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15 Indian Tourists Killed As Boat Overturns In Vietnam



Vietnam: At least 15 Indians, including 13 men and 2 women, were killed after a boat carrying several tourists overturned near Phu Quoc Island in Vietnam on Saturday. There were 36 people on board the vessel. 21 people were rescued and taken to hospital, including two in critical condition. The Indian mission has set up control rooms to assist those affected. The incident happened at 1:00 pm local time (11:30 am IST). Among the victims, 10 were from Tamil Nadu, three from Andhra Pradesh, and two from Kerala.

The vessel was carrying 36 people, including 32 Indian tourists, three crew members and one attendant, as per local media reports. The boat reportedly overturned shortly after leaving Hon May Rut Ngoai island for An Thoi Port, amid rough seas and strong winds. All passengers and crew members fell into the water. Sharing the update on X, the embassy wrote, "In a tragic incident, a boat carrying several Indian tourists has capsized near Phu Quoc Island in Vietnam. Exact details of the incident are being ascertained as search and rescue operations by local authorities are ongoing." In a tragic incident, a boat carrying several Indian tourists has capsized near Phu Quoc Island in Vietnam a few hours ago. Exact details of the incident are being ascertained as search and rescue operations by local authorities are ongoing. The Indian Ambassador, accompanied by Embassy officials, is en

route to Phu Quoc Island to oversee consular assistance, coordinate with Vietnamese authorities, and support the affected Indian nationals. In a post on X, Lava Mobiles said some of their team members and channel partners were involved in the incident. "We are in constant touch with the Embassy of India in Vietnam and the local authorities to gather information about the safety and well-being of our people. Our immediate priority is to extend all possible support to those affected and their families. Our teams in both India and Vietnam are in regular contact with the families and are providing all possible assistance," the company said in a statement. A total of 110 Lava Distributors and Employees

from South India were on a visit together, sources said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the tragedy in a post on X. "Extremely saddened to learn about the tragic news of a boat accident involving Indian nationals near Phu Quoc, Vietnam. My sincere condolences to the families who lost their loved ones. My prayers for the early recovery of the injured survivors. Our Embassy and Consulate are providing all possible assistance. Our officials are also in close contact with the Vietnamese authorities," he said. Extremely saddened to learn about the tragic news of a boat accident involving Indian nationals near Phu Quoc, Vietnam. My sincere condolences to the families who lost their loved ones. My prayers for the early recovery of the injured survivors. Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi urged the government and the Ministry of External Affairs "to work closely with the Vietnamese authorities to ensure that every possible effort is made in the ongoing rescue operations and that all necessary assistance is extended to the affected families."

Bengal Forms High-Level Committee To Review Draft Uniform Civil Code Bill

Kolkata: The West Bengal government has constituted a high-level committee headed by former Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai to examine a draft Uniform Civil Code for the state. A government notification issued on Friday said the committee was formed in view of the "wide ramifications and voluminous nature" of the proposed legislation. The panel will undertake a comprehensive examination of the draft Bill before any further steps are taken, it said. The state

government said it has prepared the draft Bill with the objective of creating a comprehensive legal framework governing personal civil matters for residents of the state, irrespective of religion, faith or community. The proposed legislation seeks to deal with issues relating to marriage, divorce, intestate succession and testamentary succession, it said. Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai (retd.) will chair the committee, the notification stated. Other members include former Meghalaya governor

Tathagata Roy, Resident Commissioner Dushyant Nariala, retired IAS officer Shatrughna Singh, Principal Secretary of the Home and Hill Affairs Department Sanghamitra Ghosh, academic Dr Ratna Bhattacharya, former vice-chancellor of Gour Banga University Gopalchandra Misra, advocate Osman Gani Mallick and former executive director Nirmalya Bhattacharya. The committee has been constituted following a decision taken at the state cabinet meeting held on July 2. "It has been set up for a com-



prehensive examination and review of the draft Bill in view of the wide ramifications and voluminous nature of the subject," a senior state government official said.

Omar Abdullah Says MLA Was Offered Rs 20 Crore To Defect, BJP Slams Claim

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has alleged that a National Conference MLA from Jammu was offered Rs 20-30 crore, a ministerial berth, and a promise of restoration of the statehood of the Union Territory as inducements to make him jump ship to the BJP. The Opposition party has dismissed the allegation as false. Addressing a public gathering in Srinagar, Abdullah claimed that the

offer was made by a Supreme Court lawyer associated with the BJP during a closed-door meeting with the MLA. He said the legislator personally informed him of the alleged offer. The chief minister said the alleged attempt reflected efforts to weaken the elected government, adding that the National Conference would not compromise its principles. He asserted that the party's legislators were not for sale and would con-



continue to stand by the mandate given by the people. Reacting to the statement of Omar Abdullah, senior BJP leader Ravinder Raina said:

"This claim is baseless, misleading and devoid of facts. If the chief minister has any proof, it should be placed in the public domain."

