sin goods such as tobacco, sugary drinks, luxury vehicles, yachts, and helicopters.
- Essential services like education, healthcare, and life/health insurance premiums remain GST-exempt for public relief.



Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis (File Photo)

reforms...”

Gujarat Finance Minister Kanubhai Desai also praised the reforms saying that the common people would benefit from this.

“The Prime Minister had

said that people would receive gifts on Diwali... There has been a significant reduction in GST. On cement, food items, insurance, and insurance premiums, reductions have been made in GST on

all these. Common people have received many such benefits,” he said.

A day earlier, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a sweeping reduction in GST, aimed at pro-

CM Patel hails Gujarat as growth engine, targets to achieve \$3.5 trillion economy

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel said on Thursday that the western state under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has become the growth engine of India’s development and is one of the most industrialized and urbanised state in the country.

He also said that Gujarat aims to achieve its target of becoming a \$3.5 trillion economy by 2047 with a regional growth push.

Patel made the remarks while addressing an interaction meet with industrialists ahead of the upcoming Vibrant Gujarat Regional Conferences (VGRCS).

He said, “Under Modi’s leadership Gujarat became the growth engine of India’s development. Due to the success of Vibrant Gujarat summit it



Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel (File Photo)

has become the most urbanised and industrialised states in the country.

The Chief Minister asserted that the real strength lies in the regional diversities. “Every region has its own distinct industrial, traditional heritage and economic potential. Besides Gujarat’s South, North and Central,

Kutch and Saurashtra are also set to witness new sector specific investment opportunities,” Patel said.

He also pointed out the state’s readiness for the next phase of industrial development. He mentioned the projects like GIFT City, Greenfield Ports, LNG Terminals, and new industrial parks, including PM-MITRA, Bulk Drug Park, Medical Device Park, and Agro Food Park to cater the next phase of industrial development.

The Chief Minister said: “These projects combined with the regional conferences, would position Gujarat to achieve its target of becoming a \$3.5 trillion economy by 2047.”

An official release said these regional conferences will bring together national and international stakeholders to showcase Gujarat’s new initiatives aimed at driving balanced and holistic regional growth.

‘GBA will only monitor, corporations will do major work’: Karnataka DyCM Shivakumar

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said that the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) will only monitor the work done by corporations in the state.

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, Shivakumar said, “GBA will only monitor. The major work will be done by the corporation.”

He said that resolving the problems faced by people in Bengaluru would take time and asked citizens to cooperate and pay taxes regularly.

“We have to deliver, make sure every citizen is helped. All the problems of Bengaluru city cannot be solved in one day. I know it takes time. Our citizens should also cooperate. They should declare their assets. They should not hide anything. They should pay taxes regularly, and they will get good governance,” he said.

Meanwhile, he told reporters that he met with farmers, legislators and councillors of the Krishna Water Basin area to discuss land acquisition for the Upper Krishna Project.

This comes after Shivakumar’s announcement that the five city corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority have come into effect to enhance urban administration and implement citizen-friendly services.

Addressing a press conference at Vidhana Soudha on Tuesday, Shivakumar said, “September 2 is a special day for Bengaluru. The five city corporations- Bengaluru Central Corporation, Bengaluru North Corporation, Bengaluru South Corporation, Bengaluru East Corporation, Bengaluru West Corporation have come into effect today. The Greater Bengaluru Authority, with 75 members, has been formed

under the leadership of the Chief Minister on August 26.”

Meanwhile, he told reporters that he met with farmers, legislators and councillors of the Krishna Water Basin area to discuss land acquisition for the Upper Krishna Project.

“Today, we meet the farmers, legislators and councillors of the Krishna Water Basin area regarding taking up the project. We are concentrating on land acquisition for this project. The State Government is committed to completing this project as soon as possible. We aim to obtain the consent of farmers and complete the land acquisition process,” DK Shivakumar said.

Congress Priyank Kharge criticizes GST: One Nation Nine Taxes

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

Congress leader Priyank Kharge on Thursday criticised the Centre’s recent GST reforms, and said that the “One Nation, One Tax” had turned into “One Nation, 9 Taxes.” Kharge also claimed that the Congress party had long pushed for a simpler GST system with lower rates to ease the burden on farmers, small businesses, and the middle class.

In a post on X, Priyank Kharge wrote, “A bit of common sense seems to have dawned upon the Modi Sarkar on the Gabbar Singh Tax. For almost a decade, the Indian National Congress has been demanding simplification of GST. “One Nation, One Tax” had become “One Nation, 9 Taxes” -- 0%, 5%, 12%, 18%, 28%, and special rates of 0.25%, 1.5%, 3% and 6%.”

“LoP@RahulGandhi-

viding relief to households, farmers, businesses and the healthcare sector.

The 56th GST council meeting decided to rationalise GST rates to two slabs of 5 per cent and 18 per cent by merging the 12 per cent and 28 per cent rates.

5% slab consists of essential goods and services, including food and kitchen item like butter, ghee, cheese, dairy spreads, pre-packaged namkeens, bhujia, mixtures, and utensils; agricultural equipment like drip irrigation systems, sprinklers, bio-pesticides, micronutrients, soil preparation machines, harvesting tools, tractors, and tractor tires; handicrafts and small industries like sewing machines and their parts and health and wellness like medical equipment and diagnostic kits.

Karnataka minister Parameshwara calls for further GST reductions

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Thursday welcomed the Centre’s decision to reduce Goods and Services Tax (GST) but said there is still a need to bring down taxes on many more essential items.

Speaking to the reporters, G Parameshwara said, “For essential commodities that reach common people, GST should be less or not at all. But even on such items, they had imposed high GST earlier. Now they have reduced it, which shows they have realised the difficulties of common people.”

Parameshwara said the central government has finally understood the concerns raised by his party, which had long been demanding a cut in Goods and Services Tax (GST), introduced on July 1, 2017.

“The central government has now understood. Our party too, had been demanding this.



Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on new.

We welcome the decision to reduce GST. But there is still a need to lower GST on many other items. We should also study how GST is implemented in other parts of the world,” he added.

GST, introduced in India on July 1, 2017, replaced previous indirect taxes under the 101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016. The initial, unified tax structure featured multiple slabs, including 0%, 5%, 12%, 18%, and 28%, to apply to different goods and services based on their essentiality and luxury status.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a sweeping reduction in GST, aimed at providing relief to households, farmers, businesses and the healthcare sector.

The 56th GST council meeting decided to rationalise GST rates to two slabs of 5 per cent and 18 per cent by merging the 12 per cent and 28 per cent rates.

5% slab consists of essential goods and services, including food and kitchen item like butter, ghee, cheese, dairy spreads, pre-packaged namkeens, bhujia, mixtures, and utensils; agricultural equipment like drip irrigation systems, sprinklers, bio-pesticides, micronutrients, soil preparation machines, harvesting tools, tractors, and tractor tires; handicrafts and small industries like sewing machines and their parts and health and wellness like medical equipment and diagnostic kits.

IIT Madras secures top spot in NIRF Rankings 2025 for seventh year in a row

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has once again bagged the top position in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025, marking the seventh consecutive year of its dominance in the overall category.

The Ministry of Education announced the 10th edition of the rankings on Thursday. IISc Bengaluru has been ranked as the best university, followed by Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, and Manipal Academy of Higher Education at sec-



IIT Madras (File Photo)

ond and third positions, respectively.

Hindu College, Delhi, retained its top rank in the colleges category, while Miranda House and Hansraj College secured the second and third spots.

IIT Madras also topped in the engineering category, followed by IIT Delhi and IIT Bombay. IIM

Ahmedabad emerged as the country’s best management institute, while Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi, secured the first position in the pharmacy category.

In the field of medical education, AIIMS New Delhi retained its position as the best medical college in India.

This year’s rankings evaluated institutions under 17 categories -- including overall, universities, colleges, research institutions, engineering, management, pharmacy, medical, dental, law, architecture and planning, agriculture and allied sectors, open universi-

ties, skill universities, state public universities and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Institutions are ranked on five key parameters: teaching, learning and resources; research and professional practice; graduation outcomes; outreach and inclusivity; and perception.

The NIRF was first introduced in 2015 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (now Ministry of Education) to provide a transparent and comprehensive framework for evaluating higher education institutions across the country.

Maharashtra: 1 killed, 17 injured in blast at explosives company in Nagpur

TDG NETWORK
NAGPUR

One worker lost his life while 17 others were injured after a massive explosion occurred at the Solar Explosives Company near Bazargaon in Maharashtra’s Nagpur in the early hours on Thursday, said officials.

All the injured have been rushed to various private hospitals in Nagpur, with four reported to be in critical condition.

The blast took place at the CB-1 plant of the company. Witnesses said that smoke was noticed before the explosion, which alerted senior workers who immediately asked everyone to evacuate. Most workers managed to escape in time, but Mayur Ganvir, who was inside the plant, could not make it out. Moments later, a powerful explosion ripped through the unit.

The intensity of the blast was such that parts of the

Authorities initially waited there would be no secondary explosion before starting rescue operations.

building were blown several meters away. Flying debris struck several workers, causing multiple injuries. Police, fire brigade teams, and senior district officials rushed to the spot soon after the incident.

Authorities initially waited to ensure there would be no secondary explosion before starting rescue operations. Later, a cooling operation was carried out, and those trapped under the rubble were rescued. The injured were given first aid before being shifted to hospitals in the city.

Speaking to ANI, Dr. Nripal Dhande, ICU in-charge at Dhande Hospital, said, “We got information around 1.30 am about a blast in a factory. At first, four patients were brought here, of whom two were in

critical condition with head injuries. They were taken into the ICU immediately, and they are on a ventilator. The maximum patients were released after primary medical aid. Seven patients are being treated in the hospital as of now.”

An injured worker said, “The incident took place around 12-12.30 am. When we saw smoke coming from the reactor, we all came out. After continuous smoke for around 20-25 minutes, there was a blast. Due to the blast, around 40-50 people got injured by stones...”

Since morning, a large crowd of onlookers has gathered outside the factory premises. Workers of the morning shift have not been allowed to enter the company, and security has been tightened at the site.

Civil aviation infra, boost in connectivity leading to growth in North East: Naidu

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The North East Region (NER) Ministers’ Conference on Civil Aviation 2025, along with the 3rd North East Aviation Summit, was held on Thursday in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.

The event was organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

In the inaugural, Pema Khandu, Chief Minister, Arunachal Pradesh, emphasised that

transportation connectivity is the most critical sector for the development of the NER. In the last 10 years, aviation infrastructure and connectivity status of NER has seen unprecedented growth, said Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Having airports in Arunachal Pradesh was a long cherished dream of the people which got realised because of the active support of the Ministry of Civil Aviation under the visionary

leadership of the PM. Progress in creation of aviation infrastructure and path breaking schemes like UDAN have been instrumental in transforming the socio economic aspirations of the NE region.

Rammohan Naidu Kinjarapu, emphasized the need for deepening Centre-State-Industry collaboration for the accelerated growth of the Civil Aviation sector in the North East Region. He emphasized

that enhanced air connectivity is vital for improving accessibility to remote and border areas, promoting tourism, facilitating cargo and logistics, and driving industrial as well as socio-economic growth in Arunachal Pradesh and the North East Region. To realise its strong tourism potential, North East Region should solve its connectivity challenges in fast pace. Also there is need for accelerating skilling initiatives

for fast tracking employment generation among the youths of the region. An industry driven aviation ecosystem would be able to cater to both these needs.

The Minister expressed pride in informing that the number of operational airports in the region has grown from nine in 2014 to 16 at present. Aircraft movements have nearly doubled, while domestic passenger traffic has increased more than

threefold since 2014.

Encouraging the states to harness on the region’s tourism potential, the Minister stated: “You have not seen India until you have seen North East India. The natural beauty, vibrant culture, warm hospitality and the strong essence of Indianness found here are unmatched.” He urged the states to focus on developing tourism infrastructure and hospitality services to complement expanding avia-

tion connectivity.

Highlighting future support for infrastructure creation, the Minister shared that for the North Eastern group of states, we have decided to offer four pre-feasibility studies for Greenfield Airport development every financial year, free of consultancy or other charges. This will encourage states to plan and build new airports and take full advantage of the growth momentum.

He assured continued support from the Central Government and emphasized that aviation is no longer a luxury-but a critical enabler of Viksit Bharat @2047. Highlighting India’s transformation into the third-largest domestic aviation market, he pointed to initiatives like UDAN, expansion of airports, growth of regional carriers, focus on Aviation skilling and efforts to incentivise MRO sector as key pillars of progress.


FLOODWATER HALTS CREMATIONS AT GEETA COLONY GROUNDS

Flooded cremation grounds in Geeta Colony force workers to stop ceremonies.

Road leading to Yamuna Bank Metro station becomes inaccessible

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Yamuna floodwaters submerge cremation site in East Delhi’s Geeta Colony
- Workers claim no government assistance despite crisis at the grounds
- Cremations forced onto roads; risk of snakes in floodwater raised
- Yamuna river level at 207.47m, well above danger mark



Severe waterlogging was witnessed as water from the overflowing Yamuna river entered parts of city.(ANI)

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Severe waterlogging was witnessed as water from the overflowing Yamuna river entered parts of the national capital on Thursday.

Geeta Colony in East Delhi is one of the many areas experiencing waterlogging-related issues. The cremations have been put to a halt as the floodwater has entered the premises.

One of the workers at the cremation site in Geeta Colony claimed that there is no help from the government yet.

“All the wood has been swept away in the floodwater. We had to do a few cremations on the road because this area is filled with water. There is no help from the government yet. We will have to continue doing the cremations on the roads. The last time this area was flooded

One of the workers at the cremation site in Geeta Colony claimed that there is no help from the government yet.

was in 2023, and then it’s now,” explained the worker.

Another worker, named Arun Sharma, from the cremation site, highlighted that the water is 11 to 12 feet deep. “There is a huge problem we are facing. The water level is currently about 12 feet. The cremation authority also informed us that the water level will rise. We have halted the cremation process as of now,” informed Sharma.

“If bodies come to us for cremation, we will have to send them to other parts of Delhi, because here there is a possibility that animals like snakes may be present in the water, which is dangerous for everybody,” he explained.

Speaking on government help, Sharma stated, “There

is no help from anybody. The maximum help that we get from them (the government) is that they will send us food, and that is all,” Sharma stated.

Meanwhile, Yamuna’s water level at Old Railway Bridge was recorded at 207.47 meters at 10 a.m. on Thursday. The level has remained steady for the past two hours, with the same reading recorded at 8 and 9 a.m. today.

The river is continuously flowing above the danger level mark of 205.33m, following incessant rainfall. The warning mark of the Yamuna for the city is 204.5 metres, while the danger mark is 205.33 metres. Evacuation of people starts at 206 metres.

Situation under control: Delhi Minister Sirsa

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Thursday said that the government is fully prepared to deal with the rising water level of the Yamuna river following heavy rainfall and also assured that the situation is under control.



Delhi Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa.(ANI)

Speaking to ANI, Manjinder Singh Sirsa said, “We are fully prepared as the water level of the Yamuna river is increasing. We are continuously monitoring the situation. The situation is currently under control.”

Yamuna’s water level at Old Railway Bridge was recorded at 207.47 meters at 10 a.m. on Thursday. The level has remained steady for the past two hours, with the same reading recorded at 8 and 9 a.m. today.

On the flood situation in Punjab, Sirsa criticised AAP leaders Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia for ignoring the interests of the state.

“Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia looted Punjab, and when it came to standing with the people of Punjab, they fled and came to Delhi,” he said.

Amidst Punjab witnessing heavy rainfall, around

37 lives have been lost due to severe flooding, announced the state government on Thursday.

According to the Punjab government, around 1,655 villages have been affected, with Gurdaspur most affected area of the lot, as 324 villages are impacted by flooding, followed by Ferozepur (111), Amritsar (190), Hoshiarpur (121), Kapurthala (123) and Sangrur (107), whose villages were significantly impacted by floods.

Further, the Punjab government said that around 1,75,216 hectares of total land have been affected. Gurdaspur was most affected, as 40,169 hectares of crop land were impacted due to heavy rain. Additionally, crop land in Mansa (24967), Sangrur (6560), Fazilika (17786) and Kapurthala (3000) were also affected.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Thursday announced that due to the escalating water levels of the Yamuna River, the approach road leading to the Yamuna Bank Metro Station was currently inaccessible. DMRC advised the passengers to plan their journeys accordingly and consider alternate routes.



Representative Image.

DMRC further stated that the metro station was operational, and an interchange facility was available.

In a post on X, DMRC wrote, “Due to the escalating water levels of the Yamuna River, the approach road leading to Yamuna Bank Metro Station is currently inaccessible. Kindly plan your journey accordingly and consider alternate routes. However, the station is operational and interchange facility is available”.

Meanwhile, the Yamuna River is continuously flowing above the danger level mark of 205.33m following incessant rainfall.

Yamuna’s water level at Old Railway Bridge was recorded at 207.47 meters at 10 a.m. on Thursday. The level remained steady for two hours with the same reading recorded at 8 and 9 a.m. today.

The warning mark of the Yamuna for the city is 204.5 metres, while the danger

mark is 205.33 metres. Evacuation of people starts at 206 metres.

Earlier today, the water level of the Yamuna River stood at 207.48 m between 6 and 7 am.

However, despite a slight decline in the river’s water level in the capital, the Yamuna River continues to flow above the danger level.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast for Delhi, a “thunderstorm with rain” has been predicted for today (September 4), followed by “generally cloudy sky with moderate rain” on September 5. IMD has also predicted a “thunderstorm with rain” for September 6, followed by a “generally cloudy sky” on September 7 and 8.

Meanwhile, Delhi continues to grapple with waterlogging and signs of possible flooding. Today, early morning visuals from Loha Pul and nearby areas showed the expanded Yamuna River that continues to wreak havoc following heavy and continuous

rainfall.

Severe waterlogging was witnessed as the water from the overflowing Yamuna River entered parts of the national capital. Visuals show the waterlogged roads of Delhi’s Monastery Market area.

In Delhi’s Civil Lines area, vehicles were submerged, and buildings were flooded on Bela Road as water from the overflowing Yamuna River entered the area.

As a preventive measure, people residing in the low-lying areas near the Yamuna River were shifted to safer locations, anticipating a flood emergency.

Some of the relief camps set up near Mayur Vihar Phase 1 were also flooded as the Yamuna River continues to swell due to continuous rainfall.

On Wednesday afternoon, heavy rain lashed parts of Delhi and the NCR, causing traffic congestion and waterlogging in low-lying areas, and leading to the Yamuna once again flowing above the danger mark.

Portion of flyover collapses on NH-44 following heavy rainfall

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A portion of the flyover on the National Highway 44 collapsed in the national capital, following heavy rainfall in the region.

Meanwhile, heavy rain lashed parts of Delhi and the NCR on Wednesday afternoon, causing traffic congestion and waterlogging in low-lying areas, and the Yamuna once again flowed above the danger mark.

Visuals showed rain sweeping across major roads, including Krishna Menon Marg, Feroz Shah Kotla Road, and Arjangarh, causing inconvenience to commuters. Traffic slowed on Mathura Road as vehicles struggled through waterlogged stretches.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the forecast for Delhi is “generally cloudy sky with moderate rain” today. A “thunderstorm with



rain” has been predicted for tomorrow, followed by “generally cloudy sky with moderate rain” on September 5, “thunderstorm with rain” on September 6, and “generally cloudy sky” on September 7 and 8.

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) recorded Delhi’s air quality index (AQI) at 80 at 4 pm on Wednesday, placing it in the ‘satisfactory’ category.

