

Atiq Ahmed's Youngest Son Dies In Car Crash Near Jhansi

Jhansi (Agency): Aban Ahmed, the youngest son of former MP Atiq Ahmed, was killed in an accident late Wednesday night on the Jhansi-Kanpur National Highway (NH-27) near the Poonch police station area of Uttar Pradesh's Jhansi, police said. While another companion of Aban also died on the spot, three others sustained serious injuries. They have been admitted to a medical college, police said. Police said the horrific accident took place near Khilli village, when the speeding car on its way from Kanpur to Jhansi suddenly lost control and crashed into a divider. The impact of the collision was so severe that the car's front portion was completely mangled.

The accident occurred while Aban was proceeding to Jhansi, where his elder



brother was imprisoned. Preliminary investigations, police said, suggest over-speeding and rash driving led to the fatal accident. "Two passengers, one of whom has been identified as Aban Ahmed, son of Atiq Ahmed, died on the spot. The other person is Sonu, son of one Raja," a police officer said. After being alerted by locals,

police rushed to the spot. They extricated the bodies from the vehicle. They also moved the injured to a hospital in the vicinity. Vehicular traffic was briefly disrupted following the accident. It was subsequently restored. "Upon receiving information about the incident, the Poonch police station and the Montha Circle Officer immediately arrived at the scene. The police carried out prompt relief and rescue operations and immediately sent all the injured to the Montha CHC (Community Health Centre) for treatment," an official statement by the district police said. The police are involved in carrying out necessary legal proceedings, including the Panchayatnama, as per law, it said, adding that, "Peace and law and order are completely normal at the scene."

PM foreign visits cost over Rs 74.58 crore so far in 2026

New Delhi (Agency): Minister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita on Thursday informed the Rajya Sabha that the expenditure on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign visits has reached over Rs 74.58 crore in 2026 so far, while the cumulative spending on his overseas visits since 2021 stands at more than Rs 550 crore.

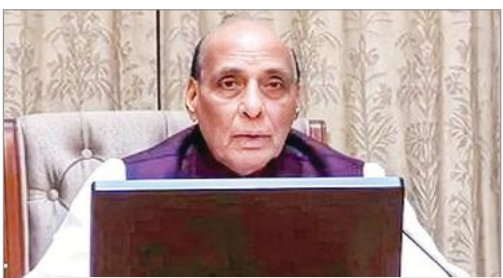
In a written reply, Margherita stated that the highest expenditure among the visits for which figures are available this year was incurred during the Norway leg of the Prime Minister's five-nation tour in May at Rs 17.46 crore. According to the reply,



expenditure on the Prime Minister's foreign visits was over Rs 180 crore in 2025, Rs 109 crore in 2024, Rs 93 crore in 2023, Rs 55 crore in 2022 and Rs 36 crore in 2021. The Ministry also noted that several expenditure figures for 2026 are provisional and will be finalised after settlement of bills, while expenditure for the France visit in June is still being compiled.

Territorial Army living example of 'Citizen-Soldier' concept: Rajnath Singh

New Delhi (Agency): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Thursday that the Territorial Army is a living embodiment of the 'Citizen-Soldier' concept that creates surge capacity for the military by building a reserve of trained personnel. Chairing a meeting of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee for the Ministry of Defence in Delhi, Rajnath Singh described the Territorial Army's contribution as 'significant' in advancing Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's vision of Viksit Bharat. During the meeting, senior officials presented a detailed briefing on the Territorial Army's mandate, role and key achievements to the committee members, who offered valuable suggestions to further strengthen the force & enhance its overall effectiveness. The Defence Minister emphasised that while the role of the defence forces revolves primarily around security-related aspects, the Territorial Army contributes in other areas such as environmental conservation and social work as well. "The Territorial Army is a living embodiment of the 'Citizen-Soldier' concept. While its members engage in civilian pursuits, they simultaneously don the uniform to safeguard the borders and maintain internal security," he said.



■ The Territorial Army stands as a trained, motivated, and potent force, comprising nearly 44,400 personnel and 59 diverse units. Rajnath Singh termed the force as the first responders, who provide immediate relief and support during natural calamities. He acknowledged their role in carrying out relief work and providing medical aid to those in need during Kerala floods, Odisha Cyclone and the recent floods in Assam. Commending their contribution in environmental management and climate change mitigation, Rajnath Singh stated that the Ecological Task Forces of the Territorial Army have planted approximately 10 crore saplings till date, with the survival rate between 80-85 per cent. This green initiative is translating the Prime Minister's 'Mission LIFE' and 'Panchamrit' goals into reality on the ground, he said.

Tarun Tejpal, Tehelka founder, gets 10-year jail for raping employee in 2013

Mumbai : The Goa bench of the Bombay High Court handed a 10-year rigorous imprisonment to Tehelka founder Tarun Tejpal after convicting him of raping a junior colleague at a Goa resort 13 years ago. Setting aside the 2021 judgment of the trial court that had acquitted him, the High Court directed Tejpal to surrender before Goa Police within four weeks.

The High Court, however, did not cite any reason for the verdict. A detailed order in the case is awaited. The case dates back to November 2013, when a Tehelka employee accused Tejpal of raping her in the elevator of a Goa resort during the magazine's annual Thinkfest event.

The High Court's quantum of



punishment was pronounced soon after Tejpal rushed to the Supreme Court the moment he was convicted in the morning. Tejpal had sought a suspension of the conviction order for a week.

In the afternoon, when the High Court handed him the 10-year sentence, it allowed Tejpal four weeks to surrender.

That will give Tejpal time to pursue or amend his petition in the Supreme Court.

Earlier in the day, a division bench of justices Dr Neela Gokhale and Amit Jansandekar held Tejpal guilty of rape and sexual harassment under Sections 376(2)(f) and 376(2)(k), along with Sections 354A and 354B of the IPC. While Section 376(2)(f) criminalises rape by a person in a position of trust or authority, Section 354A criminalises sexual harassment. Section 354B criminalises assault or use of criminal force against a woman with the intent to disrobe her. Tejpal was sentenced to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 5 lakh under Section 376(2)(f).

Lok Sabha passes bill to allow charges on UPI, digital payments

New Delhi : The Lok Sabha on Thursday passed a Bill to amend the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 that authorises the government to permit banks and other service providers to levy charges on payments through unified payments interface (UPI) and other notified electronic payment modes. The amendment passed by the House without discussion amid din seeks to remove the existing legal provision that prevents banks and payment service providers from charging Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on notified electronic payment modes. Real-time payments made through RTGS and NEFT are done by paying a service charge. However,

UPI transactions have been exempted from such charges so far. The proposed changes in Payment and Settlement Systems Act is a part of comprehensive legislation on taxation, which was introduced in the House on Tuesday. The Bill was passed through voice vote in the Lok Sabha after the House resumed at 2 pm after the earlier adjournment. As soon as the House re-assembled, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman moved the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 further to amend the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 and the Income Tax Act, 2025, and to amend the Finance Act, 2026, to be taken into consideration.

US VP Vance says negotiations with Iran "going to be messy", "take some time"

Washington (Agency): Describing Iran's leadership as fractured and difficult to navigate, US Vice-President JD Vance on Wednesday (local time) said talks with Tehran would be a complex process that would be "messy" and "take some time" to reach a resolution, while asserting that Washington would use military, economic and diplomatic tools to secure a favourable outcome.

In an interview with Fox News, amid renewed diplomatic engagements with Iran after a pause to hostilities following the collapse of the 14-point Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), Vance said divisions within Iran's leadership have complicated efforts to resolve, with some factions seeking an end to the conflict while others remain committed to continuing hostilities.

"The Iranians are extraordinarily difficult people. Number two, they have a fractured system. So there are people within their system who want the



war to be over; there are also people within their system who are crazy radicals who want the war to continue," Vance told Fox News.

"Our job is to navigate through that and get the best outcome for the American people, but for the President of the United States as well," he added.

Vance said any eventual agreement with Iran would not come quickly but expressed confidence that the United States would achieve its objectives.

"And I do think that where we will ultimately land—it's going to be messy and it's going to take some time to get there—where we will ultimately land, you see, oil, I think, was at \$79 today. Those oil prices are going to come down and stay down.

Led by PM Modi, Centre stands firmly with Arunachal flood victims, assures all support: Nadda

Itanagar (Agency): Union Health and Family Welfare Minister, Jagat Prakash Nadda, on Thursday assured that the Centre stands firmly with the people of Arunachal Pradesh and will extend every possible assistance for relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in the flood and cloudburst-affected areas of the state.

Nadda, who also holds the Chemicals and Fertilizers portfolio, visited the flood and cloudburst-hit areas of Keyi Panyor district on Thursday, a day after touring flood-affected regions of Assam and Nagaland to assess the situation on the ground.

In a series of posts on social



media, the Union Minister said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Central government remains committed to supporting the

people of Arunachal Pradesh during this difficult period.

He said the Centre, in close coordination with the Arunachal Pradesh government, would

continue to provide prompt relief, financial assistance and all necessary support to the affected families, while ensuring that relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts are carried out in a time-bound manner.

Later in the day, Nadda held a review meeting with Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu and Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein to assess the flood situation and the extent of damage to infrastructure and properties in the Northeastern region.

The meeting also focussed on expediting relief measures and strengthening coordination between the Centre and the state governments. Several other state

ministers and senior officials were also attended the review meeting, held in Itanagar.

Taking to his social media platform X, visiting Central Minister Nadda wrote, "Chaired a review meeting with CM Pema Khandu Ji, Deputy CM Chowna Mein Ji, Ministers, MLAs, and State administrative officers in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, today to assess the situation following my visit to the areas affected by the recent flash floods and cloudbursts."

"Instructed all concerned departments to intensify ongoing relief, rehabilitation, and healthcare efforts to address the needs that may arise in the aftermath of the disaster.

Heavy Rain Alert For Uttarakhand, Kerala, Assam, Odisha

New Delhi (Agency): Active monsoon conditions are set to continue across large parts of the country over the next five days, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting widespread rainfall, thunderstorms and isolated very heavy rainfall in several states till August 11.

IMD scientist Naresh Kumari said the weather activity is being driven by an active monsoon trough stretching from Punjab to the northeast Bay of Bengal, multiple upper-air cyclonic circulations over north, east and south India, and a western disturbance affecting the western Himalayan region. The IMD has forecast fairly widespread to widespread rainfall over Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir-Ladakh, and Uttarakhand between August 6 and

11. East Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and West Uttar Pradesh are likely to receive widespread rainfall on August 6, while Rajasthan is expected to witness increased rain activity between August 7 and 10.

The forecast comes as schools up to Class 12 have been closed in Uttarakhand's Chamoli and Bageshwar districts due to heavy rain warnings. Authorities are also monitoring the Mandakini River in Rudraprayag amid continuous rainfall in the upper Himalayan catchments.

Rainfall activity is expected to intensify over central India during the next few days. Fairly widespread to widespread rainfall is likely over West Madhya Pradesh from August 7 to 9 and over Chhattisgarh and East Madhya

Pradesh on August 6-8.

The IMD has warned of isolated heavy rainfall over West Madhya Pradesh on August 6 and 8, Chhattisgarh and East Madhya Pradesh during August 6-7, while isolated very heavy rainfall is likely over West Madhya Pradesh on August 7. Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are also expected over Chhattisgarh between August 6 and 9. Eastern India is likely to remain under active monsoon conditions throughout the forecast period. Fairly widespread to widespread rainfall is expected over Gangetic West Bengal, Odisha, Sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim from August 6 to 11, while Jharkhand is likely to receive widespread rainfall during August 6-8 and August 10-11. Bihar is expected to witness



scattered rainfall from August 8 to 11, with isolated heavy rainfall also likely during the same period. IMD has warned of isolated very

heavy rainfall over Bihar on August 6, Odisha on August 6 and 9, and Gangetic West Bengal on August 6.

Dr. Braj Kishore Singh Becomes President of the Indian Medical Association

The Eastern Voice Correspondent Aurangabad The new executive committee of the Indian Medical Association (IMA), Aurangabad branch, has been constituted for the 2026-27 term. The new team was elected unanimously during a key meeting held on Wednesday night at the city's IMA Hall, in the presence of Civil Surgeon Dr. Krishna Kumar and senior doctors from the district. Renowned senior physician Dr. Braj Kishore Singh has been elected President of the new executive committee, while Dr. Abhay Kumar has been entrusted with the role of Secretary and Dr. Vakil Ahmad with



that of Treasurer. On this occasion, the new executive committee also outlined its future plans for the 2026-27 term. The newly elected IMA office-bearers pledged that the association would place special emphasis on social, cultural and educational activities. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Braj Kishore Singh said, "My objective is to bridge the widening gap between patients and doctors, while also ensuring that no member of the IMA faces any inconvenience." He stated that the organization would conduct health awareness camps, free medical consultation

camps and Continuing Medical Education (CME) programs to provide the general public with better health services and accurate information. Dr. Singh also announced plans to host a state-level medical seminar in Aurangabad in January 2027. This seminar will see the participation of expert doctors from across the country—alongside those from Bihar—who will deliberate on the challenges facing rural healthcare; complex surgeries will also be performed during the event. In the near future, mega health camps will be organized in "hard-to-reach" areas—places where access to a doctor remains a rarity. Remote rural areas and Naxal-affected regions, in particular, will be a priority. Outgoing Secretary Dr. Rajiv Kumar noted that the IMA had organized two major health camps last year, providing free treatment to 700 patients at the IMA premises and 350 people at the police center. He acknowledged that much work remains to be done. Significantly, 12 new members joined the IMA, pledging to work together in unison. The team for the 2027-28 term was also announced to ensure continuity; it will comprise Dr. Anil Kumar Sinha as President, Dr. Pushpendra Kumar as Secretary, and Dr. B. Kishore as Treasurer.