Singer Janaki's death... a huge loss for Indian music: CM Chandrababu



From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, July, 11 : Renowned singer Janaki breathed her last while undergoing treatment at Apollo Hospital in Mysore. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu expressed his condolences on her death. On this occasion, he remembered her services to the world of music. The CM issued a statement to this effect.

"Deeply saddened by the passing away of Janakamma, the vocal cuckoo of South India and renowned playback singer. Born on the soil of Telugu, she built an unparalleled musical legacy for over six decades and touched generations with her timeless voice. Her immense service to Indian music will be remembered forever. My condolences to her family mem-

bers, fans and the music world," CM Chandrababu said. Andhra Pradesh Assembly Deputy Speaker Raghurama Krishna Raju expressed his condolences over the death of singer Janaki. He issued a statement to this effect. He commented that his much-admired singer S. Janaki passed away a few hours ago. He remembered that

she will always live in our hearts with her sweet singing. Raghurama said that he is praying to God for the peace of her soul. AP Cinematography Minister Kandula Durgesh expressed his condolences over the death of famous singer S. Janaki. He issued a statement to this effect. CM Chandrababu participated in the World Population Day celebrations held in Vijayawada here on Saturday. He inspected the stalls set up at Ambedkar Kalavedika in Vijayawada. He looked at the stalls set up by the Medical Health and Family Welfare Department with interest and inquired about the details. Doctors, students from medical colleges and other public representatives attended the program. CM

Population control is not the goal, population protection is the goal: CM Chandrababu

From Our Staff Reporter Vijayawada, July 11 : Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has commented that World Population Day 2026 will go down in history. CM Chandrababu participated in the World Population Day celebrations held in Vijayawada here on Saturday. He inspected the stalls set up at Ambedkar Kalavedika in Vijayawada. He looked at the stalls set up by the Medical Health and Family Welfare Department with interest and inquired about the details. Doctors, students from medical colleges and other public representatives attended the program. CM

Chandrababu Naidu addressed the gathering. He said that today is a historic meeting. He said that the children who have come here are our wealth. He said that we are taking steps towards realizing the hopes and aspirations of the youth. He emphasized that today is not population control, but population conservation starts from today. He said that he too once thought of reducing the population. CM Chandrababu Naidu said that many intellectuals told him that it was difficult to reduce the population at that time. He revealed that some decisions were taken at that time to reduce pov-

erty. He mentioned that a law was brought to disqualify people from contesting in local bodies if they had more than two children. He said that the slogan given at that time was one kiss. Two are the limit. Three are not. He said that he is saying it now. He said that the number of children should be more. He said that today, Telugus are the highest earners in the world. He said that he talked about IT at that time. He said that today he is talking about AI. He said that parents at that time used to think a lot about educating their daughters. CM Chandrababu said that back then, people

thought that if they got married early and sent to their in-laws' house, their responsibility would be over. He recalled that he had said that girls should be educated well to compete with boys. He said that 33 percent reservation was also introduced in jobs and colleges. He mentioned that there was dowry then. Now, there is a dowry. He said that girls are the ones who take dowry. He explained that today, wives' income is higher than that of their husbands. CM Chandrababu said that his wife's income is higher than his, and his daughter-in-law's income is higher than his son's.

Vietnam boat accident.. CM Chandrababu deeply saddened



From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, July, 11 : Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has expressed deep sorrow over the Vietnam boat accident. He expressed

grief over the death of two people from AP in this incident. He spoke to the officials about this accident, the assistance being provided to the victims and the current situation of the tourists.

He directed the officials to provide all necessary assistance to the victims immediately. He said that a total of 33 people from the state had gone on a trip to Vietnam. He said that 19 of them were on the boat where the accident occurred. While two died in this incident, the authorities rescued the rest. CM Chandrababu Naidu revealed that one person is seriously ill in the incident and is receiving treatment. He expressed grief over the loss of two lives while on a picnic.

He said that all the others are safe. He ordered steps to be taken to bring back those who were trapped in the accident and survived to AP. The CM directed the officials to speak to the family members of the two AP residents who lost their lives and provide them with the necessary assistance. CM Chandrababu Naidu suggested that the AP Bhavan officials in Delhi should coordinate with the Vietnamese authorities and the Indian Embassy officials there.