Meanwhile, the Yamuna river continued to flow above the danger mark of 205.33 metres, with the water level reaching 207 metres at the Old Railway Bridge at around 1 pm. On July 13, 2023, the river reached an all-time high of 208.66 metres.

Earlier on Tuesday, Delhi Chief Minister, Rekha Gupta, visited Loha Pul area and met affected families. She said that the situation was under control.

Kejriwal, Sisodia seek exemption from court due to Punjab floods

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Thursday sought exemption from appearance before Delhi’s Rouse Avenue court on the grounds of the flood situation in Punjab and their engagement in relief work, etc.

The money laundering case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) linked with the Delhi excise policy case was listed for hearing before Special Judge Dig Vinay Singh.

The court allowed the exemption applications and listed the matter for hearing on October 29. This matter is also pending before the Delhi High Court in an appeal against an order passed by the special court.

The Special Court at Rouse Avenue is dealing with the issues related to the scrutiny of documents.

The application for exemption was moved on behalf of former CM Kejriwal, as he had to appear before the Court in the matter. It



Former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.(ANI)

The Special Court at Rouse Avenue is dealing with the issues related to the scrutiny of documents.

was stated that Arvind Kejriwal is not in a position to appear before the court due to the unprecedented floods in the State of Punjab.

The application further stated that Kejriwal was visiting the flood-affected areas to coordinate relief measures and provide immediate assistance to the victims of the natural calamity.

Another application was moved on behalf of Manish Sisodia, and it was informed that he is presently

in the State of Punjab owing to the recent occurrence of severe flash floods that have adversely affected various cities and regions within the said State.

“The Applicant is currently the Prabhari (In-Charge) of the Aam Aadmi Party for the State of Punjab, and in pursuance of his responsibilities and obligations in that capacity, he has travelled to Punjab to extend assistance, support, and relief to the affected residents”, the plea said.

Economic revolution in our country: Bansuri on GST reforms

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj on Thursday hailed the GST reforms, calling them an “economic revolution” and thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for the move.

Speaking to the reporters, Bansuri Swaraj said, “I thank Prime Minister Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The Prime Minister has fulfilled what he announced from the ramparts of the Red Fort. He is proclaiming an economic revolution in our country. Congratulations to the Modi government.”



BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj.(ANI)

While Delhi Minister Parvesh Verma said that the markets have reacted positively and there is a good response across the country.

A day earlier, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a sweeping reduction in GST, aimed at providing relief to households, farmers, businesses and the healthcare sector.

The 56th GST council meeting decided to rationalise GST rates to two slabs of 5 per cent and 18 per cent by merging the 12 per cent and 28 per cent rates.

5% slab consists of essential goods and services, including food and kitchen item like butter, ghee, cheese, dairy spreads, pre-packaged namkeens, bhujia, mixtures, and utensils; agricultural equipment like drip irrigation systems, sprinklers, bio-pesticides, micronutrients, soil preparation machines, harvesting tools, tractors, and tractor tires; handicrafts and small industries like sewing machines and their parts and health and wellness like medical equipment and diagnostic kits.

While the 18% slab consists of a standard rate for most goods and services, including au-

While Delhi Minister Parvesh Verma said that the markets have reacted positively and there is a good response across the country.

tomobiles such as small cars and motorcycles (up to 350cc), consumer goods like electronic items, household goods, and some professional services, a uniform 18% rate applies to all auto parts.

Additionally, there is also a 40% slab for luxury and sin goods, including tobacco and pan Masala, products like cigarettes, bidis, and aerated sugary beverages and on luxury vehicles, high-end motorcycles above 350cc, yachts, and helicopters.

Moreover, some essential services and educational items are fully exempted from GST, including individual health, family floater and life insurance, no GST on health and life insurance premiums and education and healthcare, like certain services related to education and healthcare are GST-exempt.

SpiceJet issues travel advisory amid bad weather in Delhi

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

SpiceJet airline has issued a travel advisory amid bad weather conditions in the national capital.

In a post on X, the airline informed, “Due to bad weather in Delhi (DEL), all departures/arrivals and their conse-

quential flights may be affected. Passengers are requested to keep a check on their flight status.”

Meanwhile, Delhi Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Thursday said that the government is fully prepared to deal with the rising water level of the Yamuna river following heavy rainfall and also assured that the



situation is under control. Speaking to ANI, Manjinder Singh Sirsa said, “We are fully prepared as the water level of the Yamuna river is increasing. We are continuously monitoring the situation. The situation is currently under control.”

Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Thursday also an-

nounced that due to the escalating water levels of the Yamuna River, the approach road leading to the Yamuna Bank Metro Station was currently inaccessible.

DMRC advised the passengers to plan their journeys accordingly and consider alternate routes.

The metro operator

further stated that the station was operational, and an interchange facility was available.

Yamuna’s water level at Old Railway Bridge was recorded at 207.47 meters at 10 a.m. on Thursday. The level has remained steady for the past two hours, with the same reading recorded at 8 and 9 a.m. today.

BIHAR ELECTION 2025

BJP WORKERS PROTEST AS NDA OBSERVES 5-HOUR BIHAR BANDH

BJP workers staged protests during NDA's Bihar bandh over remarks on PM's mother.

TDG NETWORK
GAYA

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers on Thursday led protests in Bihar's Gaya and Danapur as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) observes a five-hour Bihar Bandh over the derogatory remarks made against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's late mother at a Mahagathbandhan event in Bihar.

Meanwhile, BJP's Bihar state president, Dilip Jaiswal, said the five-hour bandh will be observed from 7 am to 12 noon. However, essential services, including emergency facilities and rail operations, will remain unaffected during the shutdown. Also, the BJP Mahila Morcha will be leading the protest.

The state-wide bandh is in protest against objectionable comments made by Congress workers against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his moth-

- BJP workers protested in Gaya and Danapur as NDA called bandh.
- Shutdown lasted five hours but essential services and rail operations remained unaffected.
- NDA leaders accused Mahagathbandhan of insulting PM Modi's late mother at Darbhanga rally.
- PM Modi condemned remarks, calling them an insult to all mothers nationwide.

KEY POINTS



Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers on Thursday leading protests in Bihar. ANI

er last week in Darbhanga during the Voter Adhikar Yatra.

Following the announcement, Janata Dal (United) leader Umesh Kushwaha said, "During the opposition's rally in Darbhanga, abusive words were used against Prime Minister Modi and his mother. This is wrong, both morally and politically."

"Using such language is highly inappropriate, and so far, the Mahagathbandhan leaders have not apolo-

gised. This shows how arrogant they are. They have insulted our mothers and sisters, and now we will retaliate. Therefore, the NDA has called for a Bihar bandh, and the women's wing will hold protests across Bihar," he said.

Earlier RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav in a post on X said that a Mother is a Mother but took a jibe at the Prime Minister alleging that he had used similar words for others.

"A mother is a mother.

The word "mother" brings so much peace the moment it comes to the tongue. Even for the speechless, a mother exists. No one should ever use abusive words against anyone's mother, sister, or daughter. Every human being, living creature, animal, and bird in this world is born of a mother. If Prime Minister Modi campaigns for and appeals to elect Prajwal Revanna, who rapes women and girls, then that is Modi's masterstroke. If Modi

Gujaratis shouldn't underestimate Biharis: Lalu on NDA bandh call

TDG NETWORK
PATNA

RJD chief Lalu Yadav on Thursday lashed out at the BJP over its statewide bandh in Bihar, accusing the party's workers of "abusing and mistreating" women of the state.

Taking to a social media post on X, Lalau Yadav questioned whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi had "ordered BJP members to abuse the mothers, sisters and daughters of Bihar and Biharis."

"Has Prime Minister Modi ordered the BJP members to abuse the mothers, sisters, and daughters of Bihar and Biharis today? Gujaratis shouldn't underestimate

Biharis. This is Bihar. BJP goons and ruffians are abusing respected teachers, women walking on the streets, students, pregnant women, the elderly, and journalists, engaging in physical altercations and mistreating them? Is this appropriate? Shameful!" the social media post



RJD chief Lalu Yadav. ANI

reads.

Meanwhile, RJD leader and Bihar Leader of Opposition (LoP) Tejashwi Yadav criticised Prime Minister Modi, accusing him of making "false promises" to the people of Bihar.

He also took a dig at the Prime Minister and questioned his intentions, sug-

gesting that the BJP wants to exploit Bihar's votes for electoral gains while they set up factories in Gujarat.

The social media post reads, "Modi Ji! Bihar will not fall for your false promises. This time's issue is poverty, unemployment, crime, migration, better health and education system! You want victory from Bihar and will set up factories in Gujarat! The people of Bihar are not made for labor work."

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is observing Bihar Bandh over the derogatory remarks made against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's late mother at a Mahagathbandhan event in Bihar.

calls someone's mother a 50-crore girlfriend, then wow Modi ji, wow! If Modi refers to the wife of a brave former Prime Minister who sacrificed for the country and the mother of the Leader of the Opposition as a widow and a Jersey cow, then shameless people will say that Modi gave a brilliant speech," he said.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday condemned the abusive remarks directed at his late mother, saying they were an insult to all mothers, sisters, and daughters in India. "Mother is our world. Mother is our self-respect. I had not even imagined what happened a few days ago in this tradition-rich Bihar. My mother was abused from the stage of RJD-Congress in Bihar... These abuses are not just an insult to my mother. These are insults to the mothers, sisters and daughters of the country," he said.

Is this your culture?: BJP slams Oppn over remark

TDG NETWORK
PATNA

BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad on Thursday strongly condemned the derogatory remarks made against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's late mother during the Voter Adhikar Yatra event in Darbhanga.

Speaking to ANI, the BJP MP condemned the act and called it very "shameful". "It is very shameful that PM Modi's late mother was abused and they have not apologised till now. I want to tell Rahul Gandhi and Tejashwi Yadav that if someone from our party had used this kind of language, we would have taken strict action against him," Prasad said.

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) observed a five-hour Bihar Bandh in protest of the remarks, with workers protesting in Patna. The bandh was a show of solidarity with PM Modi and a strong message against the opposition's alleged disrespect.

"Is this your culture? This is your shamelessness!...We condemn this," he added.

While sitting in the protest, holding a banner, Prasad said that respecting one's



BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad. ANI

mother is an Indian tradition that everyone observes.

"But a mother who went to heaven and came from poverty, educated her child who became the Prime Minister; abusing her is highly condemnable...Rahul Gandhi will say and do anything, Tejashwi also has the same attitude, the people of Bihar will answer this," he added.

The controversy comes ahead of the Bihar assembly elections, expected to be held in October or November. The elections are likely to be a crucial test for both the NDA and the Mahagathbandhan alliance, with each side vying for power and seeking to win over voters.

Moreover, Bihar BJP President Dilip Jaiswal also attended the protest and demanded an apology from Rahul Gandhi and Tejashwi Yadav for allegedly abusing PM Modi and his

mother.

"Some days ago, from the stage of the INDI alliance, PM Modi's late mother was abused. Today, NDA is observing a five-hour Bihar Bandh against the derogatory remarks against PM Modi's late mother. Rahul Gandhi and Tejashwi Yadav should apologise to the nation," Jaiswal said to ANI.

Meanwhile, cadres of the BJP are staging protests in various parts of the state. On Thursday, Bihar Minister Krishna Kumar Mantoo sought legal action against the Opposition leaders who allegedly abused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his mother during the Voter Adhikar Yatra. Speaking to reporters, Mantoo said that the Prime Minister is not an ordinary person, but rather the Prime Minister of the entire state of Bihar.

Tejashwi Yadav busy making reels, has no regrets: BJP's Sushma Sahu

TDG NETWORK
PATNA

Bihar BJP spokesperson Sushma Sahu on Thursday slammed the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav over the alleged derogatory remarks made against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's late mother during the Voter Adhikar Yatra event in Darbhanga.

Speaking to ANI, Sahu said, "Are Rahul Gandhi and Tejashwi Yadav's eyes closed regarding derogatory remarks used for PM Modi's late mother? Rahul is an expert in talking dirty outside the context. Tejashwi has ten women living in his house. How can he talk

so dirty?"

She further said that Tejashwi is having fun making reels and has no regrets.

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav was seen dancing in a viral reel video at Patna Marine Drive, which he shared on X. The video showed him dancing with Bihar youth after the end of the 16-day Voter Adhikaar



Representational Image

Yatra.

Bihar BJP Mahila Morcha President Dharmshila Gupta also slammed both the Opposition leaders and said that abusing one's mother is not the culture of the BJP.

"What will Rahul Gandhi and Tejaswi Yadav say? They made their members abuse them, and they were

enjoying it. If they had even a little knowledge of the mother, they would have scolded that worker immediately, but no, Darbhanga police arrested him. Rahul Gandhi will be drenched in tears for this act," she added. She further stated that people in Bihar can tolerate everything except an insult to anyone's mother. "Today, the people of Bihar have rejected Rahul Gandhi and Tejashwi Yadav. We will not tolerate the insult of Bihar!"

Earlier today, BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad strongly condemned the derogatory remarks made against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's late mother during the Voter Adhikar Yatra event in Darbhanga.

Assam CM launches Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan in Dhekiajuli constituency

TDG NETWORK
GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday launched Chief Minister's Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan in Dhekiajuli constituency. Under this, cheques were distributed to 31,224 members of women Self-Help Groups (SHGs), covering 29,523 women from rural areas and 1,701 from urban areas.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. ANI

highlighted that Assam has around 4 lakh SHGs with 40 lakh women members and said, "Of these, nearly 8.5 lakh women already earn Rs 1 lakh or more annually. Many of these 'Lakhpati

Baideus' have even grown into bigger entrepreneurs, earning up to Rs 10 lakh every year, thereby rising to the level of 'Maha Lakhpati Baideu'."

Highlighting the government's efforts, Sarma noted that women had previously faced problems due to high-interest loans from microfinance institutions. "But with the government's revolving fund of Rs 25,000, SHGs are now able to carry out productive activities smoothly.

Mehbooba demands additional funds for relief, rehabilitation

TDG NETWORK
JAMMU

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti on Thursday asserted that the relief package worth Rs 209 crore released by the Centre after Union Home Minister Amit Shah's recent visit to inspect the rain, flood, and landslide-affected areas of Jammu division was 'not enough.'



Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti. ANI

Shah was in Jammu from September 1 to 2 to take stock of the situation amid heavy downpour and incidents of

cloud bursts and landslides. He also met the flood-affected people in Mangu Chak village, Jammu. He inspected the Tawi Bridge at Bikram Chowk, the Shiv Temple, and homes damaged by floods in Jammu. The Centre has released funds worth Rs 209 crore for the SDRF.

"We need thousands of crores rupees, given the kind of damage I witnessed while taking stock of the situation.

Will enable businesses to operate with great stability: Delhi CM on GST reforms

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Thursday praised the GST council's decision to cut Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates, and said it will help all small and large businesses to operate with great stability.

She also said that the Prime Minister has given a gift to the common citizens of the country.

Speaking to the reporters, Rekha Gupta said, "I want to thank the Prime Minister; he has given a great gift to the common citizens of the country. Such significant relief will not only benefit the common man but also the healthcare sector, insurance, household goods, electronics, education, and many other sectors, for which the public thanks Prime Minister Modi."

"Understanding the sentiments of the people, he has reconsidered every issue one by one... This will enable all our small and large businesses to operate with great stability. I believe this will prove to be a major milestone. Thanks to Prime



Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta. ANI

Minister Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman," CM Gupta added.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday announced a sweeping reduction in GST, aimed at providing relief to households, farmers, businesses and the healthcare sector.

The 56th GST council meeting decided to rationalise GST rates to two slabs of 5 per cent and 18 per cent by merging the 12 per cent and 28 per cent rates.

5% slab consists of essential goods and services, including food and kitchen item like butter, ghee, cheese, dairy spreads, pre-packaged namkeens, bhujia, mixtures,

and utensils; agricultural equipment like drip irrigation systems, sprinklers, bio-pesticides, micronutrients, soil preparation machines, harvesting tools, tractors, and tractor tires; handicrafts and small industries like sewing machines and their parts and health and wellness like medical equipment and diagnostic kits.

While the 18% slab consists of a standard rate for most goods and services, including automobiles such as small cars and motorcycles (up to 350cc), consumer goods like electronic items, household goods, and some professional services, a uniform 18% rate applies to all auto parts.

Congress considered impossible to implement GST during their time: Sitharaman

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman hit out at the Congress, and said the party once considered GST was impossible to implement, but the Modi government not only rolled it out successfully but is now taking it forward with second-phase reforms to ease the burden on common people.

Speaking in the press conference on Wednesday, Nirmala Sitharaman said, "Is the Congress Party demanding five per cent tax on tobacco and gutkha? Congress Party wants us to give it at 5%. Congress Party considered impossible to implement GST during their time. We have implemented and are also doing second-generation reforms under the leadership of Modi ji so that people get relief on their day-to-day items."

Sitharaman said that GST reforms are helping MSMEs



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. ANI

and labour-intensive industries by making compliance easier, and urged the Congress to clarify whether it supports or opposes measures that benefit the people.

"MSMEs and labour-intensive units also get relief, due to which there will be easy compliance. Congress should decide whether it wants to oppose or support on the issues that are in the interest of the people. People will expose you," she added.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a sweeping reduction in GST rates on a wide range of essential items, automobiles, agriculture inputs, and electronic appliances.

GST REFORMS WILL BE TRANSFORMATIONAL FOR THE BUSINESS: MIN PIYUSH GOYAL

Union Minister calls GST cuts a demand booster and urges consumer benefits.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, on Thursday, said that the reduction in GST rates will provide a tremendous and unprecedented boost to consumption demand. While addressing the Bharat Nutraverse Expo 2025, he noted that the industry can now aspire for a much greater volume of sales, creating a win-win situation for all.

Goyal urged the industry to ensure that every rupee saved through the GST reduction is passed on to consumers. "Businesses will gain from larger opportunities, while the entire GST benefit will be passed on to consumers," he said.

The Minister remarked that no one had expected such a wide range of prod-

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Piyush Goyal says GST cuts will trigger higher sales, boost consumption
- Industry urged to pass on all savings to consumers without exception
- Emphasizes promoting Indian-made products as a matter of pride and growth
- Projects India's GDP rising from USD 4 trillion to 30 trillion by 2047



Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal

ucts, goods, and services to benefit from the transformational reforms announced on Wednesday.

He emphasized that under the new structure, GST on several categories has been reduced to as low as 5 per cent, resulting in substantial savings across the sector. Goyal noted that this will act as a strong demand booster,

as lower prices naturally drive higher consumption and accelerate industry growth.

The Minister urged the industry to make a strong twin commitment to the Prime Minister: "First, to pass on every rupee of savings from the GST reduction to consumers, and second, to actively promote Indian

products."

He stressed the need to support products made with the "sweat and toil of hardworking Indians, products nurtured in the soil of India." Goyal emphasized that when such products reach every corner of the nation, they embody not only economic value but also national pride and self-

reliance.

Referring to India's robust economic performance, the minister underlined that it does not matter whether the ownership lies with an Indian entrepreneur or a foreign investor; what matters is that the products are manufactured in India, creating jobs for Indian youth, generating opportunities for local communities, and contributing to the nation's growth story.

Goyal reiterated the government's vision of taking India's GDP from USD 4 trillion to USD 30 trillion by 2047, stressing that India will emerge as a prosperous and developed nation.

The minister said that a fit and healthy India, supported by the nutraceuticals sector in a big way and by healthy food products, is key to India's growth.

Ramesh questions GST Council's role post reforms

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

Congress on Thursday slammed the government after Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday announced rate cuts saying even before the GST Council meeting, the Prime Minister had already proclaimed the substance of its decisions in his Independence Day speech of August 15 and asked is the GST Council to be reduced to a formality.