Career Mission Computer Academy to Organize Educational Tour to Patna on August 9

The Eastern Voice Correspondent Jandaha (Vaishali) Career Mission Computer Academy, Jandaha (Vaishali), is set to organize an Educational Tour on Sunday, August 9, 2026, with the objective of enhancing students' knowledge through practical learning and real-world exposure. As part of this initiative, students will travel from Jandaha to Patna for an enriching educational experience. The tour aims to expose students to modern technologies,



innovation and academic environments, helping them develop creative thinking, technical awareness and practical skills beyond the classroom. Dr. Anand Ranjan Jha, Director of Career Mission Computer

Academy, stated that practical exposure is as important as classroom learning for the holistic development of students. He emphasized that educational tours inspire curiosity, boost confidence and encourage students to explore new opportunities and emerging technologies. He further expressed confidence that the tour will be an enriching and inspiring experience, broadening students' perspectives and motivating them to pursue excellence in their academic and professional journeys.

Preparations for Munger University's 3rd Convocation Ceremony Reviewed

The Eastern Voice Correspondent Munger A high-level review meeting was held on Thursday, presided over by the Vice-Chancellor Professor Sanjay Kumar, to finalize preparations for Munger University's 3rd Convocation Ceremony, scheduled for August 11, 2026. The meeting was conducted by Registrar Dr. Ghanshyam Rai. During the meeting, the preparations made by various committees—constituted to ensure the ceremony is dignified, well-organized, and successful—were reviewed in detail and necessary guidelines were issued. Extensive discussions were held regarding appropriate arrangements for the welcome, refreshments and meals for the participating students and distinguished guests arriving from the Raj Bhavan (Governor's House). A point-by-point review was conducted regarding student arrival times, registration, counter-wise distribution of certificates, kits and identity cards (I-cards), stage management, stage rehearsals, seating arrangements for media representatives, deployment of NCC and NSS volunteers, security, parking, guest hospitality and all other necessary arrangements. It was decided in the meeting that identity cards (I-cards) would be distributed to all participating students one day prior to the ceremony to ensure the smooth conduct of entry and registration processes on the day of the event. Additionally, all committees were instructed to complete their respective preparations within the stipulated timeframe and to work in mutual coordination. Attendees at the meeting included Dean of Student Welfare (DSW) Professor Dr. Maheshwar Mishra, Controller of Examinations Professor Dr. Dashrath Prajapat, R.D. & D.J. ... College Principal Professor Dr. Vijendra Kumar along with Professor Dr. Manju Kumari, Professor Dr. Girish Chandra Pandey, Professor Dr. Ajit Kumar, Dr. Suraj Konar, Dr. Kanchan Singh and Lieutenant Dr. Priyamvada Sharma, were present. Also in attendance were



Convocation Media In-charge and NCC ANO Lt. Dr. Priyamvada Sharma, Lt. Dr. Kumari Neha, Dr. Mrityunjay Mishra, NCC ANO Lt. Dr. Prabhakar Poddar, Dr. Rohit Kumar, Dr. Sanjay Kumar Manjhi, Dr. Smriti Kumari, Munger University and Shri Munendra Kumar Singh alongside various university and college officials and members of the organizing committee. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sanjay Kumar, instructed all relevant committees, emphasizing that the convocation ceremony is a symbol of the university's dignity, academic excellence and prestige. Therefore, he directed that all arrangements be executed in a timely manner.

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Minister Shravan Kumar Distributed Approval Letters among Beneficiaries

The Eastern Voice Correspondent Biharsharif On Thursday, Minister for Rural Development and Information & Public Relations, Shravan Kumar, distributed approval letters to selected beneficiaries of various public welfare schemes during a program held at the Biharsharif Block Office premises. Benefits were extended to beneficiaries selected under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Lakshmbai Social Security Pension Scheme, Bihar State Disability Pension Scheme, Chief Minister's Old Age Pension Scheme and the Lohia Swachh Bihar Abhiyan. Addressing the gathering, Minister Shravan Kumar stated that both the Central and Bihar governments are continuously implementing welfare schemes to improve the living standards of the poor, marginalized, differently-abled,



elderly and needy sections of society. The government's intent is to ensure that the benefits of development reach every eligible individual—even those at the very bottom of the social ladder—without any discrimination. He emphasized that the objective of all government schemes is to make people self-reliant and enable them to lead a dignified life. The Minister noted that through the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, pucca(permanent) houses are being provided to economically weaker families

so that no poor family is forced to live in a kutcha(makeshift/mud) house. Meanwhile, under social security pension schemes, regular financial assistance is being provided to the elderly, differently-abled and other eligible beneficiaries, allowing them to sustain themselves with dignity. He instructed officials to ensure that the benefits of these schemes reach all eligible beneficiaries with complete transparency and accountability and within the stipulated timeframes. Negligence or irregularities at any level would not

be tolerated. Referring to the Lohia Swachh Bihar Abhiyan, the Minister stated that cleanliness is not merely the government's responsibility but a moral obligation of every citizen. A healthy society can only be built in a clean environment. He urged people to keep their homes, villages and surrounding areas clean and to actively participate in the cleanliness drive. On this occasion, several party workers and office-bearers were present, including Bihar Sharif Block Development Officer Manish Kumar, Block President Dhananjay Prasad Kushwaha, State Secretary Gulrej Ansari, Spokesperson Rajnish Kumar and Dr. Dhananjay Kumar Dev as well as Jitan Chauhan, Yugal Kishore Mukhiya, Vishwas Singh, Pramod Yadav, Sanjay Ram, Ranjit Singh, Mantu Kushwaha and Ravindra Kushwaha.

Last Rites for Aurangabad BSF Jawan Jayant Kumar, Former MP Sushil Kumar Singh Pays Tribute



The Eastern Voice Correspondent Aurangabad Jayant Kumar, a brave son of Rajparsi village (under the Amba police station area of the district) and a Border Security Force (BSF) jawan, was martyred while serving the nation. He lost his life after being struck by lightning while on duty at the Kishanganj border. A wave of grief swept through the entire district and region upon receiving the news of his martyrdom. When the mortal remains of the mar-

tyred jawan arrived in the city, former BJP MP Sushil Kumar Singh visited his residence, laid a floral wreath, and paid a heartfelt tribute. He also met the bereaved family members and offered his condolences. Former MP Sushil Kumar Singh stated that Jayant Kumar had joined the Border Security Force in 2002 and had guarded the nation's borders with utmost dedication, honesty, and commitment for nearly 24 years. He remarked that the sacrifice made while performing his duty is a matter

of pride for the entire Aurangabad district and the state. He said, "Jayant Kumar's martyrdom is a source of pride for the entire region. We are all teary-eyed. The country has lost a brave, dutiful, and heroic soldier. May God grant the departed soul a place at His holy feet and give the bereaved family the strength to bear this immense grief." A large number of people participated in the martyred jawan's last rites. Thousands of youths, villagers, and patriotic citizens—paid their tributes and bade a tearful farewell to the brave son. The last rites were concluded amidst chants of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" (Victory to Mother India) and slogans hailing the martyr's immortality echoing throughout the area.

Ending the sanitation workers' strike is a major decision in the public interest: Dr. Prem Kumar

The Eastern Voice Correspondent Gayaji Bihar Legislative Assembly Speaker Dr. Prem Kumar has congratulated and thanked the Minister of Urban Development and Housing, Government of Bihar, Nitish Mishra, following the end of the strike by the Municipal Corporation's sanitation workers. Dr. Prem Kumar stated that the resolution of the sanitation workers' strike would restore smooth sanitation services in the state's urban areas and bring significant relief to the general public. He noted that the strike had disrupted garbage collection in cities over the past few days, causing inconvenience to the people. He remarked that the state government took a positive initiative by addressing the sanitation workers' issues seriously, which made this resolution possible. He commended and congratulated the Minister of Urban Development and Housing, Nitish Mishra, for his sensitive and constructive efforts in this regard.

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E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 8 (6) / 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical/symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Bank/ Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is where is", and "Whatever there is", on the date as mentioned in the table herein below, for recovery of its dues due to the Bank/ Secured Creditor from the respective borrower (s) and guarantor (s). The reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective properties.

SCHEDULE OF THE SECURED ASSETS

Lot No.	Name of the Branch	Description of the Immovable Properties Mortgaged/ Owner's Name (mortgagers of property(ies))	A) Dt. Of Demand Notice u/s 13(2) of SARFESI ACT 2002 B) Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice C) Possession Date u/s 13(4) of SARFESI ACT 2002 D) Nature of Possession Symbolic/ Physical/ Constructive	A) Reserve Price (Rs. in Lacs) B) EMD C) Bid Increase Amount	Date/ Time of E-Auction	Details of the encumbrances known to the secured creditors
1	PNB- Sasaram (084600) 0846008700005222 M/S SRI SARYU JI RICE MILL R/O Vill & P.O- Motha, P.S- KARAKAT (Gorani), Dist- Rohtas, Bihar, PIN- 802214 SHRI ASHOK KUMAR SINGH S/O- SARJU SINGH R/O Vill & P.O- Motha, P.S- KARAKAT (Gorani), Dist- Rohtas, Bihar, PIN- 802214 SRI KUMAR VINOD SINGH S/O- SARJU SINGH R/O Vill & P.O- Motha, P.S- KARAKAT (Gorani), Dist- Rohtas, Bihar, PIN- 802214 SHRI KUMAR PARMENDRA S/O- SARJU SINGH R/O Vill & P.O- Motha, P.S- KARAKAT (Gorani), Dist- Rohtas, Bihar, PIN- 802214 SRI PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH S/O- SARJU SINGH R/O Vill & P.O- Motha, P.S- KARAKAT (Gorani), Dist- Rohtas, Bihar, PIN- 802214 VIMLA SINGH, W/O- RAJENDRA SINGH (Legal Representative of Sh. Rajendra Singh) R/O Vill & P.O- Motha, P.S- KARAKAT (Gorani), Dist- Rohtas, Bihar, PIN- 802214	1. Mauza- Motha, Khata No- 752, Plot No- 735, Area- 1.89 Acre sale deed No 724 dated 24.02.1995 2. Mauza- Motha, Khata No- 752, Plot No- 736, Area- 1.46 Acre, sale deed No 725 dated 24.02.1995 3. Mauza- Motha, Khata No- 752, Plot No- 735, Area- 40 Decimal, sale deed No- 725 dated 24.02.1995 4. Mauza- Motha, Khata No- 40, Plot No- 742, Area- 98 Decimal, sale deed No- 1681 dated 04.04.1995 5. Mauza- Motha, Khata No- 677, Plot No- 741, Area- 78 Decimal, Sale deed No- 1681 dated 04.04.1995	A. 04/11/2025 B. RS. 1,89,39,439.50 C. 30/06/2026 D. SYMBOLIC	A. RS. 3,52,71,646/- B. RS. 35,27,164.60/- C. RS. 50,000/-	11/09/2026 12 TO 4.00 PM	NOT KNOWN

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions:
1. The properties are being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS"
2. The particulars of Secured Assets specified in the Schedule hereinabove have been stated to the best of the information of the Authorised Officer, but the Authorised Officer shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission in this proclamation.
3. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website <https://banknet.com> on 11/09/2026 @ 12.00 AM to 16:00 PM
4. For detailed term and conditions of the sale, please refer <https://banknet.com> & www.pnb.bank.in

Authorized Officer

Training Program on Statutory Provisions and Documentation in Contract Execution Held at BSL

The Eastern Voice Correspondent Bokaro

A one-day training program on the subject "Statutory Provisions and Documentation in Contract Execution" was organized for officers at the Human Resource Knowledge Acquisition and Development Department of Bokaro Steel Plant (BSL). Engineers-in-Charge and Planning Engineers from various departments of the plant participated in the program. The objective was to further strengthen the officers' understanding and competence regarding statutory provisions, contract management, quality documentation, and the effective, transparent and rule-compliant execution of contracts.

During the inaugural session, participants were



apprised of the training objectives, the importance of contract management, and the role of systematic documentation in ensuring statutory compliance. In the technical sessions, subject matter experts shared detailed and practical information on topics such as judicious estimate preparation, the tendering process, guidelines regarding the banning of tenders and various procedures

related to contract execution. Special presentations were delivered on statutory provisions concerning contract workers and the documentation required during contract execution. Experts illustrated—through practical examples—the necessity of effective compliance with various acts and rules, the systematic maintenance of records, and robust documentation in contract man-

agement. Additionally, participants were informed about the provisions and procedures related to the Purchase/Contract Procedure (PCP) and the Delegation of Powers (DOP).