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, July, 11 : Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan underwent a successful shoulder surgery at a hospital in Mumbai here on Saturday. The Deputy CM's office officials posted this on X. They said that the surgery was performed by a team of doctors led by world-renowned orthopedic surgeon and sports medicine expert Dr. Dinsha Parthiwala. They said that Pawan Kalyan had severe rotator cuff injuries in both shoulders. He said that along with the rotator cuff tear, he had an avulsion fracture in his right shoulder, which required a major surgery. The surgery on his right shoulder lasted for about three and a half hours. Officials said that the surgery was completed successfully.

Officials said that Pawan Kalyan was shifted to the recovery room after the operation. They said that the Deputy Chief Minister is recovering well from the effects of anesthesia. They revealed that the Deputy CM is under close supervision of the medical team providing treatment. They said that medical experts have advised him to undergo surgery as soon as possible. They said that keeping in mind his official programs first, it was decided to complete them before Pawan Kalyan underwent the surgery. They said that since surgery is performed on both shoulders at the same time, there is a possibility of significant discomfort and restriction of movement after the operation. In this order, the medical team decided to perform surgery on the right shoulder first,



officials of the Deputy CM's office said. Officials said that Pawan Kalyan is planning to undergo surgery on his left shoulder after he recovers sufficiently. They revealed that due to his tireless public activities, extensive political tours, election campaigns, and constant interactions with party workers and well-wishers, the shoulder injuries sustained in

2016 have gradually worsened over the years. Despite enduring constant pain, the Deputy Chief Minister has continued to perform his official duties and participate in public functions without any interruption, they said. More details regarding Pawan Kalyan's recovery will be announced in due course, said officials from the Deputy CM's office.

EDITORIAL

Iran is the antidote to Trump's strategy

In the war that began on February 28 of this year, the world has seen how powerful countries like the United States and Israel have been able to inflict heavy losses on Iran but have not been able to subdue it. Iran has been amazed and applauded for its heroic struggle, morale, unwavering unity and patriotism. The US President's repeated boastful statements that Iran's army, air force, navy and missile forces have been destroyed by 80 to 90 percent have also been proven false by the intensity of Iran's counterattacks. The same goes for the US and Israel. The world breathed a sigh of relief as oil and gas shipments increased and prices fell until July 7. It was hoped that this situation would be long-term and that the war issue would gradually be resolved. But the next day, on the 8th, everything changed dramatically. The United States and Iran resumed mutual attacks. Immediately, energy prices rose and stock markets plummeted. Why the dramatic change? In fact, after the ceasefire agreement was signed on the 17th of last month for 60 days, there have been two mutual attacks in these 20 days. But they were sporadic. They happened and stopped in the meantime. This time it does not seem like that. Is the 'ceasefire over', as US President Trump announced during the NATO military alliance meetings in the Turkish capital Ankara? Can the war return to full-scale? Has the mediation of Pakistan and Qatar ended? Will Trump, who bowed to pressure from countries like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Kuwait, which are suffering severely from their retaliatory attacks on Iran, now call them allies? These are all important questions at this stage. But they are probably impossible for anyone to answer. Not even the US president. He said that the ceasefire is over, but he did not explicitly say that it is over. He did not say that he was withdrawing from the talks. As for Iran, he warned that the US would "pay a heavy price" for its attacks and ceasefire violations, and that it could "carry out severe attacks" on US bases in the Gulf, but there will be no more talks. In the war that began on February 28 of this year, the world has seen how powerful countries like the United States and Israel have inflicted heavy losses on Iran but have not been able to subdue it. Iran has been amazed and applauded for its heroic struggle, morale, unwavering unity, and patriotism. The US president's repeated boastful statements that Iran's army, air force, navy, and missile forces have been destroyed by 80 to 90 percent have also been proven false by the intensity of Iran's counterattacks. The same goes for the United States and Israel. According to estimates by independent Western experts, Iran's missiles are still around 75 percent intact. Not to mention drones.