He also said that the Union Finance Minister has finally recognised that GST 1.0 had reached a dead end and in fact, the very design of GST 1.0 was flawed and this had been pointed out by the Congress way back in July 2017 itself, "when the Prime Minister had made one of his typical U-turns and decided to introduce GST".

Congress general secretary and communication incharge Jairam Ramesh in a post on X, said, "The Indian National



Congress general secretary and communication incharge Jairam Ramesh.

Congress has for long been advocating for a GST 2.0 that reduces the number of rates, cuts the rates on a large number of items of mass consumption, minimises evasion, mis-classification, and disputes, does away with inverted duty structure (lower tax on output as compared to inputs), eases the compliance burden on MSMEs, and expands GST coverage."

He said, "The Union Finance Minister has made major announcements last evening after the meeting of the

GST Council, which is a constitutional body. However, even before the GST Council meeting, the Prime Minister had already proclaimed the substance of its decisions in his Independence Day speech of August 15th, 2025. Is the GST Council to be reduced to a formality?"

Taking a swipe at the government, Ramesh, who is also the Rajya Sabha member said that faced with a lack of buoyancy in private consumption, subdued rates of private investment, and endless classification disputes, the "Union Finance Minister has finally recognised that GST 1.0 had reached a dead end".

"In fact, the very design of GST 1.0 was flawed and this had been pointed out by the INC way back in July 2017 itself, when the PM had made one of his typical U turns and decided to introduce GST.

It was meant to be a Good and Simple Tax. It turned out to be a Growth Suppressing Tax," he claimed.

Singapore ready to share decades of semiconductor knowledge, skills with India: SSIA

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Singapore, with nearly six decades of experience in the semiconductor industry, is willing to share its knowledge and know-how with India, where the sector is still at a relatively nascent stage but holds immense potential.

"Singapore, being a mature site (for semiconductor), we have a very diverse experience in this area. We could share experience, could do knowledge transfer and share skills that are needed for the industry," Ang Wee Seng, Executive Director at Singapore Semiconductor Industry Association (SSIA), told ANI here in the national capital on Thursday. He is in India for the Semicon India 2025.

On Day 1 of the three-day semiconductor-focused event (September 2-4), its fourth edition, SSIA had signed an MoU with the National Institute of Electronics and IT (NIELIT) to skill up the talent



Ang Wee Seng, Executive Director at Singapore Semiconductor Industry Association (SSIA). (ANI)

pool in India to be better prepared for the future.

"For this MoU, we have been working since the beginning of this year. It's really to strengthen the industries, academia, industry relationship for both Singapore and India. It's to skill up the talent in India for the industry so that it's better prepared for the future," Ang See Weng said.

He supplemented that cross-pollination of experiences between the industries of the two countries can help create a better network of business-to-business friendships.

Singapore's semiconductor journey began in 1968, when its first company, National Semiconductor, was established. Since then, it has developed a very diverse ecosystem, not just the front-end fabs, OSAT, but also equipment manufacturing. Singapore, a small country in terms of land mass, manufactures and assembles approximately 20% of the global semiconductor equipment, contributing a significant portion to its economy, he noted. "So it's a very significant industry. But, as we all know, the world is now in chaos. But the demand for chips continues to rise. So the only way for us to meet the demand of the world is not just Singapore as a small island, but to build more chips, or Malaysia coming in to build more chips."

Lower GST rate to benefit auto sector, boost domestic sales: Crisil

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Lower GST on automobiles is set to make vehicles more affordable for buyers and create new opportunities for sellers. As per a Crisil Intelligence report, the revised GST slab to 18 per cent from 28 per cent will benefit the auto sector and boost domestic sales.

"The automotive aftermarket segment will also benefit as all components will now be brought under the 18 per cent GST slab, thereby leading to a reduction in prices of components taxed at 28 per cent by about 7.8 per cent," the report said.



Representative Image

GST 2.0 will allow customers to purchase internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles at lower rates, thereby improving affordability. Sellers are also likely to benefit from increased demand and stronger sales volumes. At the same time, the government has retained the 5 per

cent GST rate on electric vehicles (EVs), ensuring that cleaner mobility options remain attractive to buyers and aligned with India's green goals.

The report highlighted that the prices of entry-level hatchbacks, such as Wagon R, premium hatchbacks like Swift, compact sedans including Swift Dzire, and sub-compact SUVs, such as Punch, are expected to fall by nearly 8.5 per cent.

Large sedans like Virtus, compact SUVs such as Brezza, mid-SUVs like Creta, and MPVs such as Ertiga are projected to be cheaper by about 3.5 per cent. Meanwhile, premium SUVs, including the XUV 700 and

MPVs with bigger engines like the Innova, may see a decline of about 6.7 per cent.

Two-wheelers are also set to become more affordable. Prices of most ICE two-wheelers will drop by nearly 7.8 per cent, though premium bikes with engines above 350 cc could become costlier by 6.9 per cent.

In the farm sector, ICE tractors and fuel cell motor vehicles, including hydrogen-powered models, are likely to see price reductions of about 6.3 per cent. Three-wheelers, light commercial vehicles (LCVs), medium and heavy commercial vehicles (MHCVs), and buses will all record a decline of nearly 7.8 per cent.

GST exemption may hurt insurers short term, but aid growth later

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Insurance companies are expected to face a setback in the short run following the GST Council's recent exemption on GST, as it could lead to the loss of input tax credit eligibility, said industry experts and executives, adding that the companies, however, will benefit in the long term.

Individual life and health insurance premiums have been exempted from the 18 per cent GST from 22nd September onwards. This includes term insurance, health policies, including family floater and ULIPs.

"For term insurance, GST exemption could result in notable cost reduction, making them more affordable. On the other hand, insurers may lose eligibility for input tax credits. For ULIPs, these products contain a significant investment component; hence, the direct impact of the



Representative Image

exemption may not necessarily bring in a reduction of 18% premiums for such a product," said Vaqarjaved Khan, CFA, Senior Fundamental Analyst, Angel One Ltd. Bankim Mapara, Chief Financial Officer, Universal Sompo General Insurance, said that "the long-term effects will likely be good."

"This move will motivate more families to secure sufficient health protection and reinforce the role of insurance as a financial safety net against increasing medical costs," he added.

Chinmay Jain, Director -

Insurance & PPI, Jupiter, expressed a similar sentiment and said, "While insurers may need to recalibrate their cost structures due to the loss of input tax credits, we view this as an opportunity to innovate and streamline operations."

Observing the impact, Smrita Singh, Partner, S&A Law Offices, said, "While this move is expected to encourage wider insurance penetration, its actual impact on premiums will depend on how insurers adjust to the revised tax framework."

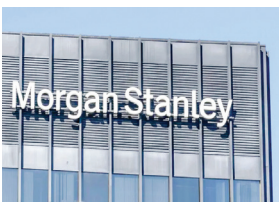
'GST rate cuts to boost affordability, spur consumption'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Global investment bank Morgan Stanley notes that the rationalisation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) structure, approved by the GST Council, is expected to significantly boost consumption in the coming months, coinciding with the onset of the festive season.

In its latest research report, the firm highlighted that the shift from the existing four-tier GST rate system to a simplified two-rate structure of a standard rate of 18 per cent and a merit rate of 5 per cent, will make a range of goods and services more affordable for consumers. A special demerit rate of 40 per cent will continue for a select few items such as tobacco products and luxury goods.

"We expect the improved affordability to give a fillip to consumption, especially as the new GST tax structure is effective from the start of the festive season," the report said, adding



Representative Image

that the indirect tax reduction would help lift demand in a broad-based manner, particularly benefiting low-income households.

The new GST rates are set to come into effect from September 22, in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement during his Independence Day address about next-generation GST reforms aimed at simplifying the tax regime and benefiting consumers.

According to Morgan Stanley, the government estimates the net fiscal impact of this rationalisation at Rs 48,000 crore, or about 0.13 per cent of GDP, after factoring in revenue foregone of Rs 93,000 crore and gains of Rs 45,000 crore from the new 40 per cent slab.

Japanese firms seen pivotal in India's semiconductor value chain: Deloitte

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Japanese companies are set to play a critical role in shaping India's semiconductor mission as the country gears up to become a USD 100 billion semiconductor market by 2030, noted Deloitte India.

In a written reply to ANI questions, P.S. Easwaran, Partner & Supply Chain Leader, Deloitte India, said that the growth of the semiconductor sector in India will be boosted by the USD 10 billion incentive scheme of the government under the Indian Semiconductor Mission.

"India's semiconductor market is projected to reach over USD 100 billion by the end of this decade, and nearly 30-35 per cent of this demand will be met through domestic manufacturing," noted Easwaran

However, he emphasised that achieving this aspiration will require strong interna-



Representative Image

tional partnerships with established semiconductor ecosystems, and Japan plays a very important role in this journey, given its leadership in semiconductor materials and equipment.

"Japan currently accounts for manufacturing of nearly 50 per cent of the world's semiconductor materials including photoresists, specialty chemicals, gases, and wet chemicals, and one-third of equipment, making it a key partner of choice in scaling India's manufacturing base and creation of a robust ecosystem." These strengths make Japan a "partner of

choice" for India to scale its semiconductor ecosystem, Easwaran highlighted.

The India-Japan partnership is already taking shape through landmark projects involving technology collaboration and equipment supply by Japanese firms for semiconductor facilities in India. Strategic initiatives such as the India-Japan Semiconductor Supply Chain Partnership of July 2023 and the Digital Partnership 2.0 announced in August 2025 are aimed at strengthening joint research, design innovation, and talent development.

FICCI hails Govt's Rs 1,500 crore scheme for critical mineral recycling

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) President, Harsha Vardhan Agarwal, lauded the government's decision to approve the Rs 1,500 crore Incentive Scheme to promote Critical Mineral Recycling in the country and termed it a "landmark step."

"It is a landmark step by the government. From the industry per-

spective, we are very positive and bullish about the step, the government has taken," Agarwal said.

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on September 3, approved a Rs 1,500 crore Incentive Scheme to develop recycling capacity in the country for the separation and production of critical minerals from secondary sources.

This scheme is part of the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM), which is aimed at build-

ing the domestic capacity of and supply chain resilience in critical minerals.

The critical mineral value chain, comprising exploration, auction and mine operationalisation, and acquisition of foreign assets, has a gestation period before it can supply critical minerals to the Indian industry.

A prudent way to ensure supply chain sustainability in the near term is through the recycling of



ondary sources.

The Scheme will have a tenure of six years from FY 2025-26 to FY 2030-31.

Eligible feedstock is e-waste, Lithium Ion Battery (LIB) scrap, and scrap other than e-waste & LIB scrap, e.g. catalytic converters in end-of-life vehicles. Expected beneficiaries will be both large, established recyclers, as well as small, new recyclers (including start-ups), for whom one-third of the scheme outlay has

been earmarked. The Scheme will be applicable to investments in new units as well as expansion of capacity/modernisation, and diversification of existing units.

The Scheme will provide an incentive for the recycling value chain, which is involved in the actual extraction of critical minerals, as opposed to the value chain involved only in black mass production.

The incentives under the Scheme will comprise 20 per cent Capex

subsidy on plant & machinery, equipment and associated utilities for starting production within the specified timeframe, beyond which a reduced subsidy will be applicable; and Opex subsidy, which will be an incentive on incremental sales over the base year (FY 2025-26), viz., 40 per cent of eligible Opex subsidy in the 2nd year and balance 60 per cent in the 5th year from FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31 on achievement of specified threshold incremental sales.

GST CUTS: A DIWALI GIFT OR A DEBT UNPAID?

OPINION

RAKESH K. CHITKARA



Seven years, Rs. 117 lakh crore collected—and yet citizens still walk on broken roads, breathe toxic air, endure erratic power, and queue for free rations. So, should I clap or grieve? Perhaps both. Clap, because India has finally moved towards a rational, citizen-friendly GST. Grieve, because the reform came seven years late, after taxpayers had already been overcharged.

The applause will be hollow unless we see a change

not just in the tax code but in the lived experience of citizens. GST 2.0 must not only be about lower rates. It must also be about higher returns—to the taxpayer, to the middle class, to the nation's poor who still stand in ration lines, and to the very idea of India's development story.

Since the introduction of GST in July 2017, taxpayers have contributed an astonishing 117 lakh crore in consumption taxes. A large part of this came from middle-class pockets—the salaried, the shopkeepers, the small entrepreneurs, the families who pay their bills on time and rarely complain.

If the newly announced 5% and 18% slabs had been applied from the start, much of this burden would have been lighter. Back-of-the-envelope estimates suggest that the average middle-class Indian paid thousands

of rupees for hard-earned (income tax paid) money over these years purely due to a faulty slab design and inflated rates. This is money that could have gone to savings, children's education, or healthcare.

The justification was simple: this money would be ploughed back into building a modern India. Better roads, stronger bridges, unclogged drains, reliable electricity, robust healthcare, clean air, and safe water. We paid GST at every shop counter, with quiet hope that it would return as public goods.

IN REALITY...

Step into any Indian city after a bout of rain and reality shatters that hope. Gurgaon, the emblem of a "Millennial City," floods within hours. Traffic police are more visible at collection points than at accident-prone junctions. Bridges across the country are collapsing with alarming frequency—whether in Bihar, Gujarat, or Kerala—exposing weak construction and weaker governance.

Electricity, a basic necessity, remains erratic even in supposedly modern urban clusters. A city that prides



itself on glass towers and IT parks often hides the reality of power outages and reliance on diesel generators.

Air quality in Delhi and beyond remains among the worst in the world. Water, whether scarce or polluted, continues to pose a threat to public health. Healthcare infrastructure—though highlighted during the pandemic—still leaves patients lying on floors in overcrowded hospitals. Broken public healthcare and rising costs in the private sector force families into debt

traps.

And what of poverty? Even after three decades of liberalisation, the Union government had to extend free ration eligibility to nearly 800 million Indians—a stark admission that a majority of citizens cannot afford food security without state subsidy. This is not a symbol of progress; it is a measure of how deeply inequality persists despite trillions in tax revenue.

Meanwhile, law and order is erratic. Street crime is up in many states, cyber scams

flourish, women's safety remains precarious, and communal flashpoints are stoked with political ease. Where exactly has the GST bounty gone if not to ensure a basic sense of security for its citizens?

To be fair, GST has achieved some of its technical goals. It created a unified national market, deepened digital compliance, and expanded the tax base. Businesses no longer navigate the maze of state-level entry taxes. Logistics efficiency has improved.

But the social contract was never just about efficiency. It was about trust—that the rupee collected at checkout would translate into better lives. And here, the gap is glaring. The paradox is striking: India collects more tax than ever, yet citizens still step out daily into broken infrastructure, choking air, erratic electricity, unsafe streets, and unaffordable healthcare.

Now, in September 2025, slabs are being rationalised. Essentials like life-saving drugs drop to 0%, common medicines to 5%, soaps and shampoos to 5%, and small cars to 18%. Sin goods such as cigarettes, pan masala, and luxury yachts move to 40%.

It is good economics and much better politics. But it also raises a harder question: why did we wait so long? For seven years, we over-collected from citizens, squeezed disposable income, and only now, on the eve of elections, are we admitting that a simpler structure is sustainable.

ANGUISH OR APPLAUSE?

This is where the dilemma deepens. Do citizens clap because the government

has finally corrected a distortion? Or do they feel anguish that the correction came seven years late, after they had already overpaid?

The middle class has been the silent workhorse of India's tax system. Unlike the very rich, who can navigate loopholes, or the very poor who are exempted, the salaried and consuming class pays what is levied. With GST, deducted at every point of purchase, escape was impossible. And so they paid—faithfully, quietly, heavily.

The GST rupee collected all along has not been returned as a civic dividend to Indian citizens. If GST 2.0 is to mean anything beyond a rate cut, it must rebuild trust: every rupee collected should show up in roads we can drive on, water we can drink, air we can breathe, and hospitals we can rely on. Without that, the so-called Diwali gift is only a receipt for an unpaid debt.

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SC rightly acquits mother-in-law in Section 498A IPC case

OPINION

SANJEEV SIROHI

It is good to see that in the fitness of things while striking the right chord, the Supreme Court in a most learned, laudable, landmark, logical and latest judgment titled *Smt Bhagwati Devi vs State of Uttarakhand* in Criminal Appeal No. 2616 of 2014 and cited in Neutral Citation No.: 2025 INSC 1051 in the exercise of its criminal appellate jurisdiction that was pronounced as recently as on August 29, 2025 while acquitting the mother-in-law of the deceased woman in a case of dowry harassment that had been registered under Section 498-A of the IPC has minced absolutely just no words to hold plainly that the word spreads faster than the wind about a daughter-in-law being harassed for dowry by the parents-in-law. It must be noted that the appeal before the top court was filed by the woman who had been convicted for the offence that is punishable under Section 498-A of IPC. It merits just no reiteration that the Apex Court very rightly acquitted the mother-in-law after taking into consideration among other things the deposition of the neighbour also thus setting aside the judgment of the Uttarakhand High Court. No denying or disputing it in any way!

At the very outset, this brief, brilliant, bold and balanced judgment authored by Hon'ble Mr Justice Aravind Kumar for a Bench of the Apex Court comprising of himself and Hon'ble Mr Justice NV Anjaria sets the ball in motion by first and foremost putting forth in para 1 that, "The Appellant herein who has been convicted for the offence punishable under Section 498-A of IPC is

assailing the judgment rendered by the High Court of Uttarakhand at Nainital in Criminal Appeal No.174 of 2003 on 10.04.2014."

To put things in perspective, the Bench while elaborating on the facts of the case envisages in para 2 stating that, "The son of the Appellant – Sh. Sanjay Mishra married Smt. Chandra Devi, the daughter of the complainant – Dharmanand Joshi (PW1) according to Hindu customs and rites about a year prior to her death on 15.06.2001. PW-1 presented a complaint before Bagwshwar (P.S.) on 16.06.2001 alleging that his daughter was found dead inside the matrimonial home and only the accused persons were present in the house. It was also stated in the complaint that the daughter of PW-1 had committed suicide by hanging herself. However, he is said to have seen the wounds on his daughter's body during examination and he along with the Patwari saw blood along with water oozing out from the mouth of his daughter. It was further alleged that she was pregnant at the time of her death and further stated that her mother-in-law was commenting on her sarcastically for dowry. Hence, expressing doubt about her death and his daughter having been killed requested suitable action being taken against the culprits. It was also stated by the complainant himself that her husband namely son-in-law was out of city on professional work at Mumbai. The said complaint came to be registered in Crime Case No.1 of 2001 for the offences punishable

under Sections 498- A and 304-B of IPC. The father-in-law, mother-in-law and brother-in-law of the deceased were arraigned as accused and the trial court framed the charge for the offences under Sections 304-B, 498-A and optional charge under Section 302 read with Section 34 of IPC. On behalf of the prosecution, three (3) witnesses namely Dharmanand Joshi, Shambhu Dutt Joshi and Smt. Heera Devi apart from four (4) other witnesses were examined and on behalf of the accused one Smt. Janki Devi was examined. The learned Sessions Judge after trial held that the charge of Section 302 read with Section 34 of IPC was not proved against all the accused. So also, for the charge of Section 304-B was held to be not proved and accused persons were acquitted for the offences punishable under Section 302 read with Section 34 and Section 304-B of IPC. However, Accused no.2 – Mother-in-law namely the Appellant herein was convicted for the offence punishable under Section 498-A of IPC on the ground that deceased had informed her mother (PW-3) and brother (PW-2) about the harassment she was facing for dowry to which effect they had accordingly deposed before the trial court. Hence, the learned Trial Judge concluded that deceased had committed suicide due to harassment. However, the offence under Section 498-A of IPC was held to be not proved against Accused no.1 and Accused no.3 and they came to be acquitted for all the offences alleged."