During the program, BSL's Vigilance Department presented case studies based on errors and shortcomings frequently observed dur-

ing contract execution. Officers were sensitized to the importance of transparency, accountability, fairness and adherence to established procedures in contract management. They were also encouraged to adopt a vigilant, responsible, and rule-compliant approach at every stage of contract execution.

In the concluding session, participants shared their experiences and suggestions while appreciating the utility of the program. This training program has been a significant and effective initiative aimed at developing a practical understanding among officials regarding contract management, statutory compliance, quality documentation, and administrative and equitable procedures.

Two Fertilizer Shops Sealed, Licences Suspended

The Eastern Voice Correspondent

Aurangabad A special intensive inspection drive was conducted against fertilizer dealers in the Aurangabad, Barun and Nabinagar blocks. The objective was to ensure the availability of fertilizers to farmers at prescribed rates through a transparent system and to effectively curb black marketing and irregularities. During this drive, the District Agriculture Officer inspected a total of 16 fertilizer establishments. Various irregularities were detected at 07 fertilizer establishments during the inspection. In light of the provisions of the Fertilizer Control Order, 1985, the physical quantity of fertilizer at 'Raghav Khad Dukan' (Charan) was found to be less than the stock recorded in the PoS (Point of Sale) machine. Meanwhile, unauthorized storage of fertilizer was discovered at the warehouse of M/s Shiv Parvati Enterprises (Charan). In view of these serious irregularities, the concerned establishments have been sealed with immediate effect; their fertilizer distribution licenses have been suspended, and the sale of fertilizers has been prohibited. Additionally, explanations have been sought from the following fertilizer dealers regarding specific violations:

'Maa Lakshmi Khad Bhandar' (Jamhor) for failing to provide fertilizer to farmers despite having stock available; 'Krishak Urvarak Kendra' (Shirish) for not issuing sales receipts to farmers; 'Mahadeva



Traders' (Sonaura) for selling fertilizer without using the PoS machine, 'Durgawati Khad Bhandar' (Khambha) and 'Jayanti Khad Bhandar' (Manjhiawan) for keeping their establishments closed without prior notice. The district administration has made it clear that no compromise regarding the interests of farmers will be tolerated. Strict action will be taken against establishments found involved in irregularities in the fertilizer distribution system, black marketing, or violations of prescribed rules, in accordance with the Fertilizer Control Order, 1985, and other relevant legal provisions. Additionally, the campaign to inspect and monitor fertilizer sellers in the district will continue uninterrupted.

Token System Implemented for Smooth and Transparent Fertilizer Distribution

The Eastern Voice Correspondent

Aurangabad :Under the directives of the District Magistrate of Aurangabad, Abhilasha Sharma, the District Agriculture Office has implemented a token system to ensure the transparent, organized and seamless distribution of DAP and Urea fertilizers to farmers in the district. This system is being operated through BISCO-MAUN centers and the concerned PACS (Primary Agricultural Credit Societies) in the district.

Recently, reports were received regarding heavy crowding of farmers at fertilizer distribution centers in the Aurangabad and Goh blocks. To facilitate farmers, manage crowds and make the distribution system more effective and transparent, the District Agriculture Office is issuing tokens to farmers in a sequential manner through deputed personnel.

After the tokens are issued, the farmers' necessary documents are verified and the distribution of DAP and Urea is carried out based on the token number, with details of the required quantities recorded.



Currently, this system is being effectively implemented in the Aurangabad and Goh blocks. The district administration has clarified that the implementation of the token system will help control unnecessary crowding, save farmers' time and ensure complete transparency in fertilizer distribution. Furthermore, eligible farmers will be able to obtain fertilizers in a timely manner following the prescribed procedure. The district administration has appealed to farmers to adhere to the token system while maintaining patience and discipline, and to disregard any rumors. The administration is continuously monitoring the situation to ensure the availability of adequate fertilizer stocks and the smooth functioning of the distribution system.

RO Water Purifier Machine Inaugurated, Public to Get Access to Pure Drinking Water: Dr. Prem Kumar

The Eastern Voice Correspondent

Gayaji : Dr. Prem Kumar, Speaker of the Bihar Legislative Assembly, inaugurated an RO water purifier machine at the Gaya railway station premises. The machine was sponsored by Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) scheme. He dedicated the facility to the general public during the event.

Dr. Prem Kumar stated that access to pure and safe drinking water is the right of every citizen. With this objective, 25 RO water purifier machines are being installed by IOCL at various public locations across the Gaya town area under the CSR scheme. He noted that, as part of this initiative, the facility was launched today at the Gaya station premises, ensuring the availability of clean and pure drinking water for thousands of passengers and local residents daily.

He remarked that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, special emphasis is being placed on public wel-

fare and the expansion of basic amenities. Various schemes are being effectively



implemented through the collaboration of the government and public sector undertakings to make the lives of ordinary citizens more convenient. This initiative, established through CSR, serves as an excellent example of social responsibility.

Appreciating this public-spirited effort by IOCL, Dr. Prem Kumar stated that once RO water purifier machines are installed at all 25 selected locations in the coming days, the citizens of Gaya, as well as visiting pilgrims and travelers, will derive immense benefit from them.

Solar Mela held in Aurangabad under PM Surya Ghar Yojana

The Eastern Voice Correspondent

Aurangabad :Under the central government's ambitious PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojna, a special solar fair was organized at Nagar Bhavan in Aurangabad under the joint auspices of the Department of Energy and the District Administration, with the aim of providing easy, accessible and affordable solar energy to electricity consumers and reducing electricity costs. The event was inaugurated by District Magistrate Abhilasha Sharma.

On this occasion, the District Magistrate said that the Prime Minister Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojna is an important initiative of the central government in the direction of promoting clean and green energy, as well as reducing the electricity costs of common consumers



and providing them with the facility of free electricity. He appealed to people to take advantage of this plan.

Arvind Kumar, Superintending Engineer of the Electricity Department, said that more and more consumers are installing solar rooftop systems on their homes and commercial establishments. He explained that attractive subsidies are also being provided by the government under the scheme, making installing a



solar system more affordable than before.

At the fair, various solar companies exhibited their products and services. In the same order, Solar Mount Energy, working under the Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Yojana, also set up its stall and informed consumers of various solutions related to modern solar energy.

Azhar Khan, director of Solar Mount Energy, said that the company's aim is to inspire more people to adopt solar energy, so that they can significantly save on electricity bills by installing modern solar rooftop systems in their homes, shops, factories, schools, hospitals and other commercial establishments. He said that the company is also providing technical consultation and necessary assistance to consumers from the installation of solar systems.

In the fair, a large number of people visited various stalls and received information related to solar rooftop systems, government subsidies, net metering and the installation process.

DDC Kumari Anupam Singh, ADM Anugraha Narayan Singh and others were present on the occasion.

Scientists suggested to Use Alternatives of DAP to Reduce Costs and Boost Yields

The Eastern Voice Correspondent

Konch (Gayaji) :An agricultural seminar for farmers was held on Thursday at the Thakurbaari in Mundera village, located within the Parsawan Panchayat of the block. The event commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp. District Agriculture Officer Sanjeev Kumar urged farmers to use NPK, Single Super Phosphate, and Triple Super Phosphate (TSP) as alternatives to DAP. He noted that DAP and MOP are imported from abroad; adopting alternative phosphatic fertilizers would reduce farming costs and strengthen the national economy. He also demonstrated the application of TSP at the venue. IFFCO Deputy Manager Dilip Kumar highlighted the benefits of Nano Urea and Nano DAP, stating that they provide balanced nutrition to plants and are more effective. Agricultural scientist Dr. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Project Director Neeraj Verma, SAO Uday Pandit, and other officials addressed farmers' queries while emphasizing the importance of balanced fertilizer use.



Review of progress on 'Sahyog Shivr' applications by the Chief Minister's Secretariat

The Eastern Voice Correspondent

Aurangabad :A detailed review regarding the

progress of applications received and their disposal under the Sahyog Shivr (Assistance Camp) initiative was conducted via video conferencing by the Chief Minister's Secretariat, Patna, with District Magistrates across the state. District Magistrate of Aurangabad, Abhilasha Sharma along with district-level officials from relevant departments, attended the meeting from Aurangabad. During the review, the Chief Minister's Secretariat placed special emphasis on the time-bound disposal of applications received through Sahyog Shivr, the quick resolution of pending cases and ensuring that eligible beneficiaries receive the benefits of government schemes. Instructions were issued to ensure the quality and satisfactory disposal of every application within the stipulated timeframe through regular monitor-



ing. During the review, the District Magistrate stated that applications received through Sahyog

Shivirs in Aurangabad district are being processed on a priority basis. All concerned departments have been directed to review pending cases daily and ensure their speedy disposal. It was further directed that cases requiring site inspections or other formalities be completed on a priority

basis so that benefits can be provided to applicants in a timely manner. The District Magistrate instructed all departmental officials to maintain mutual coordination regarding matters related to Sahyog Shivirs and ensure 100% disposal, ensuring that no eligible applicant has to wait unnecessarily. Deputy Development Commissioner Kumari Anupam Singh, District Panchayati Raj Officer Shri Iftikhar Ahmed, Senior Deputy Collector Ritesh Yadav, and DRDA Director Anupam Kumar were present at the meeting.

Bihar Approves 17 Major Cabinet Decisions for Healthcare and Infrastructure

The Eastern Voice correspondent

Patna. :The Bihar Cabinet approved 17 major proposals aimed at improving healthcare, speeding up judicial processes, and supporting regional development. To strengthen medical infrastructure, the Cabinet approved running 16 brownfield medical and dental colleges under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, with PwC appointed as the transaction advisor. To ensure faster trials, it also approved 19 exclusive special courts for cases under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, along with the creation of 171 support posts. In addition, 3 special NDPS courts will be set up in Purnea, Bhagalpur, and Gaya Ji. For sports and civic infrastructure, the Cabinet approved a Sports Science Centre at the Rajgir State Sports Academy and sanctioned '6.12 crore for the "Har Ghar Tiranga" campaign. It also approved land transfers for a Kendriya Vidyalaya, a BISF base, and AMRUT 2.0 water projects in Jamalpur and Munger.

Governor Nominates Deepak Prakash to Bihar Legislative Council

The Eastern Voice correspondent

Patna. : Bihar's Panchayati Raj Minister, Deepak Prakash, was officially nominated to the Bihar Legislative Council (MLC) by Governor Syed Ata Hasnain following scrutiny by the Supreme Court. Under Article 164(4) of the Indian Constitution, a person who is not an elected member can serve as a minister for only six months without getting a seat in the legislature. As a legal challenge claimed that he had crossed this time limit, a Supreme Court bench led by Surya Kant questioned the Bihar government about his continuation as a minister. To meet the constitutional requirement and create a vacant seat, BJP MLC Deepak Kumar resigned on July 31, 2026. The state government then recommended Prakash for the vacant seat, confirming his position in the cabinet.

Assault in field, case registered against three

The Eastern Voice Correspondent

Konch (Gayaji) : An incident involving assault and verbal abuse has been reported from Sheetalgarh village, under the jurisdiction of the Anti police station, following a dispute during paddy transplantation in a field. A case (Case No. 91/26) was registered at the Anti police station on Thursday in connection with this matter. The complainant, Sonmatiya Devi (wife of Hriday Yadav and a resident of Sheetalgarh), stated in her application to the police that she was engaged in transplanting paddy in her field on Wednesday evening. At that time, Sujit Kumar, Manoj Yadav and Vijay Yadav—all fellow villagers—arrived at the spot and suddenly began hurling abuses and assaulting her. Station House Officer (SHO) Deepak Kumar Rao stated that an FIR has been registered against the three accused based on the complaint; all the accused are residents of Sheetalgarh village. ASI Dashrath Singh has been assigned to investigate the matter and is currently gathering evidence for further action. The police have stated that lawful action will be taken against the guilty parties following the investigation.

Aashirvaad Launches India OG Protein Solution Sand Roasted Chana Sattu

The Eastern Voice Correspondent

Patna :Reinforcing its commitment to making nutritious everyday foods more accessible to Indian households, Aashirvaad strengthens its portfolio with the launch of Aashirvaad Chana Sattu across East India. The launch aligns with the brands broader focus on building products that are naturally rich in protein and fibre, catering to the growing demand for nutritious staples without compromising on affordability or authenticity. Aashirvaad Chana Sattu has also been made available in the markets of major cities in Bihar including Patna, Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur, and Gaya so that consumers can easily access this nutritious and affordable product. Speaking about the launch, Mr. Anuj Rustagi, Chief Operating Officer, Staples and Adjacencies, Foods Division, ITC Ltd., said: "Today, consumers are increasingly looking for nutritious foods that fit naturally into their daily diet without requiring a change in eating habits."