As it turned out, the Bench then enunciates in para 3 laying bare mentioning that, "The Accused no.2 being aggrieved by the conviction and sentence of three years rigorous imprisonment with fine of Rs.5,000/- and default sentence of three months imprisonment preferred an appeal before the High Court

in Criminal Appeal No.174 of 2003. The High Court on re-appreciation of the evidence came to the conclusion that evidence of PW3 disclosed that on every visit made by the deceased to the paternal home, she had disclosed the demand of dowry by her mother-in-law as well as other accused persons as an acceptable piece of evidence and as such affirmed the judgment of sessions court. Hence, this Appeal."

Do note, the Bench notes in para 6 that, "Having regard to the submissions made by the learned counsels appearing for the parties and on scrutiny of the records of the courts below, it would clearly emerge that though the appellant along with her husband and another son was charged for the offences punishable under Section 304-B and as an alternate under Section 302 read with Section 34 of IPC they have been acquitted by the court below for which there was no appeal. In other words, the order of acquittal for the said two offences had attained finality."

While citing the relevant case law, the Bench opines in para 8 observing that, "A perusal of Section 498-A would clearly indicate that whoever, being the husband or the relative of the husband of a woman, subjects her to cruelty would be liable to be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and also liable to fine. Under the caption of explanation "Cruelty" has been defined to mean and include any willful conduct which is of such a nature as is likely to drive the woman to commit suicide or to cause grave injury or danger to life, limb or health whether mental or physical of the said woman or harassment of the woman or where the harassment is with a view to coercing her or any person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any property or valuable security or is on account of failure

by her or any person related to her to meet such demand. Demand for dowry in any form is itself sufficient for Section 498-A of IPC being attracted. Demand made in any form either by the husband or by the relative of the husband would also attract Section 498-A of IPC. Even if the demand exhibits the conduct that would likely to drive the said woman being unable to bear such conduct would attract Explanation (a). Likewise, harassing of a married woman with a view to coercing her or her relative to meet any unlawful demand would also fall within the mischief of the expression 'cruelty'. This court in the case of Manju Ram Kalita vs. State of Assam (2009) 13 SCC 330 has held cruelty for purpose of Section 498-A of IPC is to be established in that context as it may be different from other statutory provisions. In other words, it has been held that it has to be established that the woman had been subjected to cruelty continuously/persistently or at least in close proximity of time of lodging of complaint. It has been further held:-

"21. "Cruelty" for the purpose of Section 498-A IPC is to be established in the context of Section 498-A IPC as it may be different from other statutory provisions. It is to be determined/ inferred by considering the conduct of the man, weighing the gravity or seriousness of his acts and to find out as to whether it is likely to drive the woman to commit suicide, etc. It is to be established that the woman has been subjected to cruelty continuously/persistently or at least in close proximity of time of lodging the complaint. Petty quarrels cannot be termed as "cruelty" to attract the provisions of Section 498-A IPC. Causing mental torture to the extent that it becomes unbearable may be termed as cruelty."

Be it noted, the Bench notes in para 9 that, "Keeping the aforesaid salutary principles

enunciated by this court in mind, while we turn our attention to the facts on hand it would be apt and appropriate to have a look at the complaint lodged by the father of the deceased PW-1 on the very next day of the demise of his daughter. The perusal of the complaint would indicate that the complainant had reached his daughter's matrimonial home on 16.06.2001 at 4 A.M. and he came to know that his daughter had expired in the afternoon on 15.06.2001 and was informed that she had committed suicide by hanging. It is further stated that the deceased used to tell them during her visit to the paternal home that her mother-in-law used to comment on her sarcastically for dowry. There is not even a word with regard to any dowry demand having been raised by the appellant. In this background when the deposition of the complainant PW-1 is perused it would not detain us for long to arrive at a definite conclusion that his deposition does not indicate of any such demand for dowry having been made or the deceased having been inflicted with cruelty so as to drive her to commit suicide. It would be appropriate to note at this juncture itself that the cause of death has been recorded as asphyxia on account of strangulation as evidenced from the post-mortem report."

It is worth noting that the Bench notes in para 10 that, "The trial court has based the conviction on the strength of the evidence of the mother of the deceased PW-3. She has deposed that her inlaws used to state that the dowry given was less and she used to weep. In the cross-examination she admits that her daughter had come with her younger brother-in-law and had not made any complaint about the members of the matrimonial home. She also admits that during Shiv Ratri her daughter had come along with son-in-law and she did not make any

complaint. She further admits that when PW-1 went to drop her to her matrimonial home she did not make any complaint to her father about any demand for dowry being made. She further admits that the alleged demands made by father-in-law, mother-in-law and younger brother-in-law was for the first time disclosed in the court when she tendered her examination-in-chief. She also admits that the married life of her daughter was happy and cordial and at the time of marriage there was no demand for dowry. She infact admits at the time of marriage her son-in-law had told that he has no demand of dowry. A holistic look at the deposition of PW-3 that is the mother of the deceased would not inspire any confidence to any person of common prudence to arrive at a conclusion that on account of either harassment for dowry or on account of demand for dowry made by the appellant she had been perforced to commit suicide. Even the evidence of PW-2 that is the brother of the deceased is in line with the evidence tendered by his mother PW-3. Infact he also admits that there was no demand for dowry made before marriage and the marriage was solemnised happily and properly and only on the basis of doubt he was expressing that his sister might have been murdered. The doctor (PW-4) who conducted the post-mortem and submitted the report (Ex. Ka-2) of the deceased PW-4 has opined the cause of death appears to be asphyxia on account of strangulation. He admits if there is strangulation then possibility of injuries being suffered to other parts of the body is possible and when there is resistance to the strangulation there is likelihood of urination and faecal matter can also be excreted which was not found on the body of the deceased."

Most significantly and resultantly, the Bench then encapsulates in para 11 what

constitutes the cornerstone of this notable judgment postulating precisely that, "Thus, the cumulative effect of the evidence of these witnesses would drive us to the irresistible conclusion that the deceased had not committed suicide on account of either demand for dowry being made or cruelty being inflicted on her. Our view also gets fortified by the fact that the neighbour of the appellant who was examined as DW-1 has deposed that appellant had never made any demand for dowry. She also deposed that the deceased had informed her of not keeping well. She being neither the relative of the appellant nor belonging to the same community to which the appellant belongs would indicate that there was no interest in her to depose against the factual matrix or in favour of the appellant. Her evidence having been brushed aside by the trial court and also High Court on the premise that she could not have deposed any fact with regard to the demand of dowry as it happens within the four walls is an erroneous finding particularly in such matters the word spreads faster than the wind about a daughter-in-law being harassed for the dowry by the parents in law. Such facts being conspicuously absent in the instant case, we have no hesitation in arriving at a conclusion that the conviction of the appellant for the offence punishable under Section 498-A and the sentence imposed on her cannot be sustained."

Finally and as a corollary, the Bench then concludes by directing and holding aptly in para 12 that, "For the reasons afore-stated above, we allow this Appeal, set aside the judgment of the High Court of Uttarakhand at Nainital in Criminal Appeal No.174 of 2003 dated 10.04.2014 and acquit the accused for the offence under Section 498-A of IPC. Her bail bonds stand discharged. No order as to costs."



From left to right: Russian President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping. AP photo

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

China marked the 80th anniversary of Japan's World War II surrender with a massive military parade in central Beijing – a spectacle heavy with symbolism for both domestic audiences and the world. President Xi Jinping stood atop Tiananmen Rostrum in a high-collared Mao-style suit, reviewing ranks of troops, tanks, and missiles amid towering set pieces emblazoned “1945” and “2025”. Flanking Xi were two controversial guests: Russia's Vladimir Putin and North Korea's Kim Jong Un, whom Xi pointedly welcomed as “old friends” despite their pariah status in Western capitals. This unprecedented tableau – Xi, Putin, and Kim appearing together publicly for the first time – underscored a dramatic alignment of authoritarian power at a time of rising East-West tensions.

COMMEMORATING VICTORY, PROJECTING POWER

Officially, the September 3 parade commemorated China's victory over Japanese aggression and fascism in World War II (a holiday Beijing calls “Victory Day”). Xi's keynote speech before the parade wrapped China's display of might in the mantle of historical memory and peace. He hailed the defeat of Japan in 1945 as “China's first complete victory against foreign aggression in modern times,” praising the “immense sacrifice” of the Chinese people in WWII. The wartime struggle, Xi noted, “reshaped the national psyche” and paved the way for China's “national rejuvenation”, a process he declared “unstoppable”. Remembering history, Xi said, is meant “to create a better future and pass the torch of peace from generation to generation” – a line emphasizing China's preferred image as a guardian of peace.

The pageantry was accordingly suffused with peace messaging even as China showed off formidable weaponry. The event opened with an 80-gun salute and a flag-raising, followed by helicopters trailing banners that read “Justice Prevails,” “Peace Prevails,” and “The People Prevail.” Later, as the parade concluded, 80,000 white doves symbolizing peace were released into the sky, accompanied by 80,000 multicolored balloons in a stunning finale. At the same time, columns of troops and cutting-edge armaments rumbled past Tiananmen Square. More than 10,000 soldiers marched in tight formation and over 100 military aircraft roared overhead. China even unveiled its nuclear triad of land, sea, and air-based strategic missiles for the first time – including new intercontinental ballistic missiles and

hypersonic weapons – as a showcase of its modern military might. Xi underscored that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) must become a “world-class force” and “resolutely safeguard national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.” To China's domestic audience, the message was clear: the country's rejuvenation comes with military strength, but only to ensure peace and prevent the “historical tragedies” of war from recurring.

A PARADE OF ‘OLD FRIENDS’ – AND OMINOUS ALLIANCES

If the internal narrative stressed peace and memory, the international optics of the parade spoke to power shifts and new friendships. On the Tiananmen viewing platform, Xi was pointedly joined by Putin and Kim Jong Un, leaders who have been largely shunned by the West in recent years. Their prominent inclusion was a show of solidarity against Western pressure, signaling that Beijing, Moscow, and Pyongyang are drawing closer in a world increasingly divided. Xi held formal talks with Putin at the Great Hall of the People and even hosted the Russian leader at his personal residence, calling him “my old friend,” according to Kremlin sources. A few hours later, Kim Jong Un's armored train chugged into Beijing; the North Korean ruler rarely travels abroad, but he made an exception for this event, bringing along his young daughter, Kim Ju Ae.

The sight of the mysterious Kim Ju Ae – believed to be about 11 or 12 – quietly standing by her father's side in Beijing grabbed attention worldwide. South Korean intelligence has identified Ju Ae as Kim's likely successor in Pyongyang's hereditary dictatorship. Indeed, this was her international debut after only appearing at North Korean military tests and parades until now. Her presence, in a sense, symbolized the dynastic and long-term intentions of North Korea's regime. It also hinted at how tightly North Korea aligns with China: Kim effectively showcased his heir-apparent on Chinese soil, perhaps to confer a degree of legitimacy and Chinese goodwill on his family's future. For Kim, who has never before attended such a large multilateral gathering, the Beijing parade was an opportunity to broaden his diplomatic exposure and gain “implicit support” from powerful friends for his banned nuclear weapons program. Just before heading to China, Kim even visited a missile factory, a not-so-subtle reminder of North Korea's nuclear status as he prepared to stand beside Xi and Putin.

Western observers have described the trio's meeting in Beijing as having shades of a *de facto* new alliance. Ana-

BEIJING PARADE SHOW: NEW POWER OPTICS

Unprecedented Xi–Putin–Kim tableau, with Kim Ju Ae's debut and “immortality” hot-mic stealing the show.



Chinese peacekeepers in UN blue debut at the National Day parade. X post/ @XHNNews

lysts note that until a few years ago, China and Russia had cooperated with the West to sanction North Korea over its nuclear tests – but now all three appear aligned in mutual support. In a startling sign of that shift, North Korea has reportedly sent more than 15,000 troops to bolster Russia's war in Ukraine, with hundreds killed in action on the Russian side. (Pyongyang's military aid to Moscow marks a 180-degree turn from its past dependence on Chinese and Soviet aid, and it underscores how shared conflicts with the West are knitting these countries together.) For Beijing's part, inviting Kim and Putin to jointly attend its Victory Day parade – and literally walk shoulder-to-shoulder with Xi – was a powerful statement. “Any new concentration of military power in the East that includes Russia will ring alarm bells for the West,” one analyst observed, adding that trilateral military exercises between China, Russia and North Korea now “seem nearly inevitable.” The spectacle of unity in Beijing suggests that Xi is willing to flout Western opinion to build an “anti-hegemonic” front, as he urged global leaders just days prior to “take a clear stand against hegemonism and power politics.” This phrasing is widely read as a rebuke of U.S. dominance.

INDIA'S DELICATE DISTANCE

Notably absent from Beijing's commemorations was one major Asian leader: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Modi did travel to China earlier in the week for a Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Tianjin, where, in a somewhat surreal scene, he was photographed smiling and even holding hands with Xi and Putin in a show of diplomatic camaraderie. But when it came to the Victory Day parade in Beijing, India pointedly opted out.

According to Indian officials, New Delhi saw the event as celebrating China's victory over Japan and declined to attend “out of consideration for Tokyo”. Japan is a close strategic partner for India (both are members of the “Quad” security dialogue alongside the US and Australia), and appearing at a Chinese military parade showcasing triumph over Japan would have been awkward for Modi. The Indian leader, fresh off a warm visit to Japan days earlier, chose to skip Beijing's parade entirely.

Behind this diplomatic snub lies the simmering distrust between India and China. Bilateral ties have been strained by a deadly border clash in 2020 and ongoing troop standoffs in the Himalayas. While Chinese state media hinted at improving relations, Modi's no-show underscored the “deep divergence” in how the two Asian giants view history and the future regional order. India also bristled at the anti-West tenor of the SCO gathering. Many leaders at the summit (convened by China and Russia) voiced opposition to U.S. President Donald Trump's protectionist policies. Modi's government, facing its own trade frictions with Washington, seemed unwilling to fully align with either side's narrative. In effect, India is walking a tightrope – cooperating with China and Russia in formats like the SCO and BRICS, but keeping enough distance to avoid undermining its partnerships with the U.S., Japan, and other democracies. Skipping China's grand parade was a subtle way for Modi to signal that India isn't signing up for any new Cold War-style bloc, even as Xi, Putin, and Kim put on a united front.

‘NO LIMITS’ PARTNERS: DEALS AND DEFIANCE

For Xi and Putin, the pa-



Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, stand atop the Tiananmen gate in Beijing on Sept. 3, 2025, as they observe a massive military parade celebrating the 80th anniversary of China's victory over Japan and the end of WWII. (Kyodo/Yonhap)



Kim Jong Un's; the North Korean ruler rarely travels abroad, but he made an exception for this event, bringing along his young daughter, Kim Ju Ae. X post

rade was not just about retro WWII memories – it doubled as a platform to deepen their present-day strategic partnership. On the sidelines of the event (and the SCO meetings), China and Russia inked a slew of agreements, reinforcing what they famously call their “no limits” friendship. Most headline-grabbing was a “legally binding” deal to move forward with the Power of Siberia 2 gas pipeline from Russia to China. This colossal pipeline, which would snake through Mongolia and potentially supply 50 billion cubic meters of gas annually, could re-route a significant chunk of the gas Russia once sold to Europe into China's eager market. Gazprom's chief announced that, in addition to the new pipeline memorandum, Russia will boost gas supplies immediately via the existing Siberia pipeline (up to 44 bcm a year). As one energy analyst put it, these moves are a “huge turning point in the geopolitics of energy” – a clear sign that Beijing no longer pretends to heed Western sanctions or censure of Moscow. Indeed, China's tacit message, in building out energy links and trade with sanctioned Russia, is that it “can resist Western pressure to isolate Moscow”.

Both Xi and Putin are visibly positioning their countries for a new era of East-West rivalry. They frequently invoke historical slights – from the “century of humiliation” by colonial powers in China's case to the post-Cold War NATO expansion in Russia's – to justify closer ranks. “The world is entering a new era with the West in decline,” is the shared narrative from Beijing and Moscow. In Beijing, Putin hailed the

relationship with China as being at an “unprecedentedly high” level, emphasizing trust and cooperation in the face of common challenges. The Kremlin noted 22 different agreements were signed during Putin's China visit, spanning energy, finance, technology and more, further intertwining the two economies. Such open coziness is a direct rebuke to Western nations that have tried to isolate Putin for his war in Ukraine. Xi's “old friend” welcome and the pomp accorded to Putin in Beijing sent a clear signal: China will not distance itself from Moscow, Western opinions be damned. As if to drive that point home, Xi pointedly attended Moscow's own Victory Day parade in May this year – standing with Putin on Red Square – and in turn Putin came to Beijing's parade. The symmetry underscores how the two nuclear powers are bolstering each other's legitimacy on the world stage, forming what they view as a bulwark against U.S. “hegemonism.”

Interestingly, this tightening Sino-Russian embrace is playing out against the backdrop of Donald Trump's return to the White House. Trump has often argued that Western policies only pushed Beijing and Moscow closer together, and in some respects he isn't wrong. In fact, Putin remarked during his Beijing visit that he sees a “sincere desire” by Trump's current U.S. administration to help resolve the Ukraine conflict – a stark contrast to Putin's hostility toward the previous Biden administration. Speaking to reporters, Putin said he perceives “a certain light at the end of the tunnel” thanks to President Trump's efforts to find a settlement, and that he'd prefer to end the war via talks “if common sense prevails”. Nonetheless, Putin warned that if negotiations don't bear fruit, “we will have to resolve all the tasks before us by force of arms.” It was an apocalyptic ultimatum: peace on Putin's terms, or a continued war. The venue of this statement – Beijing, at the tail end of the grand parade events – was symbolic. Standing on friendly soil far from Western scrutiny, Putin essentially doubled down on his war aims while enjoying Chi-

na's implicit backing. Xi, for his part, has balanced on a tightrope regarding Ukraine, calling for peace talks in abstract while never condemning Russia. The Victory Day event reinforced that China's “pro-peace” stance doesn't include pressuring its Russian partner. Instead, Putin and Xi presented a united front. They even indulged in some personal banter that caught observers off guard – and perhaps offered a glimpse into the mindset of two leaders determined to hold power for a long time.

THE IMMORTALITY CHAT AND OTHER CURIOSITIES

Amid the highly choreographed pomp, one unscripted moment from the parade garnered nearly as much buzz as the weapons on display. As Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin walked side by side (with Kim Jong Un trailing just behind) toward the viewing platform, a hot mic picked up snippets of their conversation. Incredibly, the two men were chatting about organ transplants and human longevity. Putin's interpreter was heard enthusing in Chinese about advances in biotechnology: “Human organs can be continuously transplanted... The longer you live, the younger you become, and you can even achieve immortality,” the translator relayed. Xi, off-camera, replied matter-of-factly: “Some predict that in this century humans may live to 150 years old.” Kim Jong Un, walking alongside them, smiled in apparent fascination – though it's unclear if their remarks were translated for him. The surreal exchange, captured on state TV's livestream before engineers quickly drowned out the audio, went viral. After the parade, Putin confirmed to reporters that he and Xi had indeed discussed “modern means of health improvement” and organ replacements that might extend life “differently than it does today.”