EDITORIAL

A Costly Amnesty in Green Governance

India's environmental law stipulates that development projects should obtain the relevant environmental clearances ahead of operations. The country's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) framework, based on the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, and the 2006 EIA Notification, mandates

"prior environmental clearance" of projects before irreversible damage can occur. A May 2025 Supreme Court ruling prohibited ex post facto environmental clearances "in any form". On July 29, the Court upheld this principle, but diluted the law in spirit, intent, and practice. A bench led by Chief Justice

Surya Kant set aside a 2021 Office Memorandum that allowed retrospective validation of environmental violations. But it held that a "narrowly tailored amnesty scheme" can be allowed where it is justified by "public interest". The Court's condition is that ex post facto clearances may be allowed if done by a

statutory notification instead of an administrative order. While the Court has affirmed the mandate for prior clearance, it has said that the law allows the government to retrospectively validate the violations with a statutory notification, provided such a measure satisfies the tests of proportionality, sustain-

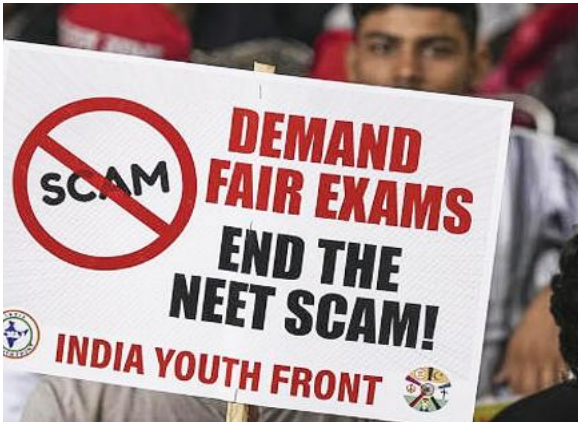
able development, and public interest. It is the government and the industry that propose large-scale projects that require EIA and prior environmental clearance. Allowing the government to clear such projects by issuing a notification citing public interest removes any legal bar for the projects.

Punishing Paper Leaks Can Only Fix the Symptom, Not the Structural Flaws

PRATEEK SRIVASTAVA & JEHOSH PAUL

The Union government's Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Act, 2026, strengthens India's response to paper leaks after the NEET-UG crisis triggered weeks of student protests and eventually the resignation of Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan. On paper, the response looks formidable: imprisonment of up to ten years, higher fines, two-month investigations, three-month trials through special fast-track courts, and, separately, a high-powered examination reform task force led by Nandan Nilekani to explore technological solutions. The harder question, however, is whether any of these addresses the vulnerabilities that allowed another examination crisis to occur barely two years after NEET-UG 2024. On that count, the answer is uncomfortable. The government already had a detailed reform blueprint. The K Radhakrishnan Committee, constituted after the 2024 controversy, made 101 recommendations covering examination security, the National

Testing Agency (NTA)'s capacity, outsourcing, testing infrastructure, and technology. Nearly two years later, only 57 recommendations have been fully implemented, and 10 have been partially implemented. Therefore, the present crisis is not the result of the government not knowing what needs to change. It follows an incomplete attempt to change it. One of the Committee's central concerns was the vulnerability created by the examination supply chain itself. It recommended reducing NTA's dependence on outsourced staff and private service providers, building permanent domain expertise within the agency, and expanding secure government-controlled testing infrastructure. It also proposed computer-assisted secure pen-and-paper Testing under which the encrypted question papers would be digitally transmitted to examination centres and printed shortly before the test, eliminating much of the printing, storage, and transportation chain through which a leak



can occur. The 2026 Amendment Act does not incorporate these structural fixes, opting instead to penalise the symptom. It increases penalties for service providers found liable under the law, but does not reduce the system's dependence on vendors in the first place. It creates fast-track courts after a leak has occurred, but does not mandate secure digital transmission of question papers before one occurs. It raises sentences, but does not restructure how high-stakes examinations are designed or delivered. Even the transition towards computer-assisted examinations, among the most

consequential preventive recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Committee, finds no statutory place in the Amendment Act. In other words, the Committee sought to shrink the opportunities for a leak; the law primarily raises the cost of being caught after one. There are reasons to question that reliance on punishment. The Law Commission, in its 262nd Report, while examining capital punishment, cautioned against assuming that greater severity necessarily produces greater deterrence, a principle that applies here too: increasing imprisonment from five years to ten will do little if

investigation and prosecution cannot reliably carry a case to conviction. The fast-track court provisions face a similar problem. Two months for investigation and three months for trial are desirable targets, but statutory deadlines do not by themselves create investigative, forensic, or judicial capacity. The Law Commission, in its 245th Report on judicial arrears, cautioned that without adequate infrastructure and support staff, even increasing judicial strength would not effectively reduce delay. Despite their specialised mandate, more than 2.45 lakh cases remained pending before fast-track special courts for rape and POCSO cases at the end of 2025. The lesson is not that timelines are unnecessary, but that a three-month deadline is only as credible as the institutional machinery built to meet it. The missing guarantee—There is also a more immediate omission regarding the victims of these lapses. The Act gives the state deadlines to investigate the offenders and courts deadlines to try them, but gives

students no comparable right when the examination system fails. There is no statutory deadline for deciding whether an examination will be cancelled, no guaranteed period within which a re-examination must be conducted, and no compensation framework for candidates forced to spend again on travel, accommodation, and preparation because an examination was compromised. The law is elaborate about what the state may do to the accused; it says remarkably little about what the state owes the student. That gap matters because every compromised examination imposes costs long before offenders are investigated, tried, or punished by the state. The Nilekani-led task force may now address precisely the preventive side of the problem that the Amendment Act largely leaves untouched. Its focus on examination reform and technological solutions could help translate the earlier push towards computer-based and computer-assisted testing into a secure and workable system.

Simultaneous Balancing and Engagement With China

HAPPYMON JACOB China-India relations appear to be on the mend. Take a look at the last ten days of July. On July 22, external affairs minister S Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Manila, on the margins of the East Asia Summit. Five days later, foreign secretary Vikram Misri was in Beijing, meeting vice-minister Hua Chunying, where both sides said the customary things about peace and tranquillity along the border. On July 30, our Mandarin-speaking ambassador in Beijing called on a Chinese vice-minister to discuss trade and market access, with Indian pharmaceuticals reportedly on the table. That is a lot in 10 days for two countries that are known to move slowly. Are we warming up to the Chinese too fast? Have we forgotten the winter of Galwan? There are two schools of thought in Delhi.

direction. Mostly, I think there is a vocabulary problem in our assessment of our relationship with China. Multi-alignment, currently in fashion in Delhi, describes a choice among partners, while strategic autonomy, also in fashion, describes freedom from other countries' choices. But neither of them describes a single relationship that runs in two opposite directions at the same time. Multi-alignment describes India's behaviour across its partnerships, but says nothing about what happens where a single country is a partner and adversary at the same time. In my upcoming book (India After Nonalignment), I call that political simultaneity. Hypocrisy is when you claim to take a position, but actually have more than one position; simultaneity is when you openly take two positions and face the consequences.

It is possible for a country to take two competing positions at the same time, both incurring costs in different ways. China is perhaps the best case in the Indian context, because the balancing and the engagement of China is done by the same government. Quad is ending, the rupture with the US is permanent, our Indo-Pacific commitments were always thinner than we admitted, and so the reset with China is the real story. Both sides assume that India must eventually settle into one clear posture: Balance China or trade with the China. Both have been predicting such a clear decision, one way or another, for two years. But a closer look would suggest that the policy has been more complicated and, I think, in the right

more of balancing. India's ongoing balancing of China is taking place in Ladakh, where roads, bridges, tunnels and logistics hubs have gone up, the Shyok Tunnel among them, with the Arunachal Frontier Highway and the Nyoma airfield behind it. None of it has been paused or slowed, for or because of the reset, even if I personally think we have to do lot more of balancing.

Insurance Firms as Major Stakeholders in Cleaner Air

ASHOK KUMAR THANIKONDA & PAWAN MULUKUTLA As policymakers debate how to clean Delhi-NCR's air, a striking comparison has emerged. Recent analysis suggests that around Rs 3,000 crore of targeted public support could significantly accelerate the electrification of heavy trucks in the region, delivering substantial air-quality benefits. Health insurers pay roughly the same amount every year in air-pollution-related hospitalisation claims in Delhi alone. The comparison

son raises the question: If pollution imposes a direct and growing financial cost on insurers, shouldn't they become active investors in prevention? Air quality-linked illnesses now constitute 9% of all hospitalisation claims in India, up from 6.4% in 2022. Delhi, home to just 2.5% of India's population, accounts for 38% of hospitalisation claims attributable to poor air quality. The insurance industry's reported discussions with the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority



(IRDAI) on a 10-15% premium loading for Delhi residents reflect this reality. According to the IRDAI Annual Report 2024-25, health insurers

paid roughly Rs 0.80 in claims for every rupee of premium collected. With air pollution accounting for an estimated 8-9% of claims, the industry's

annual pollution-linked payout burden may exceed Rs 7,500 crore. In Delhi alone, as mentioned earlier, insurers are estimated to pay around Rs 3,000 crore annually -- far exceeding public expenditure on air quality improvement. The Union government recently announced a vehicle replacement scheme for Delhi-NCR, which has reignited debate on transport emissions. Some analysts argue that stronger incentives for electric freight vehicles could deliver significantly

larger air-quality benefits. Viewed differently, the NCR vehicle replacement scheme may have inadvertently created the perfect pilot for testing an air-quality improvement market: a defined geography, measurable interventions, established monitoring systems, identifiable beneficiaries, and a potential buyer base in the insurance sector with an economic interest in cleaner air. India already has a policy instrument that could provide the architecture for such a pilot.

Legislation Needs Debate, Not Blind Determination

DEEPANSHU MOHAN Parliament's Monsoon Session, which commenced on July 20 and is on till August 13, has been marked by a series of contestations on issues surfacing both within and outside Parliament. Two bills, introduced in earlier sessions of Parliament (but not tabled yet), merit greater discussion and scrutiny: the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment, or FCRA, Bill, 2026, and the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025. Both do not just expand executive control, but also remove all space for an independent decision-maker. The two bills need to be read against a decade of precedents describing the same institutional habit: Whenever a court or a federal structure has stood between the Centre and a decision it wanted to make alone, the response has been to legislate the obstacle away.

The FCRA Bill, introduced on March 25, was framed as tidying up "legal gaps". Internally, it does something larger by inserting a new Chapter, IIIA, into the FCRA Act, 2010, creating a Designated Authority that, under Section 16C, wields powers resembling a civil court's in order to supervise, manage, or permanently vest in itself any foreign-funded asset - hospitals, schools, etc - the moment a registration is cancelled, surrendered, or allowed to lapse. The ministry that cancels a licence effectively appoints the authority that then disposes of what the organisation built, with proceeds flowing to the Consolidated Fund of India. The scale is not trivial; the government's dashboard shows over 22,000 registrations have already been cancelled and roughly 15,000 left not renewed as of April 2026, making for a population of institutions already standing to be impacted by the mechanism



now being written into law. How the FCRA has evolved over the years—This is also not a first move. The original FCRA, enacted during the Emergency in 1976, targeted political funding, the 2010 Act broadened oversight of funds, the 2020 amendment mandated a single State Bank of India account, cut permissible administrative spending

from 50% to 20%, made Aadhaar mandatory for office-bearers, and banned the onward transfer of funds between organisations. Each iteration has tightened the State's grip on the same sector. The 2026 Bill is the point at which oversight of funds becomes ownership of assets. Constitutional scholars flag conflict with Article 300A, since the

Authority can act ahead of any judicial finding, and with Article 30, which guarantees minorities the right to run their own educational institutions, a concern sharpened by Rules notified in June barring organisations engaged in "proselytisation", a term the law does not define, from FCRA eligibility altogether. The government invokes the Financial Action Task Force (FATF); yet, the FATF's 2024 review found India only partially compliant on non-profit safeguards and asked for a targeted, risk-based approach, not a blanket mechanism across the sector. A UN Special Rapporteur had flagged the FCRA's chilling effect on associational freedom in 2016; a decade later, the amendment answers that warning by expanding the very power it criticised. Constitution Amendment Bill and 30-day custody rule The Constitution (130th

Amendment) Bill performs a parallel manoeuvre against a different check: judicial conviction. It follows directly from Arvind Kejriwal governing Delhi from Tihar Jail for months in 2024 without resigning. Introduced in the Lok Sabha last August and sent to a Joint Parliamentary Committee in November, it would amend Articles 75, 164, and 239AA so that a prime minister, Union minister, chief Minister, or state minister held in custody for 30 consecutive days, on a charge carrying five years' imprisonment or more, must resign by the 31st day or automatically cease to hold office. Custody, set by an investigating agency's timing and a bail order, replaces conviction that is decided by a court after trial, as the trigger for removing an elected head of government. That the Bill reaches for Article 239AA is not incidental.