The darkly comic “immortality” talk spurred quips that these autocrats plan to rule forever – or at least long enough to see a reshaped world order. It's true that Xi (age 72) and Putin (also 72) have both amended rules to cling to power indefinitely, and neither shows any intention of grooming a successor. Kim, much younger at 41, has decades ahead of him – and even a successor-in-waiting already intro-

duced to the world. The fact that these leaders casually mused about living to 150 while showcasing nuclear missiles is a telling sign of their ambitions. Domestically, they project themselves as fathers of their nations' rejuvenation, indispensably guiding their countries through a perilous era. If science can help them cheat time, all the better. Assatirical commentary in one outlet put it, maybe Xi and Putin really are “onto something” with organ transplants for immortality – at least in the metaphorical sense of extending their regimes' longevity.

Another curious subplot was the shadow of Donald Trump looming over the event. Trump has often bragged of his personal rapport with Xi, Putin, and Kim – referring to Xi as a great friend, calling Putin “smart,” and famously claiming he and Kim “fell in love” over letters. Now all three of Trump's one-time acquaintances were bonding visibly without him. Some U.S. analysts noted that this Beijing summit of strongmen was a blow to Trump's ego, given that he had touted his unique ability to broker peace with each of them. In a bit of irony, Trump himself had long been enamored with military parades. After watching France's Bastille Day march in 2017, he was so impressed that he pushed for a grand parade down Pennsylvania Avenue, saying “we may have to try that in Washington”. Now, as U.S. President again in 2025, Trump finally got his wish – a military extravaganza in D.C. coinciding with July 4 and the U.S. Army's 250th anniversary. Yet even that celebration, replete with tanks on the National Mall, didn't carry the geopolitical heft of Beijing's Victory Day show. One of Trump's own former officials grudgingly remarked that Western missteps had “pushed Moscow and Beijing closer”, leading to scenes like Tiananmen Square where America was pointedly not missed. Indeed, Xi's speech at the parade warned that humanity faces a choice of “peace or war, dialogue or confrontation, and win-win outcomes or zero-sum games.” To Beijing, Washington's alliances and actions represent the latter – hegemonic, confrontation, zero-sum – whereas China and its friends claim to offer a more peaceful, multipolar vision.

THE SILENCE OF KEOLADEO'S FOREST LODGE



PRAKASH CHANDRA SHARMA

Rajasthan's only forest lodge built in the world famous Keoladeo (Ghana) Bird Sanctuary located in Bharatpur, which is called the Lion Gate of Rajasthan, is now losing its identity due to mismanagement. This sanctuary marked on the world map is home to both native birds and foreign birds. If we leave aside the restrictions of the Corona period, there has been a good influx of domestic and foreign tourists, but the forest lodge built in the middle of this sanctuary 49 years ago for special government guests is no longer the same old thing.

This forest lodge was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 7 February 1976. The special thing is that at that time the Prime Minister of the country stayed in this lodge for 2 nights with her two sons and daughters-in-law. The witness of this is the visitors' book of the lodge in which signatures and comments of Indira Gandhi as well as Rajiv Gandhi, his wife Sonia Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi and his wife Maneka Gandhi are still recorded. Perhaps it will be called a misfortune

that Rajiv Gandhi, who became the Prime Minister after the death of Indira Gandhi, stayed in this lodge on 7 May 1991, just 15 days before his death in a terrorist incident.

This attractive lodge, which was under the operation of the Indian Tourism Development Corporation (Ashoka Group) from 1976 to 2017, has been stayed by not only national but also foreign celebrities. Prince Charles of Britain, who came to India on 28 November 1980, not only stayed overnight in this lodge but also planted a Kadamba tree as a memento, which today is providing shade to tourists and nest to birds in the form of a lush green tree. Former Chief Minister of Rajasthan Haridev Joshi, Shivcharan Mathur and former Governor of the state Omprakash Mehra have also enjoyed the chirping of birds in this bird sanctuary as well as the pleasure of superb hospitality in this lodge.

Along with this, the Prince of Holland and the Prince of Japan have also stayed overnight in this attractive lodge. Although BJP's national leader Lal Krishna Advani also stayed here when he came to visit this sanctuary, but after reading what former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee has written in the visitors' book about the efficient management of this lodge, there is nothing left to say about the attraction of the lodge. Vajpayee, who stayed at the lodge on 22 January 1986, wrote: "I suddenly got an opportuni-



ty to come here after almost 8 years. The world of birds is unique. Be it Russia or China, but attracted by the hospitality of India, birds come here regularly. If humans can also roam freely like birds, then the dream of the sages to make the world their nest will come true. I was happy to stay at the Forest Lodge. The management is excellent,

the officers are dutiful, the employees are loyal. Congratulations"- Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Undoubtedly, neither any tourist nor any domestic or foreign personality had ever raised any question about the management of this lodge which was under the operation of the Indian Tourism Development Corporation from 1976 to 2017,



but ever since the responsibility of operating this lodge came on the shoulders of Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation, its management started faltering.

In this lodge, 18 air-conditioned rooms with ultra-modern facilities have been built for the stay of tourists. The dining hall of this lodge has the capacity to feed 60 people at a time. Vegetarian and non-vegetarian food is available till 9 pm. At present, 6 permanent employees are working in this lodge while 9 employees are employed on contract basis. The walls of this lodge,

built 49 years ago, are the same but due to lack of maintenance and regular painting, the lodge looks discolored. The appearance of the curtains hanging at various places in the lodge tells that they are not even washed. The charm that was earlier visible in the rooms built for stay has now almost died. Forget about changing the mattresses of the beds, the sheets laid out are seen crying for washing. It will not be an exaggeration to say that the management which former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had described as excellent in the visitors' book has now become inferior. The interesting thing is that the former Maharaja of Bharatpur and former Tourism Minister of Rajasthan Government Vishvendra Singh did not even show any special interest in the poor condition of this lodge which has made its unique identity on the world map.

Some employees of the sanctuary told me the truth that the Divisional Commissioner and District Collectors residing in Bharatpur did not even deem it fit to know the condition of this lodge which is shedding tears of misery.

Perhaps this is the reason that the condition of this forest lodge which has been attracting domestic and foreign celebrities with its management for the last four and a half decades is now like "the blind grinds and the dog eats".

The author is a senior freelance journalist

The power of looking back - Old photos of Rajasthan as heritage

TDG NETWORK

Rajasthan, the land of palaces, forts, deserts, and vibrant cultural traditions, has always been a photographer's dream. But beyond the aesthetic appeal, photographs of Rajasthan—especially old and archival ones—hold a deeper significance. They are more than just visuals; they are living documents of the state's heritage, cultural evolution, and socio-political transformation.

From the dusty archives of royal courts to old albums passed down through generations, early photographs of Rajasthan tell stories of a time that feels almost mythical today. These frames capture not only the grandeur of Rajputana architecture but also the subtleties of daily life—the clothes people wore, the unpaved roads they walked on, the rituals they followed, and the expressions they held.

PHOTOGRAPHY AS AN ARCHIVE OF IDENTITY

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, when photography was still a novelty, it found eager patrons in Rajasthan's royal families. Kings and nobles, fascinated by this new form of art and documentation, commissioned photographers to record everything—from majestic palaces and formal portraits to festive processions and everyday life within the walled cities. These photographs were not just vanity projects—they became a means of preserving cultural memory in a changing world.

Unlike paintings or oral history, photographs gave a sense of realism. They showed dust on the roads, cracks in the forts, shadows cast by ancient pillars, and

the vibrant chaos of street markets. They preserved the texture of life—a reality untouched by imagination or stylization.

THE VISUAL LANDSCAPE OF CHANGE

When one compares these early photographs to the present-day visuals of the same locations, the transformation is striking. Narrow lanes that once saw camel carts and barefooted vendors are now crowded with vehicles and wires. Serene courtyards that once echoed with folk music now buzz with tourist chatter and mobile cameras. The majestic facades remain, but the rhythm of life around them has dramatically shifted.

Old images of places like Jaipur's Badi Chaupar or Udaipur's Ghats reveal quieter times—when space was respected, and silence was a presence. The grandeur of palaces wasn't obscured by billboards or traffic. Even modest homes carried ornate doors and hand-carved windows, speaking of a time when craftsmanship and community defined aesthetics.

Today, while much of the architecture still stands, it's often surrounded by layers of commercial clutter. Development has come at a price—the loss of architectural purity, the encroachment on historical sites, and the fading away of oral traditions that once gave depth to these visual records.

REVIVING MEMORY THROUGH THE LENS

Many modern-day photographers and artists are now revisiting these old images—not just for nostalgia, but to understand and interpret heritage in the current context. Some recreate



the same frame from the same angle to show "then vs. now." Others juxtapose traditional elements with modern symbols to comment on cultural continuity or disruption.

These efforts aren't simply artistic—they are part

of a larger movement to document heritage before it disappears. As towns modernize and villages urbanize, traditional crafts, rituals, and ways of life are vanishing quietly. Photography becomes a tool to pause time and pay attention.

In some cases, early black-and-white photographs have even been hand-coloured or digitally enhanced, breathing new life into fading visuals. The process of restoration itself becomes a dialogue between generations—one that encourages viewers to reflect not only on what has changed, but what must be preserved.



PHOTOGRAPHS AS TOOLS OF HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Photographs have also played an instrumental role in heritage conservation efforts across Rajasthan. Old images serve as references for restoring havelis, temples, and public buildings to their original design. The intricate jharokhas, painted ceilings, and mosaic floors of old buildings are often lost or damaged—but photographs help artisans reconstruct them faithfully.

For instance, many palace museums across Rajasthan use early photographs to curate exhibits, restore dress styles, or even revive

lost practices. Photographs of ceremonial processions, religious rituals, or royal attire have helped bring back traditional festivals and community events in their authentic form.

Moreover, educational institutions and cultural organizations increasingly use vintage images to teach history—not through textbooks, but through visual storytelling. When students see images of how their city looked 100 years ago, history becomes more tangible and personal.

PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE DIGITAL AGE: PRESERVING OR

DILUTING HERITAGE?

With the advent of smartphones and social media, Rajasthan continues to be photographed more than ever before. Every corner of a fort, every street mural, every bowl of dal baati can now be found online. But with this democratization of photography comes a new challenge: depth is often lost to aesthetics.

While some photographers dive deep into documenting disappearing traditions, others focus only on curated visuals for travel blogs or social platforms. The heritage becomes a backdrop—a prop—rather than a living, breathing

subject. There is a risk that old photographs, full of quiet dignity and historical depth, are being replaced by quick snapshots and commercialized versions of culture.

Still, the legacy of old photographs continues to inspire, reminding new generations that every image carries a responsibility—to respect what it captures, and to preserve what it represents.

Old photographs of Rajasthan are not just frames of the past—they are mirrors to our present and warnings for our future. They reveal how far we have come, and what we may be leaving behind. Through them, we see a Rajasthan where life was slower, architecture was sacred, and culture wasn't consumed—it was lived.

As we continue to build the future, these images urge us to pause, reflect, and ensure that development does not come at the cost of memory. For in every grainy portrait, in every fading skyline, lies the spirit of Rajasthan—a heritage too rich to be forgotten.

The current generation is also trying hard to keep the legacy alive by showcasing the photographs of the rich culture, heritage, flora fauna and wildlife of the state. One such attempt is the Nazar exhibition where photographers from all over the world gather to project the beauty they capture through lenses. Every Year the curator of the exhibition Sanjay Kumawat brings life to a lot of old memories and gives a platform to the people who want to keep this tradition alive. Rajasthan's biggest photography exhibition showcases over 680 photos by 362 talented photographers across the state.

UAE WARNS AGAINST ISRAELI ANNEXATION OF WEST BANK

Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip overnight and into Wednesday killed at least 31 people

AGENCIES
DEIR AL-BALAH

The United Arab Emirates on Wednesday warned that any Israeli move to annex the occupied West Bank would be a “red line,” without specifying its possible impact on the landmark normalization accord between the two countries.

The warning came as Israel pressed ahead with the initial stages of its latest major offensive, in famine-stricken Gaza City. Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip overnight and into Wednesday killed at least 31 people, according to local hospitals.

Israelis took part in nationwide demonstrations to protest the call-up of 60,000 reserves for the expanded operation, which has sparked global condemnation and left the country increasingly isolated.

The demonstrators accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of prolonging the fighting for political purposes instead of reaching



Representative photo

a ceasefire deal with Hamas that would free hostages taken in the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that ignited the war.

The UAE was the driving force behind the 2020 Abraham Accords brokered by U.S. President Donald Trump, in which it and three other Arab countries forged ties with Israel. Trump has said he hopes to expand the accords in his second term, potentially to include regional power Saudi Arabia.

Anwar Gargash, a senior Emirati diplomat, wrote on the social platform X that “annexation is a red line.”

He linked to a Times of

Israel story that quoted another Emirati diplomat, Lana Nusseibeh, as saying annexation would “severely undermine the vision and spirit of (Abraham) Accords, end the pursuit of regional integration and would alter the widely shared consensus on what the trajectory of this conflict should be -- two states living side by side in peace, prosperity and security.”

It was unclear what action, if any, the UAE might take, and the Emirati Foreign Ministry did not respond to questions seeking clarification.

Yemen’s Houthi rebels target ship in Red Sea

DUBAI: A suspected attack by Yemen’s Houthi rebels targeted a ship in the Red Sea on Thursday, officials said, as the militants increase their missile fire targeting Israel.

The attack off the coast of Hodeida follows an Israeli strike last week that killed the rebels’ prime minister along with several officials. The Houthis have been using cluster munitions in the missile attacks on Israel — which open up with smaller explosives that can be harder to intercept, raising the chances of strikes as Israel prepares for a new ground offensive in its war on Hamas that’s decimated the Gaza Strip.

The attack Thursday saw an “unknown projectile” land off the side of a vessel as electronic interference

was particularly intense, the British military’s United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said. It added that the ship and crew were safe after the apparent assault.

The private maritime security firm Ambrey also acknowledged the apparent attack, as did the firm EOS Risk Group, which noted the Houthis have launched multiple missile attacks targeting Israel in recent days as well.

“The current tempo reflects a clear escalation, shifting from sporadic launches to multiple daily attempts,” said Martin Kelly of EOS Risk Group.

The Houthis did not immediately claim the apparent attack, though it can take hours or even days for them to acknowledge their assaults.

‘If Zelenskyy is ready, he can come to Moscow’: Putin

AGENCIES
BEIJING

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday (local time) expressed his openness to meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, suggesting that such a meeting could take place in Moscow, provided that the meeting is well-prepared and aimed at producing a constructive outcome.

During a press briefing following his four-day visit to China, Putin emphasised the possibility of dialogue amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict, reiterating that he has “never ruled out” such a meeting, but stressed it must be in line with Ukraine’s constitutional framework.

“I’ve already said that I’ve never ruled out such a meeting, but whether this can be meaningful in accordance with the Ukrainian constitution... It is possible; I never rule this out. If the meeting is well prepared and if it leads to a positive potential outcome, it is possible. And by the way, Donald (Trump) asked me if it’s possible to have such a meeting, and I said that it is. After all, if Zelenskyy is ready, he can come to Moscow. This is quite possible,” he stated.



Russian President Vladimir Putin

The Russian president also weighed in on Ukraine’s right to sovereignty, including its freedom to choose its own security arrangements. However, he added a significant caveat, arguing that “no country can ensure its security at the expense of another country, such as Russia.”

Putin also repeated Moscow’s longstanding objection to Ukraine’s potential NATO membership, calling it a direct threat to Russian national interests, while showing less resistance to Ukraine’s European Union ambitions.

“I concur with those who say that every country has the right to choose how to ensure its security, and it’s

true for every country, including Ukraine. But it also means that no country can ensure its security at the expense of another country, such as Russia. We always opposed the idea of Ukraine becoming a member of the North Atlantic Alliance, but we never doubted its right to engage in its economic activities in any way it likes, and that includes EU membership,” he stated.

Following his remark, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Andrii Sybiha, slammed the Russian President, accusing him of not accepting proposals given by “at least seven countries” to host the talks, while calling his proposal “knowingly unacceptable.”

“Right now, at least seven countries are ready to host a meeting between leaders of Ukraine and Russia to bring an end to the war. Austria, the Holy See, Switzerland, Türkiye, and three Gulf states. These are serious proposals and President Zelenskyy is ready for such a meeting at any point of time. Yet, Putin continues to mess around with everyone by making knowingly unacceptable proposals.

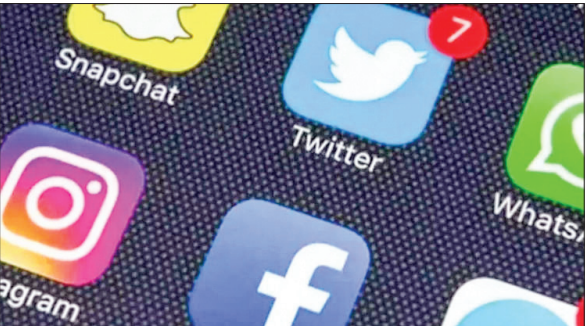
Nepal orders ban on social media platforms including Fb, Insta, X

AGENCIES
KATHMANDU

The Government of Nepal on Thursday decided to block 26 social media platforms for operating without registration.

The meeting held on Thursday, attended by Communication and Information Technology Minister Prithivi Subba Gurung, ministry officials, representatives from the Nepal Telecommunication Authority, telecom operators and internet service providers, made the decision.

According to ministry officials, all unregistered platforms will be restricted with immediate effect. The Ministry has already begun issuing letters to the concerned companies. The government had set a sev-



Representative photo

en-day deadline for mandatory registration, which expired on Wednesday past midnight.

However, major social media platforms such as Meta (Facebook, Alphabet, X, Reddit, and LinkedIn have not yet contacted the Ministry regarding the process.

Officials had earlier warned that platforms failing to comply would face a gradual suspension of

their services in Nepal. Currently, platforms such as Viber, TikTok, Wetalk and Nimbuzz are registered, while Telegram and Global Diary are in the process. Widely used platforms like Facebook, Twitter (X), and WhatsApp have yet to initiate registration. This move follows a Supreme Court order and a recent ministerial meeting led by Communications Minister Prithvi Subba Gurung.

Bangladesh bans war crimes suspects from fighting elections

AGENCIES
DHAKA

Bangladesh’s interim government on Thursday said it has incorporated a new clause in the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act 1973 to disqualify a candidate from contesting an election if a chargesheet is filed against the person for committing crimes against humanity.

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus’s press secretary, Shafiqul Alam, said the new clause was included to prevent anyone formally charged under the law from contesting parliamentary elections or remaining in or applying for government jobs. “According to the newly added section, if a person is formally charged under Section 9 (1) of the said law, they

will be disqualified from being elected or continuing as a Member of Parliament,” Alam said.

He said a new provision, Section 20C, has been added to the International Crimes Tribunal Act. According to the provision, anyone against whom a formal charge sheet is filed under the Act will be disqualified from being elected or remaining a member of parliament. The same restriction applies to holding or contesting positions in local government bodies—including member, commissioner, chairman, mayor, or administrator. Such individuals will also be barred from receiving appointments or employment in the service of the republic or in any other institution.

Sudan’s latest tragedy counts a village wiped out by a landslide

AGENCIES
CAIRO

A devastating landslide that killed an estimated 1,000 people in Sudan’s Darfur region struck as the northeastern African nation reels from a civil war that pushed some of its parts into famine.

The nation of over 50 million people has a long history of conflicts, including the one that created South Sudan in 2011. It’s also known for its seasonal flooding that kills hundreds of people every year. Climate change has made the rainfall and flooding more deadly and destructive in recent years.

After days of heavy rainfall, a landslide on Sunday wiped out the village of Tarasin in the Marrah Mountains area, more than 900 kilometers (560 miles) west of the capital,



landslide wiped out an entire village

Khartoum. At least 1,000 people were killed, and only one of the residents survived, according to the Sudan Liberation Movement-Army, a rebel group that controls the area.

The group’s spokesman Mohamed Abdel-Rahman al-Nair said search efforts were underway and that about 100 bodies were recovered as of Tuesday evening. The U.N. humanitarian coordinator

in Sudan, Luca Renda, said “between 300-1,000 people may have lost their lives,” citing local sources. Marrah Mountains, where the village is located, are hard to reach. The UNESCO World Heritage site is located in a volcanic area with a summit of 3,000 meters (9,840 feet). The landslide happened in the peak of Sudan’s flooding season, which runs from July to October.

4 Baloch students abducted from Sindh Agriculture University hostel

AGENCIES
BALOCHISTAN

In a troubling incident, four Baloch students were allegedly forcibly disappeared by Pakistani security forces from the hostel of Sindh Agriculture University, Tando Jam, Hyderabad, on Wednesday, as reported by The Balochistan Post..

The group was taken to an undisclosed location, and their whereabouts remain unknown.



Abducted students

According to The Balochistan Post, the men entered the hostel premises and detained the students, who had recently arrived in Tando Jam for academic

purposes in the Agriculture Department. The sudden abduction has sparked deep concern among the student community.

The missing youths have

been identified as Imran, son of Saifullah; Aftab, son of Ghulam Mustafa; and Mehrullah, son of Muhammad Qasim, all hailing from Wadh in Khuzdar district, as well as Shoaib, son of Abdul Hayee, a resident of Surab. Families of the students have reportedly received no official information regarding their detention or location, as reported by The Balochistan Post.

4.8 magnitude quake strikes Afghanistan again

AGENCIES
KABUL

An earthquake of magnitude 4.8 struck Afghanistan again on Thursday, a statement by the National Center for Seismology (NCS) said.

As per the statement, the earthquake struck at a depth of 135km.

In a post on X, the NCS said, “EQ of M: 4.8, On: 04/09/2025 10:40:56 IST, Lat: 34.38 N, Long: 70.37 E, Depth: 135 Km, Location: Afghanistan.” Earlier, an earthquake struck Afghanistan late Wednesday night at a shallow



Representative photo

depth of 10km, making it susceptible to aftershocks. In a post on X, NCS said, “EQ of M: 4.3, On: 03/09/2025 23:53:44 IST, Lat: 36.86 N, Long: 71.18 E, Depth: 10 Km, Location:

Afghanistan.”

Shallow earthquakes are generally more dangerous than deep earthquakes. This is because the seismic waves from shallow earthquakes

US approves \$32.5 million to Nigeria to help address hunger

AGENCIES
ABUJA

The United States has approved \$32.5 million in assistance to Nigeria to help address hunger, in a rare shift in U.S. foreign policy since President Donald Trump suspended most aid through the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The funding will provide food assistance and nutritional support to internally displaced people in conflict-affected areas, the U.S. mission to Nigeria said in a statement Wednesday.

Insecurity and funding cuts have put northern Ni-



A malnourished child receives treatment at the Intersos facility, in Maiduguri, northeastern Nigeria

geria in the grip of “an unprecedented hunger crisis” that could leave more than

1.3 million people without food and force the closure of 150 nutrition clinics in

Borno state, Margot van der Velden, the World Food Program’s regional director for West Africa, said in July.

In July, the WFP suspended food assistance across crisis-hit West and Central African countries as a result of U.S. and other global aid cuts that are grinding its operations to a halt.

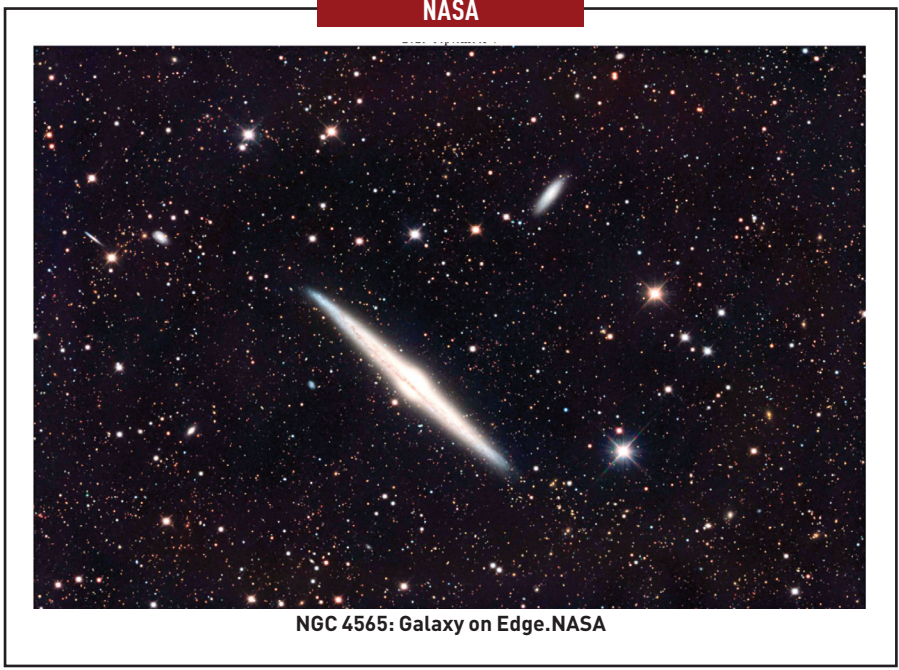
Food stocks were projected to end around September for most of the affected countries, leaving millions of vulnerable people potentially without emergency aid, according to the WFP.

The U.S. mission said the donation would provide

food and nutrition assistance to 764,205 beneficiaries across north-east and northwest of Africa’s most populous country.

“This includes complementary nutrition top-ups for 41,569 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls and 43,235 children through electronic food vouchers,” it said.

In recent months, there has been an uptick in attacks on communities in the northwest and north-central regions of Africa’s most populous country, where farmers often clash over limited access to land and water.



US REAFFIRMS TROOPS' PRESENCE IN POLAND

Trump threatens phase-3 sanctions roll out

US-Poland defense ties spotlighted in Washington.

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday reaffirmed a robust US military presence in Poland during a meeting with Polish President Karol Nawrocki at the White House, amid rising concerns over the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, Euro News reported.

Trump, who had endorsed Nawrocki during Poland's presidential election earlier this year, said, "We'll be staying in Poland. We're very much aligned with Poland," adding, "We'll put more there if they want."

During the meeting, Nawrocki thanked Trump for his support and highlighted the strong bonds between Poland and the United States. He said, "Those relations for me, for Poland, for Poles, are very important," adding



Trump meets President Nawrocki at White House, Washington D.C., Wednesday.

At White House, Trump pledges continued U.S. forces in Poland; F-16s honor fallen Polish pilot, underscoring alliance.

that these ties are based on shared values of independence and democracy, Euro News reported.

Trump lauded Nawrocki's electoral victory, noting, "It was a pretty tough race, pretty nasty race, and he beat them all. And he beat them all very easily, and now he's become even more popular as

they got to know him and know him better."

The visit comes as Trump continues to express frustration over his inability to bring Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to the negotiating table to end the war.

"Maybe they have to fight a little longer," Trump told

the conservative Daily Caller. "You know, just keep fighting -- stupidly, keep fighting," Euro News reported.

Last month, Trump met with both Putin in Alaska and Zelenskyy alongside several European leaders at the White House. While Putin expressed willingness to meet Zelenskyy in Moscow, Kyiv swiftly rejected the proposal, Euro News added.

The White House engagement also included a display of US military strength, with F-16 jets flying in a missing man formation over the South Lawn as a tribute to Polish Air Force pilot Major Maciej "Slab" Krakowian, who died in a crash in Poland on August 28. Nawrocki expressed gratitude for the gesture, saying, "Thank you for this gesture."

Trump previously emphasized closer military ties with Poland, hosting Nawrocki at the White

House before the election and promising support to ensure Poland could "fight off enemies that do not share your values," Euro News reported.

Currently, approximately 8,200 US troops are stationed in Poland, though Pentagon officials note that troop levels fluctuate. While some advisers favor shifting US forces to the Indo-Pacific, Trump reaffirmed continued commitment to Europe, describing the US-Polish relationship as "better than ever."

Nawrocki, backed by the conservative Law and Justice party, has tense relations with Prime Minister Donald Tusk's government but promises to maintain support for Ukraine. He has criticized Zelenskyy and expressed concerns over Ukrainian refugees taking advantage of Poland's social services, prioritizing Polish citizens for health-care and schooling.

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, DC

President Donald Trump on Wednesday warned that the United States has not yet rolled out "Phase-2" and "Phase-3" tariffs against countries continuing trade ties with Russia. He called secondary sanctions on India a direct action against Russia, as "that cost hundreds of billions of dollars to Russia".

He said this when being asked about why he has taken no action against Russia after he assumed the Oval Office in January this year.

He also called India the largest buyer of Russian oil after China, indicating that New Delhi could face further penalties if it continues energy imports from Moscow.

While the US has temporarily suspended additional tariffs on China until November, India has been hit with steep levies. A 25 per cent tariff was imposed ear-

At White House presser, Trump warns Phase-2/3 tariffs, frames India secondary sanctions as direct action undermining Russia's oil revenues.

lier this month, and an additional 25 per cent secondary sanction took effect on August 27, bringing the total to 50 per cent on Indian goods.

Trump further mentioned that these steps amounted to direct action against Russia, as they target its oil exports through major buyers.

"Would you say that by putting secondary sanctions on India, the largest purchaser outside China, they are almost equal. Would you say there was no action? That cost hundreds of billions of dollars to Russia, you call that no action? I haven't done Phase-2 yet or Phase-3," Trump told reporters during a joint press conference with the Polish President at the White

House.

The US president recalled his earlier warning that India would face "big problems" if it continued Russian oil purchases. "Two weeks ago, I said if India buys, India will have big problems, and that's what will happen," Trump added.

Earlier, in a separate interview, Trump claimed that New Delhi has offered him a "no tariff" deal following Washington's decision to raise duties on Indian goods. Speaking on The Scott Jennings Radio Show, he said, "India was the most highly tariffed nation in the world, and you know what, they've offered me no tariffs in India anymore. If I didn't have tariffs, they would never make that offer."

UC-Berkeley professor flags risks in US-South Korea agreement

AGENCIES
CALIFORNIA

Maurice Obstfeld, a renowned economist and professor emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley, has expressed concerns over "uncertainties surrounding" the South Korea-US trade agreement, announced in July 2025, under which South Korean goods will be subject to a 15 per cent tariff, while US exports will not face duties, as per the Maeil Business Newspaper. While addressing a press conference on Wednesday, during his visit to Korea for the 2025 G20 Global Financial Stability Conference, he said, "What is concerning is that there can be very different interpretations of the agreement between Korea and the United States." "Details such as the structure of profit-sharing and who will be responsible for investment have not been spelled out," he added. Obstfeld, who has held prominent positions



Maurice Obstfeld warns on US-Korea tariffs, G20, South Korea, Wednesday.

such as chief economist at the International Monetary Fund and a member of the White House Council of Economic Advisers under President Barack Obama, noted that Washington, DC, will likely "make new demands if the trade situation does not improve." Obstfeld also highlighted the difference in negotiation approaches between the past and present US administrations,

Maeil Business Newspaper reported. "During Donald Trump's first term, negotiations were conducted in a reliable way thanks to US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer," he said. "But this time it was not the case. Washington will likely make new demands if the trade situation does not improve to the level it wants on a monthly or quarterly basis." As for potential new US demands, Obstfeld pointed to exchange rates. "While America's high-tariff policy drives down the value of the Korean won, the US wants the won to appreciate," he said. "However, a Mar-a-Lago-style agreement to forcibly push up the won will not happen." According to Maeil Business Newspaper, Obstfeld emphasises the importance of maintaining healthy trade relations with China, stating, "China is a hugely important trade partner for Korea, and if trade relations with China sour, the Korean economy will pay a high price."

Russia denies GPS jamming allegations

AGENCIES
MOSCOW

Russia has strongly rejected claims that it attempted to jam the GPS system of a plane carrying European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

At a press briefing on Thursday, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova called the allegations "preposterous" and "100% false," RT reported.

Zakharova said Moscow will continue to combat "the West's web of lies" aimed at discrediting Russia on the world stage, suggesting the claims were intended to distract the public from "actual events," including problems in the EU's economy and the recent summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Tianjin, China, which concluded on Monday.

Zakharova cites Flightradar24 signal data; Bulgaria declines probe as von der Leyen visits Polish-Belarusian border with Tusk.

"It is not just paranoia, but a cynical plot to distract their own population from the EU's worsening economic situation and from considering the real culprits behind the European crisis - the irresponsible, kleptocratic political elites of the European Union," Zakharova said, RT reported.

She also pointed to data from the flight-tracking website Flightradar24, which indicated that von der Leyen's jet "reported good GPS signal quality from take-off to landing."

Bulgarian Prime Minister Rosen Zhelyazkov added on Tuesday that the incident would not be investigated,

stating that "these disturbances are neither hybrid nor cyber threats," according to RT.

Since 2024, Nordic and Baltic countries have accused Russia of disrupting communications on planes and ships as part of "hybrid warfare," allegations Russia has consistently denied.

Amid these claims, von der Leyen and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk arrived at the Polish-Belarusian border on Sunday, where they discussed defence and security, among other issues, highlighting continued EU focus on regional stability, Euro News reported.

Peru sentences ex-president Alejandro Toledo

AGENCIES
LIMA

A Peruvian court has sentenced former President Alejandro Toledo to 13 years and four months in prison for money laundering, his second conviction linked to widespread corruption, Al Jazeera reported.

Toledo, who served as president from 2001 to 2006, was found guilty of using bribe money from the Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht, now known as Novonor, to acquire high-value real estate.

According to prosecutors, Toledo and his wife used \$5.1 million to buy a house and an office in an upscale Lima neighbourhood and to pay off mortgages on two other properties. The funds were funnelled through an offshore company in Costa



Peru court convicts ex-president Alejandro Toledo in Lima on Wednesday.

Rica that Toledo created to launder the illicit cash, Al Jazeera reported.

Toledo's conviction on Wednesday follows a 20-year and six-month sentence handed down in October 2024, when he was found guilty of accepting up to \$35 million in bribes from Odebrecht in exchange for awarding the company lucrative public works contracts, Al Jazeera noted.

MK Stalin, UK sign six investment pacts

AGENCIES
LONDON

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, during his ongoing TN Rising Europe investment drive, met Catherine West, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Indo-Pacific) at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, to discuss opportunities for enhanced collaboration between Tamil Nadu and the United Kingdom.

The meeting focused on exploring deeper cooperation across a range of strategic areas, as part of efforts to strengthen ties and promote mutual growth between the Indian state and the UK.

During his London visit, CM Stalin also signed several Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), including with Wilson Power (Rs 300 crore investment) and Britannia RFID (Rs 520 crore investment).

On Wednesday, Tamil Nadu



MK Stalin meets Catherine West, London, Wednesday; Tamil Nadu-UK collaboration.

Chief Minister signed four more agreements with the University of Exeter, French design school Ecole Intuit Lab, Lloyd's List, and Rolls-Royce.

Sharing updates on X, Stalin called them "six strategic wins" for Tamil Nadu. He wrote, "Six strategic wins for Tamil Nadu in London today, powering growth, innovation and future readiness. Our agreements with Wilson Power and Britannia RFID will boost our renewable energy

industry and improve the competitiveness of exporters from Western Tamil Nadu."

He added that partnerships with the University of Exeter and the French design school Ecole Intuit Lab will empower the youth, while Lloyd's List will boost the state's presence in the shipping and maritime sector.

"We also facilitated partnerships with the University of Exeter and Ecole Intuit Lab that will empower our youth with niche capabilities.



Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness greets supporters while arriving at a polling station to cast his vote in the general election, in Kingston, Jamaica September 3, 2025. REUTERS

15 dead as Lisbon Funicular derails

AGENCIES
LISBON

At least 15 people were killed and 18 others injured on Wednesday evening (local time) when a historic funicular in Lisbon, the Elevador da Gloria, derailed and crashed, the New York Times reported, citing Portugal's health ministry.

Out of the 18 injured, five are in critical condition.

According to the New York Times, citing the Lisbon Firefighters Regiment, the incident occurred shortly after 6



Elevador da Gloria derailment kills 15, Mayor Moedas, Lisbon Wednesday.

pm (local time) when a cable reportedly snapped, causing the funicular to lose control and slam into a nearby build-

ing.

The Elevador da Gloria, a century-old cable railway built in 1885, is one of Lisbon's most

iconic transportation systems, linking Restauradores Square to the scenic Bairro Alto neighbourhood. Its two-car system climbs steep hills and serves both locals and the city's millions of annual tourists. Each tram can hold up to 42 passengers and is operated by Carris, Lisbon's public transport operator, as per the New York Times.

In a statement, Tiago Augusto, head of Portugal's health ministry, noted that the victims included both Portuguese citizens and foreigners, though nationalities had yet to

be confirmed.

No children were among the deceased, he added.

As per the New York Times, citing local news reports, both passengers aboard the derailed car and pedestrians nearby were among the casualties.

Although locals seldom use the Elevador da Gloria, it's a beloved symbol of Lisbon and a major tourist attraction, offering scenic rides through historic neighbourhoods.

By 8:30 pm (local time), all the injured had been transported to local hospitals.

NEETU KAPOOR REMEMBERS LATE RISHI KAPOOR ON BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Veteran actor Neetu Kapoor has paid a heartfelt tribute to her late husband, Rishi Kapoor, on his birth anniversary. On Thursday, Neetu posted on her Instagram handle and shared an old video of Rishi Kapoor from his popular stage show, 'Khullam Khulla with Rishi Kapoor. "You will always remain in our hearts, happy birthday," Neetu wrote in her caption.

The video features numerous memorable moments, capturing the late actor's witty stage presence. It also includes the reactions from the star-studded guests, including the likes of Ranbir Kapoor, Randhir Kapoor,



and Subhash Ghai.

Heaping praise on his father, the 'Animal' star said, "You know, a man who's

been in the industry for 40 years now and all the anecdotes and all his experiences and to share it with such a

large audience, I think it's a wonderful idea."

Neetu Kapoor could also be seen seated in the audience, laughing her heart out as Rishi Kapoor took centre-stage. Reacting to the post, fans as well as celebrities were seen remembering the late actor on his birth anniversary. Sanjay Kapoor wrote, "Happy birthday, Chintu. You will always be missed. So fortunate to work with you in luck by chance."

The star couple's daughter, Riddhima Kapoor Sahni, also took to her Instagram stories and paid a tribute to her father. "We celebrate you every day, Papa. You are loved, missed, and remembered-always. Happy Birthday. Love you..."

Celebs shower praise for Kalyani Priyadarshan's 'Lokah'

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt showered praise on Kalyani Priyadarshan's recent release 'Lokah Chapter 1: Chandra', calling it a fresh blend of "mythic folklore" and "mystery". 'Lokah' has emerged as a hit at the box office. It stars Kalyani and Naslen in the lead roles. Kalyani plays the role of a superhero in the movie. The film is produced under the banner of Dulquer Salmaan's production house Wayfarer Films.

The Malayalam film is set to release in Hindi to



day. Taking to her Instagram handle, Alia Bhatt expressed her happiness for the movie's release in Hindi. She wrote, "Such a fresh blend of mythic folklore & mystery! So happy to see the love it's getting,

This is a step in cinema that I will always be eager to show my love & support for!"

Bollywood star Akshay Kumar has extended his loudest cheer for Kalyani Priyadarshan's 'Lokah -- Chapter One: Chandra.' Ahead of the film's Hindi version release, Akshay Kumar took to his official social media handle and hailed Kalyani Priyadarshan's performance, further giving a nod to her father, filmmaker Priyadarshan.