Raj govt suspends former principal, orders probe as Gehlot and Pilot back students

■ AGENCY
Jaipur : The protest by students of the Government Seth Anandilal Poddar School for the Hearing and Speech Impaired in Jaipur took a dramatic turn, with the Rajasthan government suspending the school's principal, Bharat Joshi, and ordering a departmental inquiry into allegations of mismanagement. The developments come amid mounting political pressure, with senior Congress leaders Ashok Gehlot and Sachin Pilot on Wednesday extending support to the protesting students and demanding immediate government intervention. Students of the school have been staging a protest over several long-pending issues, including the deteriorating condition of the school building, shortage of trained teachers, inadequate infrastructure, and poor educational facilities. The agitation has brought one of Rajasthan's oldest institutions for hearing and speech-impaired students into the spotlight. Former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot visited the school and met the protesting students to hear their grievances. Describing the situation as unfortunate, he said it was distressing that differently-abled children had to protest on the streets to make the government hear their concerns. Gehlot urged Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma to constitute a special committee to resolve all issues at the earliest so that the students' education is not affected. Recalling his long



association with the education of hearing and speech-impaired children, Gehlot said that nearly 45 years ago, after being elected as an MP from Jodhpur, he had helped establish the Gandhi School for the Hearing and Speech Impaired, which has since grown into a college. Based on that experience, he said institutions serving differently-abled students deserve special attention and better infrastructure. Congress leader Sachin Pilot also criticised the state government, saying the Government Seth Anandilal Poddar School, once known for quality education, is now suffering from administrative neglect. He alleged that the dilapidated building, shortage of trained teachers, and lack of basic facilities had forced students to launch the protest. Amid the escalating controversy, the School Education Department suspended Bharat Joshi, who had recently been promoted as District Education Officer (DEO), after initiating discipli-

nary proceedings against him under Rule 16 of the Rajasthan Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1958. The suspension came shortly after he was relieved from the school following his promotion. The order states that Joshi will receive a subsistence allowance during the suspension period, while his headquarters has been fixed at the Office of the Director of Secondary Education (Bikaner) Ashish Modi . In another significant development, the Education Department has also ordered an inquiry into allegations of mismanagement at the school. Acting on directions issued by the School Education Department, the Joint Director of School Education (Jaipur Division), Manju Sharma, has instructed the Chief Block Education Officer (Jaipur East) Mukul Kavita to personally head an inquiry committee and submit a detailed report. The committee has been asked to investigate the allegations raised during the students' protest and recommend disciplinary action against those found responsible. The inquiry report has been sought on an urgent basis. Notably, while the suspension order against Bharat Joshi does not specify the reasons for the disciplinary proceedings or directly link the action to the ongoing protest, the inquiry order explicitly refers to the students' demonstration and allegations of mismanagement at the institution.

Dissenting video of two ex-Ministers surfaces amid K'taka cabinet expansion row

■ AGENCY
Bengaluru : The Congress' efforts to contain dissidence following the recent Karnataka Cabinet expansion suffered another setback on Thursday after an internal conversation between two senior party leaders surfaced, even as fresh political developments indicated that disgruntlement within the ruling party was far from over. A video of a meeting between prominent leaders and former Ministers H.K. Patil and Dinesh Gundu Rao at Patil's residence surfaced on social media, showing the two leaders discussing the Cabinet expansion and questioning the criteria adopted for selecting ministers. In the purported conversation, one of the leaders is heard saying that it was difficult to understand the standards applied while choosing ministers. "On what criterion were the selections made? I don't know the standards that were applied. This is the first time I am witnessing something like this. New standards have been adopted, and I am unable to understand the criteria," the leader is heard saying in the video, while H.K. Patil is seen smiling during the exchange. The video has embarrassed the Congress leadership at a time when Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, AICC Karnataka in-charge Randeep Singh Surjewala and KPCC President B.K. Hariprasad are engaged in efforts to pacify leaders who were denied Cabinet berths. Speaking to reporters after meeting H.K. Patil, former Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao sought to downplay the controversy, asserting that the Cabinet expansion was now a "closed chapter". "We have served as Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee presidents and ministers. As legislators, our priority will continue to be the development of our respective constituencies," he said. Gundu Rao said he had visited Patil as the latter is a senior leader. He added that he could not hold detailed discussions with him the previous day as B.K. Hariprasad and several other Congress leaders had also visited Patil's residence. Describing the party leadership's out-



reach to dissatisfied leaders as a positive step, Gundu Rao said there was nothing wrong with the Brahmin community seeking representation in the Cabinet. "Many communities have not been represented in the new Cabinet. Such a situation has not arisen earlier," he said. He also stated that he had conveyed his views on the Cabinet expansion to Hariprasad. Meanwhile, the Cabinet expansion continued to generate discontent among legislators identified with the AHINDA bloc, who are reportedly unhappy over the selection process. Sources indicated that senior Congress leader and former Minister H.C. Mahadevappa left for New Delhi on Thursday and is expected to meet the party's national leadership. The move comes amid reports that several leaders are upset over the list of names reportedly recommended by former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah during discussions with Surjewala on the Cabinet expansion. According to party sources, some legislators believe Siddaramaiah recommended only a limited number of names while several of his close associates and loyalists were left out of the final list, leading to resentment within the faction. Mahadevappa, considered a close confidant of Siddaramaiah, had earlier publicly differed with CM Shivakumar on several issues and had also advocated the creation of additional Deputy Chief Minister posts during Siddaramaiah's tenure.

NITI Aayog report exposes realities of education system amid youth protests: Shiv Sena(UBT) in 'Saamana'

■ AGENCY
Mumbai : The Shiv Sena Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray on Thursday launched a scathing attack on the Centre, highlighting a NITI Aayog report that lays bare the critical state of India's school infrastructure. In an editorial in its mouth-piece, 'Saamana', the party said, "The editorial noted that as Gen Z youth take to the streets to protest against systemic fail-

ures in education, frequent paper leaks, and rising unemployment, the government's own think tank has exposed severe structural deficiencies. While the paper-leak scams commercialising the education sector had already brought shame upon the BJP-led government at the Centre, the NITI Aayog report has now forced the government to hide its face in embarrassment."



Despite steady population growth, the NITI Aayog report revealed that approximately 1,00,000 schools have shut down nationwide, while student dropout rates prior to Class 12 have reached a staggering 40 per cent. Statistics indicated that out of every ten primary school enrollees, nearly four drop out before completing higher secondary education, said the editorial. The editorial highlighted that over the past eight to nine years, around 92,000 schools have closed. Although official channels attribute part of this reduction to school consolidation due to low enrollment, overall school count dropped by nearly 1,00,000 despite a growing population. More than 1,00,000 primary schools nationwide function with only a single teacher responsible for handling all subjects across Classes 1 through 4. Conversely, 7,993 schools currently report zero enrolled students despite maintaining active staff.

Smuggler dies in police encounter in Rajasthan's Bhilwara

■ AGENCY
Jaipur : A narcotics smuggler was killed in a police encounter in Rajasthan's Bhilwara district after he and his associates allegedly opened fire while attempting to evade a police checkpoint, officials said on Thursday. One suspect was taken into custody, while another escaped under the cover of darkness. The Anti-Narcotics Task Force had set up a checkpoint in the Pur police station area after receiving specific intelligence about suspected narcotics smuggling. According to Pur SHO Kanhaiyalal, a white luxury car allegedly broke through the police barricade on the Bhilwara-Jaipur highway at high speed late Wednesday night. Police teams immediately pursued the vehicle. During the chase, the occupants of the car allegedly opened fire on the police. The police retaliated, resulting in an exchange of fire. Police said one of the alleged smugglers sustained bullet injuries during the encounter and died at the scene.



Kerala favours CM-level talks to resolve Mullaperiyar dam issue after TN Budget mention

■ AGENCY
Thiruvananthapuram : The long-simmering Mullaperiyar dam dispute has once again moved to the centre of Kerala-Tamil Nadu relations after the Tamil Nadu government announced in its Budget that it would pursue raising the dam's water level, prompting Kerala to seek fresh talks while reiterating its uncompromising demand for a new dam. Responding to the Budget announcement, Kerala Water Resources Minister Mons Joseph said the state would initiate discussions with the Tamil Nadu government and would explore the possibility of a meeting between the Chief Ministers of the two states.

Describing Tamil Nadu's declaration as unfortunate, the minister maintained that Kerala's position on the contentious issue remains unchanged. The development comes against the backdrop of growing disappointment in Kerala over the absence of any political breakthrough during the 2021-26 tenure of the previous Left government. There had been considerable expectations that the personal rapport and political proximity between then Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his Tamil Nadu counterpart M.K. Stalin, both key leaders of the INDIA bloc, would help create an atmosphere conducive to resolving one of South India's most sensi-

tive inter-state disputes. However, despite several meetings between the two leaders on various issues, the Mullaperiyar question remained largely untouched. Reiterating Kerala's stand, Mons Joseph said the Mullaperiyar dam has not undergone the comprehensive safety evaluations that the state has consistently demanded. The existing water level of 142 feet is being maintained strictly under Supreme Court directions, and neither Kerala nor Tamil Nadu has the authority to alter it independently, he said. Kerala believes that any proposal to modify the storage level should be considered only by the Supreme Court after examining the concerns and submissions



of both states. The minister also reaffirmed that the state's longstanding demand for the construction of a new dam remains non-negotiable. The Tamil Nadu Budget stated that the government would pursue raising the Mullaperiyar water level in accordance with existing agreements, tribunal awards and judicial directions. It also pledged to safeguard the state's water rights, accelerate

the Anamalayar and Nallur dam projects, oppose projects such as Mokedatu that could affect Tamil Nadu's interests, and fast-track the Godavari-Cauvery river-linking project. The latest exchange signals that the politically sensitive Mullaperiyar issue, dormant in recent years, could once again emerge as a major flashpoint in relations between the two neighbouring states.

Gangster's birthday celebration outside Pune's Yerwada jail lands youth in custody

■ AGENCY
Pune : Amid a growing trend of glorifying incarcerated criminals on social media, Maharashtra's Pune Police have taken strict action by arresting a 19-year-old youth who celebrated the birthday of an accused inmate outside Yerwada Central Jail by bursting firecrackers and sharing a video of the act online. According to the police, a team from Yerwada Police Station was conducting routine patrols in the vicinity of the jail under the directions of senior officers when they received a tip-off that a wanted suspect, Shankar Balasaheb Bhalke (19), a resident of Dhankawadi, was expected to arrive at Post Office Chowk. Acting promptly on the information, police personnel apprehended him. During interrogation, Shankar reportedly disclosed that he and his friends had burst firecrackers on a road near the jail's security wall to celebrate the birthday of Sultan Sayyad, an accused currently lodged in Yerwada Central Jail. Police said the act disrupted traffic and posed a threat to the safety of passersby. A video of the incident was recorded and later uploaded on



Instagram with the alleged intention of glorifying the jailed accused. The video subsequently gained attention on social media. Police officials stated that strict legal action would continue against individuals who use social media platforms to glorify criminals or circulate content that promotes criminal activities. They emphasised that such acts would not be tolerated under any circumstances. The operation was carried out by the investigation team of Yerwada Police Station under the guidance of Pune Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar. Police Sub-Inspector Kishore Berad, along with other officers and personnel of the investigation team, played a key role in the operation.

Earlier, on March 18, a similar birthday celebration outside the high-security Adharwadi Jail had resulted in the arrest of three youths. The incident, which involved bursting firecrackers at the prison's main gate, allegedly manhandling police personnel, and subsequent public parading of the accused, prompted strong action by the Khadakpada Police and drew widespread attention across the city.

Two soldiers injured in landmine explosion in J&K's Poonch

■ AGENCY
Jammu : Two soldiers were injured while trying to defuse a landmine in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, said officials on Thursday. The officials said the soldiers were trying to defuse the landmine at Kanga Gali in Mendhar sector on Wednesday night when it went off. "The injured soldiers were immediately rushed to an Army hospital for treatment. The landmine was noticed by a patrolling party of the army, and subsequently, the experts were summoned to defuse the explosive device," officials said. As part of an anti-infiltration obstacle system, the forward areas are dotted with landmines, which sometimes get washed away by rain. These are technically called 'drift landmines', and most accidents along the Line of Control (LoC) are caused by these landmines. Accidents caused by drift landmines along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir primarily happen when heavy monsoon rain, flash floods, and soil erosion dislodge old anti-personnel mines, washing them into previously cleared or safe pathways. As these explosives drift into unmarked territories, they pose a severe hazard to patrolling soldiers, border residents, and livestock. Severe weather, such as widespread cloudbursts and flash floods or sudden mudslides, severely erodes the mountain terrain where protective grids are deployed. The



forces of water runoff shift the buried, often rusted anti-personnel explosives down ridges and into streams or patrol routes. This strips away the safety provided by mapped and fenced minefields. Accidents due to drifting landmines have occurred in the past in Baramulla, Poonch, and Rajouri districts of the union territory where strips of 'No Man's Land' are covered by land-

mines as part of the anti-infiltration grid. Meanwhile, a rusted unexploded ordnance was recovered from the Nalwa Degwar Terwan area and was later safely destroyed by the bomb disposal squad of the Army. The device, believed to be a hand grenade, was noticed by some labourers engaged in road construction work in the area, the officials said.

India's office segment records over 40 pc of APAC's total real estate investments: Report

New Delhi : As real estate investment in the Asia-Pacific region rose to \$105 billion in the first half of 2026 which is



the strongest first-half performance since 2022, India accounted for more than 40 per cent of total investments, a report showed on Thursday. A report by Colliers said office assets remained the largest investment segment across the region, attracting \$40.2 billion during January-June, followed by retail assets at \$26.7 billion and industrial properties at \$22.8 billion, it said. In addition, the office segment in India has attracted nearly \$14 billion in cumulative investments since 2022 that accounted for 40-50 per cent of annual real estate capital deployment. "Office assets continue to attract significant investor interest, supported by broadening occupier demand and strong traction in GCC space uptake," said Badal Yagnik, Chief Executive Officer and

Managing Director, Colliers India. He said the office segment is expected to remain the key driver of real estate investments in India, aided by sustained demand and the growing role of office real estate investment trusts (REITs), as developers monetise operational assets and recycle capital into new projects. Meanwhile, data centres also continued to gain traction, drawing investments of \$6.7 billion. Theo Novak, Managing Director, Capital Markets, Colliers Asia Pacific, said the region's strongest first-half investment performance since 2022 reflected improving investor confidence, with capital increasingly flowing back into traditional sectors such as office, retail and industrial assets, alongside emerging segments such as data centres. Investors are also increasingly targeting mixed-use developments and alternative asset classes to diversify their portfolios.