"Talent runs in the family...suna thaa, ab dekh liya! Hearing lovely things about the

brilliant acting chops of @kalyanipriyan, Priyadarshan Sir's daughter. My best wishes to her and the entire team of #Lokah on their Hindi version release. More power," Akshay wrote on X.

Akshay Kumar and Priyadarshan have collaborated multiple times for superhit films like 'Hera Pheri', 'Garam Masala', 'Bhagam Bhag', and 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa'. Recently, the actor-filmmaker reunited for the horror comedy 'Bhooth Bangla,' marking their collaboration on the big screen after 15 years.

Diljit, Randeep Hooda extend support to Punjab flood victims

AGENCIES
GURDASPUR

Amidst Punjab dealing with severe floods due to heavy rain, singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh is showing his complete support for the affected families. He shared a video expressing his solidarity and concern for the people in the state and said that "we all stand" with them. Taking to his Instagram, he posted a video, saying, "... The situation in Punjab is very bad due to floods. People have lost their homes. Crops have been destroyed. Animals, cows, and buffalo have died. People's lives have been ruined. Punjab is wounded, but not defeated. Hum Punjab ki gond se uthe hai, Punjab ne hume gond liya hai aur humne Punjab ki gond mein hi marna hai (We have risen from the lap of Punjab. Punjab has adopted us. And we have to die in the lap of Punjab.)"

Diljit has adopted ten of the worst-hit villages in Gurdaspur and Amritsar to support relief efforts. Earlier, taking to Instagram, his team said they were focusing on essentials such



as food, water and medical aid, while also planning rehabilitation and long-term reconstruction. "Together, we can rebuild," the caption reads. Actor Randeep Hooda has stepped forward to support families affected by the floods in Gurdaspur. Punjab has been hit hard by devastating floods over the

past weeks, leaving thousands of families in several villages of the state. Among the areas affected, Gurdaspur is the most affected city in the state, as per the government of Punjab.

He has been associated with the Global Sikhs NGO founder Amarpreet Singh and his friend Maninder Singh for 10 years, has come together to extend relief to flood-affected communities in Gurdaspur, as per the press note shared by the actor's team. With the help of volunteers of the Global Sikh NGO, relief materials are being distributed, and every effort is being made to bring comfort to affected families.

James Gunn confirms next 'Superman' movie for 2026

AGENCIES
LOS ANGELES

The next 'Superman' saga has booked an official release window. DC Studios co-CEO James Gunn took to his social media and confirmed that the follow-up to his summer blockbuster will be titled 'Man of Tomorrow.' He also announced the film's release date and wrote, "Man of Tomorrow. In theatres July 9, 2027."

Gunn made the announcement with an animated drawing by



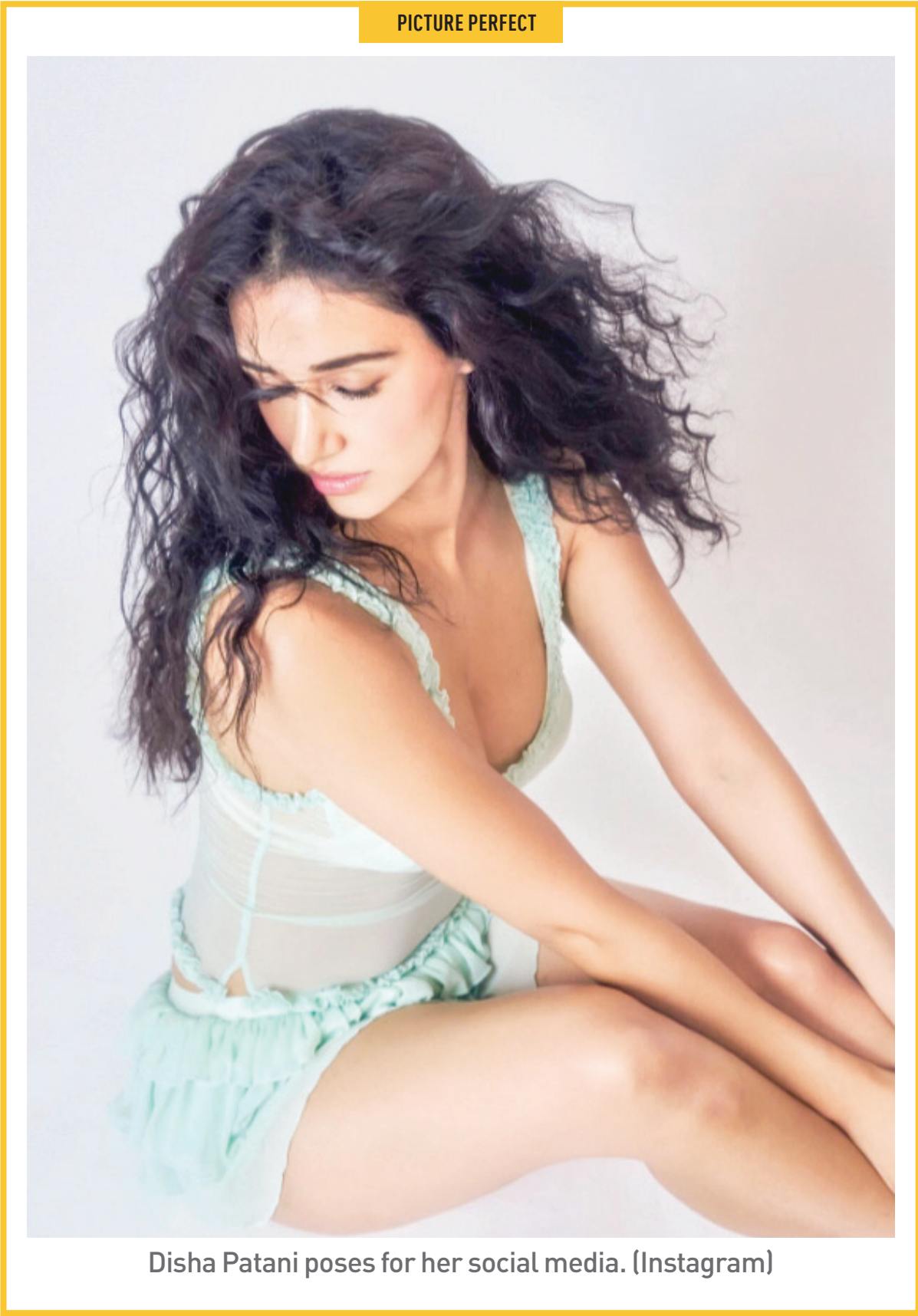
DC head Jim Lee, showing Superman leaning against Lex Luthor, who appears in a green and purple mech suit. Luthor's armoured suit, designed to fight Superman, has been featured

significantly in the comics and in animation.

It is now set to make a debut in live-action. The announcement comes at a time when Gunn has been teasing his next film, though he did not mention a straight sequel. "I've already finished the treatment for the next story in what I'll call the 'Superman Saga. I'm working on that and hopefully going into production on that not too far away from today," Gunn previously told The Hollywood Reporter.

While further details

about the next 'Superman' film have been kept under wraps, DC Studios currently has Craig Gillespie's 'Supergirl' in the pipeline, set for release on June 26, 2026. Further, James Watkins' horror film, 'Clayface', will be released on September 11, 2026. James Gunn is coming off of 'Superman', which opened to strong reviews, acting as a reset for the DC Cinematic Universe. The film was released on July 1, collecting \$125 million at the domestic box office on



Disha Patani poses for her social media. (Instagram)

BRAIN PICKING



"True beauty comes from within. It's about being kind, compassionate, and confident."

—DEEPIKA PADUKONE
(Indian Actress)

'You' star Penn Badgley confirms arrival of twin boys

AGENCIES
LOS ANGELES

The 'You' star Penn Badgley has made a surprise announcement of the arrival of his twin boys with his wife, Domino Kirke, on Instagram. In an Instagram video, Badgley revealed being on paternity leave, as he went on to speak in a whispering tone to avoid disturbing the babies. The actor slyly shifted to speak about an upcoming live event for his upcoming book, 'Crushmore', which he wrote with his Podcrushed cohorts Nava Kavelin and Sophie Turner. "There are tiny little baby feet right there. I don't

want to wake them up," the actor said in the video. "Interrupting twin paternity leave to announce a live event @podcrushed at @symphonyspace Oct 14 NYC supporting the release of our book CRUSH-



MORE. Truly proud of this one. Please check it out! @podcrushed for all info," he wrote in the caption. Earlier in August, the actor's wife, Domino Kirke Badgley, revealed her baby bump on Instagram.

In a previous interview, the actor opened up about their growing family and said, "They're identical boys, so now we have four boys. You know, I do mean this sincerely. It sounds a bit tacky, but the world needs more good men, so you know, pressure's on us to raise them well." During his appearance on The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon, Badgley admitted to being thrilled about his twins.

Vivek Agnihotri seeks President's help after film release halt in West Bengal

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Director Vivek Agnihotri shared an open letter from Pallavi Joshi, the actress and producer of 'The Bengal Files', which appealed to the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, for the protection and support regarding the film's release in West Bengal.



Set to release in theatres on September 5, the 'Bengal Files' explores the communal violence that took place in undivided Bengal during the 1940s, including the events of the Direct Action Day and the Noakhali riots of 1946.

In an open letter, Joshi alleges that the film faces an "unofficial ban" in West Bengal, with the theatre

owners refusing to screen the movie due to alleged "intimidation" and "threat" by the state's ruling party workers.

She wrote, "Respected Madam President. With a heavy heart, I reach out to you, not for favours, but for protection. The Bengal Files, the final part of the Files Trilogy, releases on 5th September.

Italian fashion icon Giorgio Armani passes away at 91

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON DC

Iconic fashion designer Giorgio Armani was passed away at the age of 91, the Armani Group announced on Thursday, according to CNN.

The Italian fashion designer was known for curating a quintessentially Italian aesthetic in his clothes, as well as taking Hollywood's red carpets to new heights.

"Il Signor Armani, as he was always respectfully and



admiringly called by employees and collaborators,

passed away peacefully, surrounded by his loved ones," the Armani Group said in a statement, describing the founder as "a tireless driving force," as quoted by CNN.

"In this company, we have always felt like part of a family," read a statement provided by the brand on behalf of his family and employees. "Today, with deep emotion, we feel the void left by the one who founded and nurtured this family with vision, passion, and dedication.

The teacher within: how we can all be educators through our actions

TDG NETWORK

Everyone has the capacity to be an educator, regardless of their official role or title—a truth that shines through in daily interactions, from boardrooms to classrooms and everywhere in between. Leadership is not limited to formal instruction; coaches, managers, and peers alike constantly teach by example, through feedback, and by modeling behaviors that shape environments and foster mutual development. Whether through informal peer discussions, mentorship, or collaborative projects, each individual's actions and words contribute to a powerful collective learning culture where knowledge is constructed not just by experts, but by everyone actively participating.

Bringing her expertise to the same, Dr. Mansi Talwar, Mindful Leadership Coach and Founder of Happy Mee, says, “When we hear the word teacher, most of us picture classrooms, chalkboards, and lesson plans. But the truth is, teaching doesn't only happen in schools.



Teachers in India help Microsoft Research design AI tool for creating great classroom content

Each of us—leaders, coaches, colleagues, parents, and even peers—teach every single day, often without realizing it.”

Children learn not just from what their parents say but from how they show up. A leader in a boardroom teaches not only through presentations but also through the way they listen, handle conflict, or admit mistakes. Even in friendships, we teach resilience, kindness, or boundaries simply by living them.

This is what I call the *tesilent curriculum*—the lessons absorbed through observation, tone, and action. Sometimes, a single authentic act, like a

boss taking responsibility for an error, teaches more about integrity than a hundred speeches.

The power of recognizing the “teacher within” lies in awareness. Once we realize that every action, every word, every silence is a lesson, we become more intentional. We stop underestimating our influence and start using it to build, not break.

In today's world, where information is everywhere but wisdom feels scarce, the most impactful teaching happens through presence. You don't need a title to be an educator; you just need to embody the values you want

others to carry forward.

So, whether you're raising children, managing a team, or sharing coffee with a friend, remember that someone is learning from you. The question is: What lesson are you teaching today?

Dr. Sonali Priy Kapoor, MD, Hatch Project, shares her insight, saying, “A teacher's true power lies not only in lessons delivered but in lives inspired. On this Teacher's Day, we are reminded that the role of an educator is not reserved for classrooms alone—it is a responsibility we all share, every single day, through the actions we choose and the values we



Dr. Mansi Talwar



Dr. Sonali Priy Kapoor

embody.”

True teaching extends beyond lessons and examinations. It rests in the values we uphold, the kindness we extend, the patience we practice, and the resilience we display in the face of challenges. Every action—whether it is showing empathy towards a

colleague, offering guidance to a younger professional, or demonstrating integrity in a difficult situation—becomes a silent lesson for someone observing us. Children learn more from what they see than from what they are told, but so do adults. Our behaviors set precedents and create ripple effects. When we lead with compassion,

we teach humanity; when we embrace diversity, we teach acceptance; when we strive for excellence, we inspire perseverance.

Being an educator through our actions means realizing that we are constantly shaping perspectives, influencing thoughts, and leaving imprints on lives. The greatest teachers in history did not

merely impart knowledge—they embodied principles. In our daily lives, we too can be torchbearers of wisdom.

This Teacher's Day, let us honor the profession not just by thanking our teachers, but by recognizing our own responsibility to educate through our choices, our conduct, and the example we set for the world around us.

Teachers' day: The architects of tomorrow

BHAVANI SUNDARAM

Every year on 5th September, India celebrates Teachers' Day to honour Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan—scholar, philosopher, and former President of India. Beyond the ceremonies and speeches, this day is a reminder of the extraordinary role teachers play in shaping both individuals and society.

Teachers are far more than transmitters of knowledge. They are mentors who nurture curiosity, guides who show the path when life feels uncertain, and quiet role models who teach us values without uttering a word. Long after we forget mathematical formulas or historical dates, we remember the teacher who believed in us, who encouraged us to rise after a fall, who saw our potential even when

we doubted ourselves.

In today's fast-changing world, their role is even more crucial. With information at our fingertips, what we need most is not just knowledge but wisdom—the ability to think critically, to choose wisely, to live with empathy. A good teacher does exactly that: not only preparing stu-

dents for exams, but preparing them for life.

Every profession—doctors, engineers, scientists, leaders—traces its roots back to a teacher. They are the invisible architects of tomorrow, building nations one classroom at a time.

As we celebrate Teachers' Day, let us remember that gratitude need not be

expressed only once a year. A simple “thank you,” a note, or even carrying forward their lessons in our own lives is the truest tribute we can offer.

Teachers may retire, classrooms may change, but the lessons they leave behind echo through generations. That is their legacy—and our greatest gift.



File Photo

Why gratitude towards teachers shouldn't be limited to one day

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Every year on September 5th, we celebrate Teacher's Day to honor the contributions of educators. Students express gratitude with cards, flowers, and heartfelt words. While the day holds great significance, true appreciation for teachers should not be confined to a single occasion.

Teachers play a lifelong role in shaping our thoughts, values, and perspectives. They are not just providers of academic knowledge but mentors who instill discipline, confidence, and compassion. Their lessons often extend beyond textbooks, guiding us in real-life challenges. Many of us recall a teacher who motivated us to chase our dreams or supported us during difficult times. Such lasting impact cannot be celebrated fully in just one day.

Moreover, the teaching profession is demanding. Teachers dedicate countless hours preparing lessons, assessing work, and innovating to make learning engaging. In today's digital age, they also adapt to new technologies and changing student needs. A day of appreciation, though meaningful, is hardly enough recognition for their constant dedication.

Gratitude towards teachers should be expressed through our actions every day—by respecting them, valuing their time, and applying their teachings in life. Even a small gesture, like showing attentiveness in class, can reflect appreciation. As adults, remembering our teachers, staying in touch, or acknowledging

their role in our success is another way to honor them.

In essence, Teacher's Day is a reminder, not a limit. It reminds us of the invaluable role educators play, but the spirit of gratitude should live throughout the year. After all, behind every successful individual stands a teacher whose guidance lit the path.



File Photo

India's Next Education Revolution: from exam factories to innovation labs

TDG NETWORK

Let's not sugarcoat it. Most schools in India still run like production lines. Children walk in. The bell sets the pace. Teachers deliver content. Students sit in neat rows, absorbing, memorising, reproducing. The entire year is a conveyor belt leading to one final output, a percentage on a mark sheet, a rank in a list.

The future is arriving faster than we can imagine. Artificial Intelligence can now write code, compose music, and diagnose illness in seconds. Our children will grow up in a world where information is everywhere, but the real value lies in knowing what to do with it. This is a chance for education in India to step into its most exciting chapter yet, not by doing more of the same, but by creating schools where curiosity, courage, and creativity are daily practice.

THE SHIFT WE NEED

Instead of seeing classrooms as places to prepare for the next test, we can see them as launchpads for solving real



problems, imagining new possibilities, and shaping the world. Knowledge will still matter, but so will the ability to learn, adapt, and collaborate.

The answer is simple, everything machines can't. Brave thinking. Deep empathy. Ethical judgment. Creative problem-solving. Collaboration across differences. Adaptability in the face of uncertainty.

None of these thrive in a classroom obsessed with “the right answer” and terrified of mistakes. The future will not reward those who never fail. It will reward those who fail, learn, and try again, faster and smarter than before.

WHAT THIS REALLY MEANS FOR SCHOOLS

India doesn't need more exam toppers. It needs people who can look at messy, unsolved problems and figure out a way forward. People who see opportunity where others see dead-ends. People who can imagine, design, and act.

So, the question is no longer “What should schools teach?” It is “How should schools teach so children can do what matters?”

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: HOW TO MAKE THE SHIFT

This is not just about adding a few “innovation” periods or running the occasional science fair. It is about rebuilding the core of schooling so every child's daily experience pushes them to think, act, and reflect like innovators.

HERE IS WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE

1. FLIP THE POWER IN THE CLASSROOM

In an AI age, information is cheap. Understanding is priceless. The teacher's job is no longer to be the foun-



File Photo

tain of all knowledge but the architect of deep learning experiences. That means giving students ownership. Let them work in pairs or small groups to discover concepts. Rotate who leads the discussion so every child learns to explain and defend their ideas. Ask open-ended questions and let silence do

its work.

When children explain things to each other, they don't just learn faster; they learn to listen, to negotiate, and to rethink.

2. MAKE LEARNING ACTIVE, NOT PASSIVE

A child sitting still, eyes glazed over, is not learning

deeply. Replace lectures with activities that demand participation: debates, design challenges, real-world case studies. Give them problems with more than one possible answer.

3. ASSESS WHAT MATTERS

If you want creativity and initiative, measure creativity and initiative. Keep the board exams if you must, but alongside them, track skills like: How well does a child work with others to solve a challenge? Can they break a complex problem into steps? Do they show persistence when a solu-

tion fails?

4. BRING THE OUTSIDE WORLD IN

The more disconnected school feels from real life, the less motivated children will be. Connect lessons to current events, local issues, and global challenges. Invite entrepreneurs, scientists, artists, and activists into classrooms, not to give speeches, but to mentor and collaborate.

5. TEACH HOW TO LEARN, NOT JUST WHAT TO KNOW

Knowledge will keep changing. A child entering Grade 1 today will face jobs in 2040 we can't even name yet. That makes one skill non-negotiable: the ability to learn, unlearn, and relearn.

THE CALL TO ACTION

The next education revolution will not be televised. It will happen in thousands of classrooms where the seating plan changes, where students argue over the best way to solve a problem, where a teacher steps back so a child can step forward.

“

Teaching is a very noble profession that shapes the character, caliber, and future of an individual. If the people remember me as a good teacher, that will be the biggest honour for me.

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

”

Illegal Betting App Case: ED Summons cricketer Shikhar Dhawan

TDG NETWORK

The Enforcement Directorate has summoned former Indian cricketer Shikhar Dhawan on Thursday for questioning in connection with a money laundering probe linked to the betting app 1xBet.

Dhawan, 39, will appear before investigators as his statement is to be recorded under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The federal agency is examining his alleged association with the app, which has been declared “illegal” in India.

According to sources, the left-handed opener came under the agency’s scanner after his name surfaced in connection with endorsements tied to the platform. Officials are keen to understand the extent of his links with the betting company and the nature of any financial transactions involved.

WIDER PROBE INTO BETTING APPS

The ED has been pursuing multiple cases related to illegal betting and gaming apps, several of which have allegedly duped thousands of users of large sums or evaded substantial taxes. The investigations are spread across states and involve networks suspected of laundering crores of rupees.

Last month, another former India cricketer, Suresh Raina, was also questioned in the same probe. His statement was recorded to determine whether promotional activities linked him to the app’s operations.

GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWN ON REAL-MONEY GAMING

The summons comes against the backdrop of a wider crackdown on online betting and gaming platforms. The Union gov-



File Photo

Last month, another former India cricketer, Suresh Raina, was also questioned in the same probe. His statement was recorded to determine whether promotional activities linked him to the app’s operations.

ernment recently brought in legislation banning real-money online gaming, citing concerns over addiction, financial fraud, and unlawful offshore betting practices.

Dhawan, one of India’s most successful limited-overs batsmen, retired from international cricket earlier this year. While he is not accused of direct involvement in the betting racket, the ED wants clarity on his endorsement deals and whether these inadvertently lent legitimacy to the platform.

The questioning is expected to focus on contract

details, financial transactions, and communications between Dhawan or his representatives and the app’s promoters.

ONGOING INVESTIGATION

The probe into 1xBet is part of a larger effort to dismantle betting syndicates that allegedly channel funds through complex routes, including hawala operators and shell companies. Authorities believe that money siphoned off these apps is not only evading taxes but also finding its way into other unlawful activities.

SC Expresses concern about floods in Himalayan States; Observes there’s illegal felling of trees

BHAVANI SUNDARAM

The Supreme Court on Thursday raised alarm over the scale of destruction caused by recent floods and landslides in the Himalayan states, remarking that illegal felling of trees may have worsened the disaster.

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India B R Gavai, with Justice K Vinod Chandran, referred to disturbing visuals from Himachal Pradesh showing timber logs tumbling down with the floodwaters. “Prima facie, it appears there has been rampant cutting of trees in the hills,” the bench said, terming the situation a matter of “grave concern.”

COURT PULLS UP AUTHORITIES

The bench issued formal notices to the Union ministries of Environment and Jal Shakti, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), and the state governments of Pun-

jab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jammu and Kashmir. The matter will be heard again in two weeks.

CJI Gavai pointed out that villages and farmlands in Punjab had been wiped out in the floods. “Development has to be balanced,” he cautioned, stressing the need for sustainable planning in fragile ecological zones.

The court requested Solicitor General Tushar Mehta

to take stock of the situation with the environment ministry and state officials. “It appears a serious issue. A large number of wooden logs were seen floating around, showing illegal felling of trees,” the bench told him.

Mehta acknowledged the concern, remarking, “We have interfered with nature so much that now nature is giving back.”

PUBLIC INTEREST



File Photo

PLEA ON HIMALAYAN ECOLOGY

The remarks came during the hearing of a petition filed by Anamika Rana, who sought stronger safeguards for the Himalayan ecosystem. The plea urged the top court to set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) or frame guidelines to prevent disasters of this nature in the future.

The petition argued that both the Centre and states have failed to prepare mean-

ingful disaster management plans despite having dedicated authorities in place. It blamed reckless hill road construction, encroachment on water bodies, and neglect of environmental regulations for increasing the frequency of landslides and flash floods.

CALL FOR EXPERT COMMITTEE

The PIL also asked for an independent expert panel of geologists and environmental scientists to examine road and highway projects in landslide-prone areas. It sought an inquiry into non-compliance with environmental laws, breaches in development guidelines, and accountability of officials connected with projects between 2023 & 2025.

According to the petitioner, protecting the fragile Himalayan ecology is essential not only for disaster prevention but also for enforcing citizens’ fundamental rights to life and equality under Articles 21 and 14 of the Constitution.

SC QUESTIONS ENFORCEMENT OF PHARMA MARKETING NORMS

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday expressed concern over the enforcement of rules regulating drug marketing practices, observing that the real challenge lies not in framing norms but in ensuring their proper implementation. Bench Questions Effectiveness

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta was hearing a plea seeking a uniform code to curb unethical promotional tactics by pharmaceutical companies. During the hearing, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, argued that the petition had become infructuous as a statutory regime was already in place.

“The difficulty is, regime is there in place, but whether that is actually implemented or not,” Justice Nath remarked.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, also appearing in the case, pointed out that a new framework had been introduced last year. Justice Mehta observed, “That is what the concern of my lords is, that if it is a toothless tiger... what is



File Photo

the purpose?”

Countering this, the Solicitor General said, “It is a tiger with all power at its command.”

UCMPM 2024 Under Scrutiny

The Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) 2024 came into force last year, aimed at regulating how companies promote medicines. The Solicitor General urged the court to list the matter on a non-miscellaneous day, stating that the issue may require detailed hearing. The bench has posted the case for further consideration on October 7. Background The case stems from a petition filed by the Federation of Medical and Sales Representatives Association of India. In March 2022, the apex court had sought the Centre’s response on the matter. The plea sought binding guidelines to regulate marketing practices until a

strong legal framework was in place.

It highlighted that the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002 impose restrictions on doctors from accepting gifts, hospitality, or monetary benefits from pharmaceutical firms. However, these rules do not extend to the companies themselves, creating what the petitioners described as an “anomalous situation.”

Allegations Of Unethical Practices

The plea alleged that drug manufacturers routinely offer indirect incentives—such as foreign trips, entertainment, or sponsored events—to doctors in exchange for increased prescriptions. Such practices, it argued, could influence prescription patterns, leading to over-prescription, irrational drug combinations, and health risks for patients.

The petitioners further contended that despite repeated discussions on curbing these practices, there is still no enforceable law that directly regulates pharmaceutical companies’ promotional strategies, allowing misconduct to continue unchecked.

SC FLAGS ILLEGAL TREE CUTTING IN FLOOD AREAS; SG SAYS NATURE IS HITTING BACK

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday issued notices to Punjab, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir over the devastation caused by heavy rains and floods.

A bench led by Chief Justice B.R. Gavai expressed serious concern, noting that ‘we have seen unprecedented rains and flooding.’ CJI Gavai observed that prima facie it appears to be a case of large-scale illegal felling of trees in the hilly regions.

Referring to media reports and videos showing huge numbers of timber logs washed down by floodwaters in Himachal Pradesh, the Court said this indicated possible human-made aggravation of the natural disaster.

The bench directed the states to file their responses within 3 weeks.



File Photo

SG Mehta said: ‘We have interfered with nature so much that now it is giving back.’

The bench asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to take note of the issue.

CJI said: ‘This appears to be a very serious matter.’

The Court also took a stern view of reports showing logs floating in floodwaters across Himachal, Uttarakhand, and Punjab. CJI warned that indis-

criminate interference with nature was proving dangerous.

SG Mehta said: ‘We have interfered with nature so much that now it is giving back.’

Authorities in Jammu Division of Jammu and Kashmir has ordered closure of all government and private schools on September 4.

The order was issued after heavy rainfall and weather alerts in the region.

Continuous rains have triggered landslides in several hilly areas.

Normal life has been disrupted due to the weather conditions.

TDG NETWORK

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the National Investigation Agency to respond to Kashmiri separatist leader Shabir Ahmed Shah’s petition challenging the Delhi High Court’s order denying him bail in a terror funding case.

INTERIM BAIL REQUEST REJECTED

A bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta issued notice to the NIA but refused to grant Shah interim bail at this stage. Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, appearing on behalf of Shah, pressed for temporary relief citing his client’s ill health.

He submitted that the petitioner was “very sick” and in urgent need of medical attention outside prison.

The court, however, declined to extend interim bail and instead scheduled the

matter for detailed hearing after two weeks.

COURT’S EARLIER DECISION

Shah had earlier approached the Delhi High Court seeking bail in the case but faced rejection on June 12 this year. The high court had observed that releasing him could not be considered safe, as there remained a likelihood of him indulging in unlawful activities and attempting to influence witnesses.

The court underlined the seriousness of the allegations and the possible impact of his release on the ongoing trial, which involves sensitive charges relating to terror financing and conspiracy.

CASE BACKGROUND

The NIA arrested Shabir Shah on June 4, 2019, in connection with its investigation into a wider conspiracy



File Photo

case. The probe was initiated in 2017, when the agency registered a case against 12 individuals for allegedly raising and collecting funds to foment unrest in Jammu and Kashmir.

The charges include using the funds to instigate stone pelting, damaging public property, and conspiring to wage war against the Gov-

ernment of India. According to the NIA, the accused were part of a larger network that sought to destabilize the region by channeling money into disruptive activities.

Shah, who has been in custody for more than four years, has consistently denied the allegations against him. His legal team maintains that the charges are

politically motivated and that his prolonged incarceration without bail is unjustified, especially given his deteriorating health.

The outcome of the next hearing will determine whether his plea for bail gains any traction or if he continues to remain behind bars while the trial proceeds.

BHAMBRI ENTERS US OPEN MEN’S DOUBLES SEMIS

TDG NETWORK
NEW YORK

Indian tennis player Yuki Bhambri, along with his partner from New Zealand Michael Venus, has advanced to the men's doubles semifinals in the



Grand Slam.

In a thrilling match at the US Open, Bhambri and Venus outplayed the 11th-seeded duo of Nikola Mektić and Rajeev Ram, winning by 6-3, 7-6, 6-3 in 2 hours and 37 minutes. The Indian-kiwi duo will take on Neal Skupski and Joe Salisbury in the semifinals.

Currently ranked World No. 32 in men's doubles, Bhambri holds the distinction of being India's highest-ranked player in the category. With this win, he has scripted history by reaching his first-ever Grand Slam semifinal in doubles.

Rated among the top nations the right



Yuki Bhambri and Michael Venus stunned at US open.

player in men's doubles, ranking 32nd in the world. After winning this fixture, he has made history by making it to his first Grand Slam doubles semifinal.

Bhambri had previously only managed to reach the pre-quarterfinals of the US Open in 2024, when he played alongside French partner Albano Olivetti.

Bhambri stormed to his maiden Grand Slam quarter-finals at the US Open in the Men's doubles alongside his partner from New Zealand, Michael Venus. Yuki and Venus defeated the No. 4 seeds Kevin Krawietz and Tim Puetz in one hour and 23 minutes by a 6-4, 6-4 score line to move into the final eight.

Earlier, Bhambri and Venus stormed into the men's doubles pre-quarterfinals at the US Open 2025 in New York on Monday. The 14th-seeded pair registered a commanding 6-1, 7-5 win over the unseeded duo of Colombia's Gonzalo Escobar and Mexico's Miguel Angel Reyes-Varela in one hour and

25 minutes at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Centre.

Bhambri and Venus made a flying start, breaking their opponents twice to take an early 3-0 lead before comfortably sealing the first set 6-1.

Escobar and Reyes-Varela offered stronger resistance in the second set, but Bhambri and Venus held their nerve to clinch it 7-5, securing their place in the last 16.

They will next face the fourth-seeded German duo of Tim Puetz and Kevin Krawietz. In their opener, Bhambri and Venus had eased past the American pair of Marcos Giron and Learner Tien with



Sinner extends winning streak

TDG NETWORK
NEW YORK

World number one Jannik Sinner steamrolled past countryman Lorenzo Musetti at the US Open, by 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 in the first all-Italian men's major quarter-final to advance into the final fours.

Sinner, a four-time Grand Slam titlist, will face No. 25 seed Felix Auger-Aliassime in the

semifinals. After dispatching Musetti in a convincing fashion, Sinner became the second-youngest man in the Open Era to reach the semifinals of all four Grand Slam events in a season, behind a 22-year-old Rafael Nadal in 2008.

The Canadian is the rare opponent that has an advantage over Sinner in their head-to-head series: Sinner trails 1-3, with his lone triumph coming in their most

recent match, a quarterfinal affair at Cincinnati.

Last month in Cincinnati, Sinner defeated Auger-Aliassime with ease, while losing two games in a decisive quarterfinal victory. Both of Auger-Aliassime's victories over Sinner occurred in 2022.

"We know each other very well. We are from the same country. We have so many Italian players every time in the draw.

Naomi Osaka defeats Karolina Muchova

TDG NETWORK
NEW YORK

Naomi Osaka stormed into the semi-finals of the US Open, defeating Karolina Muchova on Wednesday, in straight 6-4, 7-6(3). Osaka's story sets up a semifinal against Amanda Anisimova, who upset Iga Swiatek in the day.

sets vic-match simova, earlier

With a 6-4, 7-6(3) quarterfinal victory against Muchova, the Japanese star improved to 13-0 in the quarters

and beyond at the majors.

The Japanese player, seeded 23, was competing in her first major quarterfinal fixture since taking home the Australian Open title in 2021. The former World No.1 came into the match with a dominant win over third-seeded Coco Gauff.

"It was an incredibly difficult match. She's one of the best players in the world, and every time I play her, it's so, so difficult. Last year she beat me here when I had one of my best outfits, so I was really upset," Osaka said as quoted from the US Open website.

World Boxing: Pawan Bartal kickstarts India's campaign with win

AGENCIES
LIVERPOOL

Pawan Bartwal provided India a winning start to their World Boxing Championships campaign as he got the better of Brazil's Michael Douglas Trinidad, a Paris Olympian, in a close men's 55kg bout in Liverpool, UK, on Thursday.

Bartwal displayed his boxing acumen under pressure in the third and final round to keep his Brazilian opponent at bay and still impress the



Pawan Bartal kickstarts India's campaign with win.

judges with his punches to win the first round bout 3:2. The two boxers were deadlocked after the first two rounds, with Trinidad nullifying Bartwal's advantage in the second round, as per a press release from the Boxing Federation of India (BFI).

Amit Mishra bids adieu to international cricket

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

A remarkable career of over 25 years, iconic Indian leg-spinner Amit Mishra announced his retirement from professional cricket on Thursday.

Amit Mishra, one of India's most consistent movers with the ball, said that the decision was largely based on repeated injuries and the belief that the younger generations need to be given an opportunity to shine on the big stage, as per a press release.

Men's Asia Cup: Clinical India beat Malaysia 4-1 in Super 4s

AGENCIES
RAJGIR

The Indian Men's Hockey Team came back from a goal down and stormed over the finish line, defeating Malaysia 4-1, in their second Super 4s game at the Rajgir Hockey Stadium, in the Men's Asia Cup Rajgir, Bihar, on Thursday.

It was a landmark day for Captain Harmanpreet Singh as well, as he won his 250th cap for the Indian Men's Hockey Team. For the hosts, the goals came from Manpreet Singh (17'), Sukhjeet Singh (19'), Shilan-

and Lakra (24'), and Vivek Sagar Prasad (38'). Meanwhile, Shafiq Hassan (2') found the back of the net for Malaysia, as per a Hockey India press release.

It was Malaysia who got the better of the early exchanges, as they scored with their first attack when Shafiq Hassan (2') found the back of the net. After that, Malaysia dominated possession and continued to maintain the pressure on the hosts. Midway through the first quarter, India, with Dilpreet Singh, Harmanpreet Singh and co, started to build in attack, but Malaysia

continued to hold out. India finished the quarter in the ascendancy, but were yet to find the equaliser. Malaysia led 1-0 after the first quarter.

In the first few minutes of the second quarter, India won five back-to-back penalty corners, and four were thwarted. The fifth penalty corner saw Harmanpreet Singh's shot saved after which Manpreet Singh (17'), India's most experienced player, pounced on the chance and made it 1-1. The momentum was now with India, and a couple of minutes later Sukhjeet Singh (19') made it 2-1 for the hosts.



Clinical India beat Malaysia 4-1 in Super 4s.



The first group of Indian athletes is all set for the World Athletics Championships 2025 in Tokyo, Japan.X

Margao to host India's AFC Asian Cup qualifiers clash with Singapore

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The AFC Asian Cup 2027 final round Qualifiers Group C match between India and Singapore, on October 14, will be held at the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Margao, Goa.

"The Senior Indian Men's National Team will play Singapore twice in the October FIFA International Window, with the first match slated to be held at the National Stadium in Singapore, on October 9. The teams will then travel to Goa after the match for



representative photo

the second leg of the Asian Cup qualifiers, AIFF said in their official statement released on Wednesday.

This will be the 17th match the Indian senior men's

team will play in Goa, and the first since 2017 when the Blue Tigers were held 2-2 by Myanmar in the Asian Cup qualifiers. India have previously faced Singapore in

Goa -- a 1-0 win in the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers in 2004. Overall, India have won five, drawn five and lost six matches in Goa, according to an AIFF press release.

India are currently at the bottom of Group C of the AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers Final Round with one point in two games. After the October matches against Singapore, India will face Bangladesh in Dhaka (November 18) and Hong Kong at home (March 31, 2026). The group winners will qualify for the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027.

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Watching the Indian Premier League (IPL) action live from a cricket stadium would be costlier, following the introduction of an increased Goods and Services Tax (GST) by the Centre on IPL tickets from 28 to 40 per cent.

The final ticket prize for an IPL match, which has a base prize of Rs 1,000, will now be upto Rs 1,280-1,400, as per ESPNcricinfo. This raise puts the IPL in India's highest GST bracket, alongside casinos,

race clubs, or any place featuring casinos or race clubs.

However, the people going to watch international matches seem to get some respite as the GST levied for these matches was the same as the IPL tickets, at 28 per cent, but this slab has been done away with. According to an official release, the changes in the tax rates as part of the GST reforms only talk about "sporting events like the IPL". Various finance and

business publications have interpreted this to mean that international matches



Sangram Singh ready for Second MMA competition in Poland

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Fit India Icon and Commonwealth Heavyweight Champion Sangram Singh has announced his highly anticipated return to Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), confirming his participation in the upcoming international tournament in Poland in the 83-90 kg category.

The 40-year-old vegetarian athlete, who is the world's first fighter to compete in MMA at the age of 40 and made history by becoming the first Indian male wrestler to win an international MMA fight, continues his mission to break age-relat-



ed stereotypes in professional combat sports.

Singh's unprecedented MMA debut at the Gama International Fighting Championship in Tbilisi, Georgia, where he achieved victory against a Pakistani fighter in just 90 seconds, established him among the

elite group of fighters worldwide who have successfully transitioned to MMA in their late thirties and beyond. His achievement proves that athletic excellence has no age limit.

"Age is just a number when your soul refuses to give up," Singh said during his training preparations. "When I stepped into that octagon in Georgia at 40, fighting against a fighter 17 years younger than me, I wasn't just fighting for

myself - I was fighting to show every dreamer in their 20s, 30s, and 40s that their time is still ahead. This Poland tournament is my second chapter, not the final one."

The journey of the Rohtak-born champion resonates deeply with athletes across generations. Singh's transformation from wheelchair dependency due to early diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis to international MMA success reflects the true spirit of the Fit India movement, which he proudly represents.

Record holder for fastest international MMA victory by an Indian fighter (90 seconds against Pakistan's Ali Raza) prepares for MMA return