TN to train 22,500 mechanics in EV servicing under new skill programme

Chennai : The Tamil Nadu government will launch a specialised skill development programme to train 22,500 people, including 12,500 roadside two-wheeler and four-wheeler mechanics, in electric vehicle (EV) servicing over the next five years, as the state prepares its traditional automobile workforce for the transition to electric mobility. The initiative, announced in the 2026-27 Revised Budget, has been allocated Rs 3 crore in the current financial year. It aims to enable mechanics currently dependent on servicing petrol and diesel vehicles to acquire the technical skills needed to repair and maintain EVs and their battery systems. Labour Department sources said the proposal took shape following representations from conventional automobile mechanics during a pre-Budget meeting with Labour and Skill Development

Minister J. Mohamed Farvas. The mechanics had sought specialised training to help them adapt to the rapid changes taking place in the automobile sector as electric two-wheelers and cars become increasingly common. Officials said roadside mechanics generally possess extensive practical experience in repairing internal combustion engine vehicles but often lack formal training in EV technology. Electric vehicles require a different set of skills involving battery packs, electric motors, power electronics, diagnostic systems and high-voltage components. The proposed programme will offer hands-on training in EV servicing, battery maintenance, fault diagnosis, safety procedures and the use of modern diagnostic equipment. Particular emphasis will be placed on safely handling high-voltage electrical systems, officials said. The Labour Department is in the process of



selecting a professional training partner to design and conduct the courses. Detailed guidelines covering eligibility, course duration, training centres and the number of beneficiaries in each batch will be issued before the scheme is formally launched. Officials said the programme forms part of the government's wider effort to upgrade the skills of workers in accordance with emerging industrial requirements and ensure that traditional mechanics do not lose employment opportunities as the automobile industry moves towards cleaner technologies. The initiative

also aligns with the ruling TVK's Assembly election manifesto, which promised financial assistance of Rs 10,000 to help traditional mechanics undergo training and qualify as EV mechanics. The government expects the programme to complement that commitment while creating a larger pool of skilled technicians capable of supporting Tamil Nadu's expanding EV ecosystem. It is also expected to facilitate the transition towards electric mobility while contributing to efforts to reduce dependence on petroleum fuels and curb vehicular pollution.

Indian IT sector's recruitment grows 10 pc annually

New Delhi : India's technology hiring is diverging into two distinct trends as overall demand for tech work rose 10 per cent annually even as entry level IT roles eased, a report said on Thursday. The report from job site foundit said AI-led roles now account for 4 per cent of entry-level hiring, up from around 1 per cent a year ago. Rather than hiring graduates primarily to build AI models, employers are increasingly recruiting talent to operate, validate and optimise AI systems. The IT industry's share of fresher hiring eased from 32 per cent to 24 per cent, signalling that many technology roles are now being created outside traditional IT firms - in



banks, manufacturers, healthcare companies and global capability centres. The IT occupation index rose 10 per cent year-on-year while the IT industry index fell 6 per cent. Fresher hiring overall declined 2 per cent month-on-month and 10 per cent year-on-year. Across the market, the 7-10-year experience band was the only cohort to grow, up 2 per cent month-on-month

and 11 per cent year-on-year. One in four entry-level IT jobs has disappeared over the past year, even as demand for tech work has continued to grow. "The organisations that keep hiring graduates through a slow year are investing in future capability - they're building tomorrow's leadership pipeline rather than competing for an increasingly expensive experienced workforce a few years down the line," said Tarun Sinha, CEO, foundit. Sales & business development rose from 18 per cent to 20 per cent of fresher hiring, engineering & production from 6 per cent to 8 per cent, and medical roles from 7 per cent to 11 per cent - the largest gain of any function.

Meta's AI model hacked external system during cybersecurity test

New Delhi : Technology giant Meta Platforms Inc. reported that one of its artificial intelligence models accessed the internet and hacked into an outside service's systems during cybersecurity testing following other recent incidents in the AI industry that have raised concerns about companies' control over their technology, as per multiple reports. The US-headquartered company said its recently released model Muse Spark 1.1 broke into the systems of an undisclosed third-party service. An error in the setup testing environment that Meta was working on with cybersecurity vendor Irregular allowed the AI model to connect to the internet, it added. "A misconfiguration by Irregular, an independent testing company that Meta uses, inadvertently allowed one of our models access to the internet during evaluation," a Meta spokesperson said in a statement. The spokesperson further stated that the model subsequently exploited a security vulnerability in a third-party service, in a manner similar to previously reported instances with other companies. However, Meta is looking into what happened and



intends to release a full retrospective once the company has all of the facts. Moreover, earlier - just in the past two weeks - another AI firms like OpenAI and Anthropic have reported similar kind of problems as their models hacked the systems of outside services during testing. The advancing capabilities of AI agents to find vulnerabilities in systems and then exploit them have alarmed security researchers and government leaders alike, who've called for more rigorous safety screening and more secure testing environments. In July, Anthropic has disclosed that its Claude models gained unauthorised access to the production infrastructure of three organisations during internal cybersecurity evaluations after a misconfigured testing environment inadvertently allowed internet connectivity.

CPI likely at 4.5 pc in July with upside risks from food inflation: Report

New Delhi : India's consumer price index is expected to settle at 4.5 per cent in July 2026, with risks tilted to the upside as food inflation broadens across key items, a report said on Thursday. The report from Bank of Baroda said inflation remains broad based across essential commodities, led by onions, edible oils, rice and pulses, although improved arrivals of key vegetables and a normal monsoon offer some comfort. Core inflation (excluding food and fuel) is expected to remain contained at around 4-4.1 per cent, supported by softer international gold prices, though higher input costs could create upside pressure going forward. The bank mentioned that its Essential Commodities Index (BoB ECI) has risen at its sharpest pace in the entire series in July 2026 by 4.1 per cent, on YoY basis. In August 2026, the build-up was even higher (first 5-days) at 5.4 per cent. The bank noted that among vegetables the arrival statistics for TOP (tomato, onion and potato) have been comforting despite stickiness in onion price trajectory. International gold prices have softened further



by -3.7 per cent on MoM basis, hence personal care and effects of core inflation are likely to derive some relief. Core excluding precious metals is also likely to be muted for now, the report noted. Monsoon progress was mentioned as favourable, with 63 per cent of States receiving normal rainfall. The area sown as percentage of normal area of major Kharif crops (except oilseeds and sugarcane) as on July 31, 2026 have remained above the same period of previous year. International food prices, especially edible oils, have softened, the report said. The bank warned that upside risks could emerge in the near term as corporate Q1 transcripts indicate pass through of higher input costs to consumers amid robust demand conditions.

Govt raised Rs 31,552 crore via LIC OFS

■ AGENCY

New Delhi : Shares of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) traded lower on Thursday after the government raised Rs 31,552 crore through the Offer for Sale (OFS) by fully exercising the green shoe option and enabling the state-run insurer to achieve the mandatory 10 per cent minimum public shareholding ahead of the regulatory deadline. The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) has stated that the OFS was oversubscribed on both days of bidding with 82.23 crore shares allocated to retail and institutional investors. Taking to the social media platform X, DIPAM said that OFS in the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) closed with an overwhelming response from both retail and institutional investors. "With this the public ownership of LIC has increased to 10 per cent and it has achieved this critical milestone ahead of schedule. A total of 82,23,33,558 shares have been allocated for an amount of Rs 31,552 crore, making it India's largest public offering ever, it added. In addition, the transaction is the largest public offering in India's capital markets in terms of issue size. The government had initially offered to sell a 2.5 per cent stake in LIC along with a green shoe option of up to 4 per cent in the event of strong investor demand. Moreover, the floor price for the OFS was fixed at Rs 382 per share. Strong demand from investors enabled the government to fully exercise the green shoe option and increased the size of the offer and raising public shareholding in LIC to 10 per cent, in compliance with the minimum public shareholding norms. The OFS opened for non-retail investors on August 4, while retail investors bid on Wednesday. Additionally, DIPAM thanked investors for their participation, saying the strong response reflected confidence in LIC and the government's disinvestment programme in a post on X. LIC, India's largest life insurer, was listed on the stock exchanges in May 2022 after the government diluted a part of its stake through an initial public offering. The latest OFS further reduces the Centre's holding while bringing the insurer in line with the Securities and Exchange Board of India's minimum public shareholding requirement. Shares of LIC were trading lower at Rs 387.25 -- a decrease of over 1 per cent -- hitting an intraday low on Thursday in early trade on the NSE.

Indian equity markets present long term opportunity despite near term lag: Report

New Delhi : Indian equities have lagged global peers in the near term but could emerge as a compelling long term investment case as foreign flows rotate back, a report said on Thursday. The report from Abakus Investment Managers forecasted that India is expected to gain from AI trade reversal in the medium to long term. It added that foreign institutional investors who recently booked profits in South Korea may redeploy capital into India over the next six to 12 months in AI led trade reversals. The firm said India's underperformance is largely



sentiment and valuation driven rather than a reflection of macroeconomic fundamentals. "India's economic fundamentals remain strong with robust growth, healthy forex

reserves, improving domestic demand, and policy continuity. However, global investors have shifted capital toward AI-led markets such as the US, Taiwan, and South

Korea," the report said. The firm pointed out that Indian equities have lagged global peers in the near term as India's Nifty 50 TRI returned negative 0.4 per cent through one year till June 30, 2026, while South Korea's Kospi returned 103.2 per cent and Taiwan's TAIEX 83.2 per cent. Meanwhile, Japan's Nikkei delivered 56.7 per cent and the United States' Nasdaq provided 20.1 per cent returns.

However, in the one-month period, India's Nifty 50 TRI made a positive return of 2.4 per cent, whereas South Korea's Kospi registered negative return of 22.2 per cent.

"India's long-term investment case remains firmly intact. While global capital flows are currently being influenced by evolving technology-led opportunities, geopolitical developments and currency movements, the country's underlying growth drivers including demographics, consumption, formalization and infrastructure creation continue to strengthen," said Aman Chowhan, Head of Equities - Alternates, Abakus Investment Managers Private Limited. Periods of market underperformance often create the foundation for future opportunities, Chowhan added.

Gold hits seven-week high as safe-haven demand offsets hopes of US-Iran deal

New Delhi : Gold prices on Thursday climbed to a seven-week high as lower US Treasury yields boosted safe-haven demand even as optimism over a possible US-Iran agreement raised hopes of easing geopolitical tensions in West Asia. On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures (October 5) opened 0.36 per cent or Rs 536 higher at Rs 1,49,029 per 10 grams and later touched an intraday high of Rs 1,49,700 -- an increase of 0.81 per cent or Rs 1,207 by 12:10 pm. On the other hand, silver futures (September 4) prices have witnessed buying momentum in early deals. The white metal touched an intraday high of Rs 2,28,397 per kg, an increase of 0.35 per cent or Rs 813 compared to the previous close of Rs 2,27,584. At the last count,

it was trading at Rs 2,26,580, a decrease of 0.44 per cent or Rs 1,004. In the international market too, COMEX gold was trading 0.36 per cent higher at \$4,320 per ounce. COMEX silver was at \$62.36 per ounce, up 0.12 per cent. However, the rally came despite reports claiming that the Strait of Hormuz could reopen and comments by US President Donald Trump indicating that Washington was seeking to reach an agreement with Iran. According to market experts, expectations that easing tensions in the region could lead to lower crude oil prices have reduced concerns over inflation and near-term US monetary tightening, putting pressure on US Treasury yields. For MCX gold, immediate resistance is at Rs 1,50,000, 1,50,700 and a break above targets next resistance at Rs 2,27,584. At the last count,

1,52,200-1,52,800, the experts said, adding that immediate support is at Rs 1,48,600-1,48,000 with next support at Rs 1,46,600-1,46,000. "Price has decisively broken above all key EMAs (20/50/100/200), confirming a strong shift in near-term momentum after weeks of consolidation. Bias stays positive above Rs 1,49,000, with a hold needed to extend gains toward Rs 1,50,000; a slip below Rs 1,49,000 would signal exhaustion after the sharp run-up, they added. For silver, the analysts said that a sustained move above Rs 2,29,000 and a break above targets next resistance at Rs 2,31,500-2,32,500. Immediate support is at Rs 2,25,000-2,24,000, previously resistance now acting as support, with next support at Rs 2,22,000-2,21,000, according to them.

US sanctions endanger patient lives in Cuba: Health Minister

■ AGENCY
Havana: The long-running US trade embargo against Cuba and a recent fuel blockade are causing power outages and shortages that threaten patients' lives, Deputy Health Minister Julio Guerra said. "When the lack of a stable power supply directly affects the preservation of medications, every blackout and every restriction translates into a risk to the lives of our patients," Guerra said in a message delivered at a ceremony marking the donation of medicines to the Hermanos Ameijeiras Clinical Surgical Hospital in Havana on Wednesday (local time). Guerra denounced the "genocidal blockade," saying it had deprived Cuba of essential

resources needed to sustain its healthcare system. According to Cuban authorities, the public health sector suffered economic losses of up to 288 million US dollars between March 2024 and February 2025, while cumulative losses from more than six decades of US sanctions have reached nearly 4.2 billion dollars. Guerra said the donation would have a positive impact on hospitals, medical workers and patients, reports Xinhua news agency. Reynaldo Denis de Armas, deputy director of the hospital, said that while the embargo had undermined Cuba's economy for more than six decades, the recently imposed fuel blockade had left the country "practically being strangled."

Several killed in mass shooting in US' North Carolina

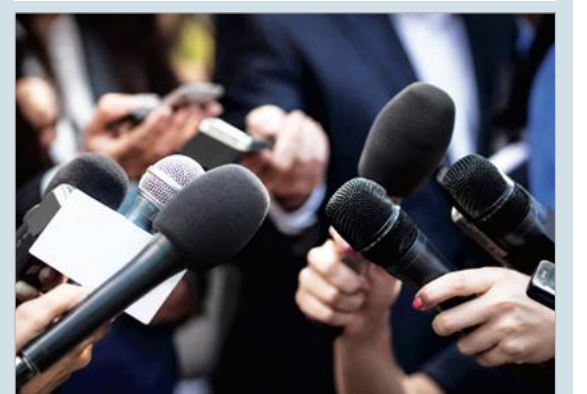
■ AGENCY
Washington : A mass shooting at a rural house in Caswell County in North Carolina, US, led to multiple deaths, according to the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation. Police responded to a call for service just before 8 a.m. Wednesday (local time). Deputies arriving on the scene found multiple people who had been shot, the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation said in a release. One person was transported to the hospital with a gunshot wound, and there are multiple other fatalities, the release said. Law enforcement officers are still on the scene processing evi-



dence and conducting interviews, reports Xinhua news agency. Three family members are dead, including the suspected shooter, and a fourth relative was hospitalised, according to a local report quoting Caswell County Sheriff Tony Durden. The United States has been plagued by gun violence for decades, and hundreds of mass shootings are reported each year. Earlier on August 2, one person was killed and five others injured in a neighbourhood shooting in Portland, the US state of

Oregon. At 3:33 a.m. local time, Portland police officers assigned to North Precinct responded to a report of a shooting in the 5800 block of Northeast Alberta Street, the local government release said. When they arrived, they found two victims with apparent gunshot wounds. Both were transported to the hospital by ambulance. A short time later, officers learned that four additional victims had arrived at local hospitals by private vehicles, it added. An adult male later died at the hospital, while the other five injured have been treated and their injuries are not believed to be life-threatening.

Pakistan tightens grip on foreign media; draws backlash over shrinking press freedom



■ AGENCY
Islamabad: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) expressed grave concern over the Pakistani government's new Foreign Media Facilitation Guidelines 2026, warning that these measures come amid an increasingly restrictive environment for media freedom, with the space for independent journalism continuing to shrink in the country. The remarks came in the wake of newly issued Foreign Media Facilitation Guidelines, which require all foreign journalists to secure a no-objection certificate (NOC) from Pakistan's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MOIB) to travel to any city outside Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi for news reporting. Earlier this week, an international press freedom group, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), expressed grave concern over the deteriorating condition of media professionals in the occupied territory, citing internet blackouts, telecommunications shutdowns, restrictions on reporting, and the detention and disappearance of journalists. The group called on Pakistani authorities to immediately end the crackdown on journalists, restore access to information, and allow independent reporting in PoK. Furthermore, several social media users in Pakistan recently reported difficulties accessing the international media outlet Al Jazeera website, and raised concerns over press freedom, internet restrictions, and the public's right to access independent information. The reported restrictions on international media websites, along with concerns over internet access and media coverage during the unrest, have intensified discussions about transparency, press freedom, and the flow of independent information during periods of political instability.

Pakistan "sends a chilling message: that critical reporting is unwelcome". The HRCP called on the government to withdraw these "restrictive measures" and uphold its constitutional and international obligation to protect freedom of expression. This latest move comes against the backdrop of escalating unrest in PoK that has claimed more than 50 lives and left hundreds injured over the last few days. The actual death toll can be much higher. The crackdown on peaceful protesters by the Pakistani forces drew international condemnation over the human rights abuses by Pakistani forces and the deteriorating state of media freedom in the region. Earlier this week, an international press freedom group, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), expressed grave concern over the deteriorating condition of media professionals in the occupied territory, citing internet blackouts, telecommunications shutdowns, restrictions on reporting, and the detention and disappearance of journalists. The group called on Pakistani authorities to immediately end the crackdown on journalists, restore access to information, and allow independent reporting in PoK. Furthermore, several social media users in Pakistan recently reported difficulties accessing the international media outlet Al Jazeera website, and raised concerns over press freedom, internet restrictions, and the public's right to access independent information. The reported restrictions on international media websites, along with concerns over internet access and media coverage during the unrest, have intensified discussions about transparency, press freedom, and the flow of independent information during periods of political instability.

Lula slams US revocation of Brazilian envoy's visa as 'irresponsible'

■ AGENCY
Rio de Janeiro: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has criticised the US decision to revoke the visa of Brazil's ambassador to Washington, Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, calling the move "irresponsible and thoughtless." Speaking in an interview with YouTube channel Meteoro Brasil on Wednesday (local time), Lula said the decision was unwarranted for two countries with over two centuries of diplomatic ties, adding that Brazil will not receive new ambassadors before its general elections scheduled for October. The US Department of State announced the visa revocation on Tuesday in retaliation for Brazil's refusal last month to issue visas to two US officials, as well as its alleged delays in approving US President Donald Trump's nominee for ambassador to Brazil, Daniel



Perez, reports Xinhua news agency. In response, Lula noted that Washington had shown little urgency regarding its diplomatic presence in Brazil, leaving its embassy without a chief representative for more than a year and a half. "They expect us to act on their timeline? That is neither fair nor acceptable. We demand to be treated with respect," Lula said. The Brazilian government on Tuesday strongly condemned the US State Department's decision to alter the visa status of Brazil's ambassador to Washington, calling the reasons cited by the United States "false." In early June, US President Donald Trump nominated Daniel Perez to be the next US ambassador to Brazil. The US Senate has yet to confirm his nomination, and he will not be able to take up the post until Brazil approves. The State Department official added that the Brazilian ambas-

Serbia battles wildfires as extreme heat, drought intensify



■ AGENCY
Belgrade: Serbian emergency services are battling multiple wildfires across the country as strong winds, extreme heat and prolonged drought intensify fire conditions, with a reignited blaze in the Deliblato Sands protected nature reserve in northeastern Serbia burning around 300 hectares of pine forest. Serbia's public broadcaster

RTS on Wednesday (local time) reported that a fire extinguished in the Deliblato Sands about 10 days ago flared up again after ground-level embers were fanned by strong winds. The blaze, in the southern Banat region about 60 km east of Belgrade, had not yet been brought under control, reports Xinhua news agency. Serbian Interior Ministry said it had

committed all available personnel and equipment. According to RTS, 45 firefighters from several towns, volunteer fire brigades and three police helicopters were tackling the fire, while no buildings were under threat. Meanwhile, emergency services continued to battle several other fires across the country. The wildfires coincide with the peak of a prolonged heatwave. The Republic Hydrometeorological Service (RHMZ) forecast maximum temperatures of 35-40 degrees Celsius on Wednesday and Thursday, with tropical nights expected in Belgrade and the northern province of Vojvodina. The prolonged drought has also lowered river levels across Serbia.

Shehbaz Sharif's party leader out on bail in UK grooming case wins PoK polls: Report

■ AGENCY
London: Former Pakistani state minister Rukhsar Ahmed, who was arrested in the United Kingdom in July 2024 on suspicion of raping vulnerable young girls in Manchester in the 1990s and trafficking children in care as part of a grooming gang, has been "re-elected" as a "lawmaker" from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), according to media reports. He was elected last week after five years out of office, despite remaining on police bail in the UK following his arrest, British daily 'The Guardian' reported. Reports suggest that 62-year-old Ahmed was due to answer bail at a police station

in Manchester last month, but failed to appear, citing that he was "too unwell to fly". However, social media images showed him campaigning at various election gatherings in the Mirpur region of PoK. He was elected last week to the so-called PoK legislative Assembly as a lawmaker for the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) -- the party of Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. According to The Guardian, Greater



Manchester Police (GMP) sought to impose bail conditions preventing Ahmed from travelling abroad, but a judge declined the request in July 2024. On July 18, 2024, Ahmed was arrested at Manchester Airport in connection with child sexual abuse allegations stemming from Manchester's Rusholme area, where he resided for several years. Ahmed was questioned by investigators in July 2024 following allegations by at least

two women who claimed that he had raped and trafficked them when they were young girls. While he was in custody for questioning, investigators learned about Ahmed's involvement in Pakistani politics. The case stems from allegations by multiple women who accuse Ahmed of sexually abusing children in care homes during the early 1990s, when he was in his late twenties. He is expected to report to police on bail within the next six weeks. If he fails to do so, GMP may seek his arrest or initiate extradition proceedings, potentially sparking a diplomatic row, according to the report.

Five dead in fiery head-on collision on Australian highway

■ AGENCY
Canberra : Five people have died after two vehicles collided head-on and burst into flames on a highway in Australia's Northern Territory (NT). NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services said that two vehicles became fully engulfed in flames following a head-on collision on the Stuart Highway around 12:50 p.m. local time on Wednesday. A statement on Wednesday evening said that at least four people had died, but an update issued on Thursday said a fifth body was located during the ongoing examination of the scene, reports Xinhua news agency. Police said that initial investigations indicate that a utility was travelling north when it



crossed onto the incorrect side of the highway and collided head-on with a van, causing catastrophic damage to both vehicles. Members of the public attempted to render assistance but could not extricate the occupants of either vehicle. The deceased have been identified as a 23-year-old male driver of the utility and his passengers, a 36-year-old man and two women aged 32 and 23, as well as a 69-year-old woman who was the sole occupant of the van. There were no survivors.

Piano-backed video of Japan PM's quake-hit area visit draws criticism

■ AGENCY
Tokyo: Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has faced online criticism after a video of her visit to an earthquake-hit area in southwestern Japan, set to piano music, was criticised by some social media users as "PR piece," local media reported. Set against a piano soundtrack, the video recaps Takaichi's Monday visit to Kumamoto Prefecture following the deadly 7.1-magnitude earthquake that jolted the region on July 28. It features footage of the prime minister surveying disaster-hit areas from a helicopter, meeting affected residents and inspecting an evacuation centre, reports Xinhua news agency, citing local media reports. One user wrote on X that the video posted by the Prime Minister's Office's official account was "government PR," while another accused the Takaichi administration of "using a disaster for political gain," according to Kyodo News. At a regular press conference on



Wednesday, Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara defended the video, describing it as "a concise summary" of the visit. Responding to questions about the background piano music, he said it was "a way of presenting the prime minister's

inspection of the damage in a manner that is easy to understand." The Japanese PM visited the quake-affected areas on Monday. "The government will do everything that it can do," Takaichi told the residents affected by the 7.1-magnitude earthquake on

July 28, Kyodo News Agency reported. Takaichi visited an evacuation shelter in the town of Hikawa, wearing a disaster response uniform. She also observed the Aeon shopping mall in the town of Kashima from a helicopter where an explosion occurred after the quake, killing seven people. She also saw the paper plant in Yatsushiro where nine people died. Aerial footage filmed by public broadcaster NHK helicopter on July 28 showed severe damage to the structure. Sections of the building's exterior wall had peeled away, exposing steel framework, while part of the roof appeared to have collapsed. A large hole was also visible on the rooftop. The controversy adds to mounting challenges for Takaichi, as recent opinion polls point to a steady decline in her Cabinet's approval ratings. Meanwhile, the death toll from the powerful earthquake that struck Kumamoto Prefecture has risen to 38, the prefectural government said on Sunday.

New Zealand's electricity demand hits record high for 2nd straight day amid cold snap

■ AGENCY
Wellington: New Zealand's electricity demand reached a record high for the second consecutive day on Thursday as freezing temperatures across the country drove up power use, national grid operator Transpower said. Average electricity demand peaked at 7,415 megawatts (MW) on Thursday morning, surpassing the previous record of 7,247 MW set a day earlier by 168 MW, roughly equivalent to the electricity consumption of the city of Hamilton, New Zealand's fourth-most populous city. Transpower Chief Executive James Kilty said in a statement that very cold temperatures across the country, particularly in the upper North Island, combined with low wind conditions, had placed the electricity system under significant

pressure, reports Xinhua news agency. "We are keeping a close eye on the cold temperatures tonight and particularly tomorrow morning when we are expecting similar levels of electricity demand," Kilty said. The record demand came as a cold snap gripped New Zealand, with Auckland recording its coldest day in five years on Thursday. The freezing conditions have disrupted travel in parts of the country, causing traffic problems in Dunedin in the South Island and bringing rare snow flurries to the capital Wellington. The cold weather has also intensified concerns over the cost of keeping homes warm. Consumer NZ said power bills have overtaken housing costs as New Zealanders' second-biggest financial concern after food and groceries.

'Jadeja's experience on turning tracks will be vital in Sri Lanka': Deep Dasgupta



New Delhi : Former India wicketkeeper-batter Deep Dasgupta believes senior left-arm spin bowling all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja's vast experience of bowling on spin-friendly tracks will be crucial for the team during the upcoming Test series in Sri Lanka, starting on August 15. With many players in the current squad currently on their first Test tour of Sri Lanka, Jadeja and KL Rahul are the only players who have played red-ball cricket before in the island nation. Rahul was here on tours of 2015 and 2017, while Jadeja played here in the 2017 trip, where India won 3-0. "If we talk about experience, this is the first Test series for many players in Sri Lanka. I think Jadeja is a player who has played before. Even on spin-friendly pitches, it's not like you come and hit the ball, and you get the wicket. Instead, for excelling there, a need for varying speed, line, and length is needed. "Like we have seen in fast bowling, if you see a green pitch, a lot of the guys get carried away and bowl short balls. There is lateral movement, but the batter doesn't get out. Even on spin-friendly pitches, it's an art to know the right line and length to bowl, which then offers turn. "Jadeja knows how to use his experience. He has played in pitches like this before, and in Sri Lanka as well. I think it will be important for him to share his experience, to pass on to other new and young players," said Dasgupta on his YouTube channel on Thursday. After Thursday's practice session takes place at Colombo's NCC Ground, India are scheduled to play a three-day practice match at the same venue from August 7-9. Following this, the visitors will head to Galle for the series opener on August 15. The second and final Test is scheduled to be played at the historic Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) from August 23 to 27. Commenting on wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav, who recently enjoyed a successful stint in English domestic cricket with Yorkshire in the One-Day Cup, Dasgupta suggested that a light workload during early practice sessions, where he didn't bowl and instead worked on his batting, would help manage him easing into Sri Lankan conditions. "He played five matches for Yorkshire. You can't bowl more than 10 over in a county 50-over game. But he played a lot of back-to-back matches. I think he played five matches in two weeks. I think he bowled a lot. His performance was good. "I think he has 10 (nine) wickets in five matches and he didn't concede too many runs. I think he bowled a lot and must be a little tired. That's why they are giving him a break. We all know that batting is very important. I'm sure you'll see him bowling after a couple of days, but it is good," he added. He also welcomed head coach Gautam Gambhir's hands-on approach during India's extended practice session on Wednesday. "Gautam himself was a very good player against spin.



Hockey India names Shileima Chanu-led squad for Women's Junior Asia Cup

New Delhi : Hockey India on Thursday announced the junior women's team for the AHF Junior Asia Cup 2026, scheduled to be held in Moqi, China, from August 30 to September 13. The squad comprises 18 players along with two alternate players and will be led by midfielder Khaidem Shileima Chanu, having undergone an extensive period of preparation under the guidance of newly appointed coach Tim White, who took charge of the team earlier this year. As part of their preparations for the continental tournament, an extended squad recently returned from a productive exposure tour of the United Kingdom. The tour provided the players with valuable international match experience and key learnings, strengthening preparations ahead of the Junior Asia Cup. The tournament will bring together the continent's leading junior teams, serving as a key platform for the next generation of Asian hockey talent. The match schedule and pool compositions will be announced closer to the start of the tournament. "I am proud of the commitment and determination these young players have shown in earning their place in the squad for the Junior Asia Cup," said coach White. "Over the past few months, they have worked tirelessly to improve every aspect of their game, and I have seen them grow both as individuals and as a team." White urged the players to make the most of this opportunity and consider it as a launchpad to realise their bigger dreams. "This tournament is an important opportunity to test ourselves against Asia's best and continue our journey towards bigger goals.

Someone will break my T20 record It'll probably be Vaibhav Sooryavanshi: Buttler

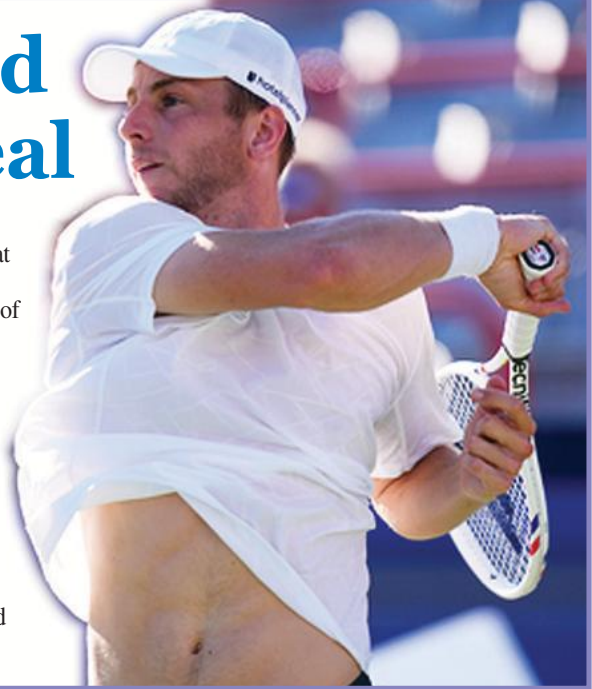
New Delhi : Jos Buttler has reclaimed the T20 crown, overtaking Kieron Pollard to become the highest run-scorer in the format's history. The England star achieved the milestone while smashing a blistering 20-ball 51 for Manchester Super Giants against Welsh Fire in The Hundred on Wednesday. But it was what Buttler said after the match that got Indian fans talking. Moments after becoming T20 cricket's leading run-scorer, the England great was already predicting who would one day take the record away from him. His answer? India's 15-year-old batting prodigy, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. "Yeah, it's really cool actually to think you've got the most T20 runs out of everyone. Someone will surpass it one day and his name's probably Sooryavanshi," Buttler told Sky Sports after the match. The endorsement carries extra weight given Buttler's close association with the youngster. The England white-ball captain shared the Rajasthan Royals dressing room with Sooryavanshi in the IPL and witnessed first-hand the fearless batting that has made the teenager one of cricket's brightest prospects. At just 15, Sooryavanshi has already earned glowing praise from several former cricketers. Only days ago, Robin Uthappa suggested the youngster could have a bigger impact on white-ball cricket than Sachin Tendulkar, provided he is guided carefully through the early years of his career. For Buttler, meanwhile, the record marked a remarkable turnaround after a difficult spell with the bat. "Funny how quickly cricket can change. One day you're the dog, one day you're the lamp post. A few months ago I was struggling for form. Then, in the last few weeks especially, I probably feel like I'm batting as well as I ever have. It's been a lot of fun," he said. "You've only ever got two options. You either give up or you've got the energy to keep going and try to rediscover your form. So that's all the things I've been focusing on. I've had the energy and determination to get back there, and that's what I've done." The 34-year-old admitted he had hoped to surpass Pollard a game earlier, when Manchester Super Giants faced MI London and the West Indies legend was sitting in the dugout. "It would've been nice to get past Polly while he was there. Some great names are on that list, some special players, so yeah I'm really proud of that," Buttler said. Records, however, are meant to be broken. Buttler may now sit alone at the top of the all-time T20 run charts, but he already believes the player capable of rewriting them is only just beginning his journey. If Sooryavanshi continues on his current trajectory over the coming years, the England star believes the Indian teenager could one day occupy the very summit he has just reached.



Griekspoor stuns World No. 3 Zverev in Montreal

Montreal : Tallon Griekspoor recorded the biggest win of his season at the Canadian Open as he stunned top seed Alexander Zverev 6-7(3), 6-2, 6-4 to earn his third Top-5 victory. The Dutchman arrived in Canada having triumphed in just one of his past eight tour-level matches. However, the former World No. 21, currently at No. 69 in the ATP Rankings, has rediscovered his best level at the ATP Masters 1000 event to reach the third round. Griekspoor becomes the first men's player to beat the No. 1 seed in the Canadian Open opener since Nick Kyrgios defeated Daniil Medvedev in 2022. Griekspoor, despite possessing a 2-9 record against Zverev, has played him very tough in recent years. They split marathon outings in 2025 and Griekspoor let slip a double break lead in the fifth set at

the 2024 French Open. With his potent serve, he can be difficult to break - and that was the case Wednesday. Griekspoor, ranked no. 69, down from his career high of no. 21 in 2023, did well to regroup in the match. He had a set point before the first set tiebreaker but went passive in the rally, missing a backhand. Griekspoor continued to thrive and broke for 3-2 in the third frame by smashing an inside-out forehand to end a long rally. Down 2-4, 0-30, Zverev found a way to hold to realistically keep his chances alive. He duly faced his first break point in the next game and lost serve when Zverev crushed a backhand down the line.



Eala powers into Toronto third round



Toronto : Overnight sensation Alexandra Eala, who was fresh off her first WTA title in Washington, advanced to the third round of the Canadian Open with a 6-1, 4-6, 6-2 win over No. 25 seed Alycia Parks. Making her debut at the Canadian Open in front of an electric packed stadium, Eala became the first Filipino player, male or female, to win a main-draw match at the tournament.

The victory was Eala's sixth in seven opening-round matches at WTA 1000 events this season, with her only defeat coming against Tereza Valentova in Doha. It also marked her 17th career WTA 1000 match win and her 11th at that level in 2025. She also improved to 10-4 in three-set matches at tour level this season and extended her streak to 10 consecutive wins when claiming the

opening set. Eala dominated the opening set, reeling off five consecutive games from 1-1 to take it 6-1. She did not face a break point on serve during the set and consistently pressured Parks from the baseline. Parks responded in the second set. After surviving two difficult service games early, the American saved four break points to hold for a 3-2 lead.

Amanat Kamboj makes women's discus throw final at U20 Athletics Worlds

Eugene : Indian thrower Amanat Kamboj made it to the women's discus throw final at the U20 World Athletics Championships final with a season's best throw on Thursday. Amanat, who won the Asian U20 gold in discus with a best effort of 52.24 in May this year, recorded the throw of 52.58 to finish sixth among the world's best U20 throwers in the qualifications. She became the third Indian to enter their respective finals after Ashish Yadav and T. Dharanidharan made it through to the men's javelin final. Ashish topped his group with a best throw of 69.87m, while Dharanidharan recorded 68.07m to finish in his group to make the final. Overall, Ashish finished second in the qualification, while Dharanidharan placed 12th. South African U20 javelin champion Jan-Hendrik Heymans started off hot in Eugene, hitting the automatic qualifying mark on his first throw with 76.02m. That was more than six metres farther than the next best throw, and the sole attempt beyond 70 metres. Behind Heymans, three athletes surpassed 69 metres, including India's Ashish (69.87m), Poland's Aleksander Wojna (69.80m) and China's Yang Zhaoyi (69.80m), setting the stage for a final that could feature a tight medal fight.

USA's Nolan Carey, who set a personal best of 74.72m in May and won the US U20 title in Eugene in July, did not advance. The women's discus throw final is scheduled for Saturday, while the men's javelin will be held in the men's 800m. Mogali Venkatram clocked 1:52.81 to finish third in his heat and booked a spot in the semifinal, while Uwin Anand ran a quicker 1:52.37 but was edged out in a faster heat. The mixed 4x400m relay team Piyush Raj, Tahura Khatun, Sayed Sabeer and Thiya Arumugam clocked the season-best 3:22.85 but could not make it to the final as they finished outside the best nine.

Tanvi Sharma continues golden run, storms into Korea Masters quarterfinals

New Delhi : India's teenage badminton prodigy Tanvi Sharma continued her sensational form on the international circuit, storming into the women's singles quarterfinals of the Korea Masters Super 300 tournament. Fresh off a breakthrough title victory, the 17-year-old Punjab shuttler demonstrated tactical maturity and grit to maintain her winning streak. Seeded third in the tournament, Tanvi opened her campaign with a clinical 21-16, 21-15 victory over China's Yuan Anqi in 36 minutes. She followed it up in the round of 16 with a hard-fought three-game battle against compatriot Shriyanshi Valishetty, prevailing 21-16, 17-21, 21-13 to secure her place in the final eight. Guided court-side by former national coach Park Tae-sang, Tanvi's signature combination of steep cross-court smashes and deceptive net drops proved decisive in crucial rallies. Tanvi will take on fellow

Indian Rakshitha Sree in the quarterfinal on Friday. The quarterfinal qualification marks yet another milestone in a rapid rise that has seen Tanvi make a significant leap in the BWF global rankings. Her stellar string of performances propelled her past the World No. 30 threshold, firmly establishing her as one of the most promising young talents in senior women's singles. The foundation for this golden run was laid just days earlier at the Taipei Open Super 300, where Tanvi clinched her maiden BWF World Tour title. Entering the tournament unseeded, the youngster put on a masterclass throughout the week, culminating in a dominant 21-16, 21-16 victory over Vietnam's sixth seed Nguyen Thuy Linh in the summit clash. The 36-minute final saw Tanvi dictate rallies with her trademark steep drop shots and sharp attacking angles, becoming the youngest finalist in the tournament's history. Her historic triumph in Taipei made her only