Iran, which applied drones to a power like Russia in the Ukraine war, has a vast production capacity. All this is because the US agreed to a ceasefire agreement only because it learned from months of war how effective Iran's weaponry and asymmetric warfare tactics were. These conditions are not going to change with Trump's resumption of attacks on July 8. Therefore, negotiations should be considered inevitable. From the Iranian perspective, despite having vast oil reserves, they have been suffering from the vicious economic sanctions of the US and other Western countries since the Islamic Revolution that overthrew the Shah in 1979. In addition to 46 years of economic sanctions, a completely unjustified war has now come and made the losses very serious. It goes without saying how much the need to recover from that situation. That is why the Iranian government and people, while united in resisting war, also felt the need for talks. It is likely that the same attitude will continue in the new situation that has emerged since July 8. Resisting attacks and not closing the door to talks. In this situation, the responsibility again falls on the intermediaries Pakistan and Qatar, and on the Gulf states that are being choked by Iranian attacks. In this regard, there are two things to watch in the coming days. One is how the current attack and counterattacks may proceed. Two is what initiatives the above-mentioned countries may take behind the scenes. Israel does not want this to happen, but if it does not happen, there are problems that Trump may face. Support for the unnecessary war being waged against Iran is decreasing among the American people, and among Trump's own voters. No matter how much the president claims that America has abundant oil reserves, the prices of essential goods are increasing along with them. Criticism has begun from Trump's Republican senators. The danger beyond all this is that the November mid-term elections are approaching. The American media also wrote that these pressures were behind the June 17 ceasefire agreement. With all this, Trump made harsh comments on Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu a few times in those days. Given this backdrop, it would not be surprising if Trump suggests talks again in a few days. At the same time, the complexities of the negotiations cannot be ignored. They are linked to the strategies of the US and Iran. Of the 14 points in the June 17 agreement, the most important are the Strait of Hormuz, Israeli attacks on Lebanon, Iranian support for militant organizations such as Hezbollah, and Iranian nuclear research. There are many things surrounding each of these four. On one side are the interests of the US and Israel, on the other side are those of Iran. None of these are easy, nor are they easily resolved. If the Hormuz issue can be resolved in a certain way, the other three are not. They need to be broken up as if they were one or the other. We cannot go into the discussion of those three in the present context, but let us examine the matter since the immediate cause of the attacks that began on the 8th of this month is the Hormuz dispute. This has become such a problem because the strategies of both sides are visible. In the midst of a fierce war, the transportation of energy resources and other goods through the Strait of Hormuz has become a major weapon for Iran. In fact, this has been said repeatedly by experts and discussed repeatedly by the media. Although blocking that transportation has created problems for the world, it has come in handy for Iran in the unequal war strategy faced by the United States and Israel. Everyone has said that if they do not block America, it will be more difficult for Iran to defend itself. In this way, since Hormuz has become a weapon, the American strategy is to take the Strait of Hormuz out of Iran's hands by any means. If they can do that, they will not be able to block transportation, so the pressure on prices, on the world countries, and on themselves will be gone. In this regard, Iran will be disarmed. It will be significantly weakened. One comment we hear is that Iran does not have nuclear weapons, but control of Hormuz has become a nuclear weapon. Given that, one can imagine how crucial it has become for American strategists to remove Iran's control of the strait.

The ICJ Said Yes To The Right To Strike, But Ducked The Hard Questions

On May 23, the International Court of Justice ('ICJ') delivered a resounding 'YES' in its verdict to the question, referred to it by the International Labour Organization ('ILO') to draw advisory opinion on "whether the right to strike is protected under the international legal framework of the Convention No. 87 'Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize' ('Convention No. 87')? While the Court upheld this labour right in principle, the devil lies in the details of judicial analysis that formed this affirmative advisory opinion. The larger constitutional question regarding the ILO's Committee of Expert ('CoE') is left unanswered.

This affirmation has sought to tie several loose ends within the ILO itself. First, it has answered the question of legal interpretation. Second, it has also addressed the question of the status of supervisory bodies of ILO in its own way. Third, and most importantly, it has also redressed the internal tension simmering in ILO from within for long that the ILO itself called an "institutional crisis". The verdict, hence, rebuffed and re-invigorated the global labour governance system of ILO.

The crisis was in-making for the last many decades and revolved around one of ILO's crucial international treaties, Convention No. 87. Convention No. 87 was drafted in the background of the Second World War and the consequent polarization of the world through political ideologies which affected industrial behaviour in return. The purport of Convention No. 87 was, in words of the then-ILO Chairperson, to provide "a statement of fundamental principles" rather than minutely specifying each aspect of trade union activities or workers organizations' liberty. Two main supervisory bodies of the ILO, the Committee of Experts on Application of Conventions & Recommendations and the Committee on Freedom of Association ('CFA'), were entrusted to detect and report cases of violations by State-parties in respect of the Convention No. 87 and direct cor-

rective measures.

The Convention No. 87 is now part of ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights At Work (1998). Hence, it applies to all ILO member-States whether they have ratified it or not due to their membership to ILO.

It is the CoE that prepares the Annual Survey, offering a kaleidoscopic report on the overall compliance of States Parties with the treaties they have ratified, including Convention No. 87, regarded as a fundamental convention. Another tripartite supervisory body of the ILO, the Committee on Application on Standards (a tripartite body consisting of ILO representatives) would deliberate the issues of Annual Survey and mull possibility in terms of future course of action.

The Court noted that “since the adoption of the Convention No. 87 in 1948, the interpretation of this treaty has continuously been evolving under the supervisory system.” In 1952, the CFA asserted that “the right to strike was an essential part of trade union rights and did not refer to it as part of fundamental freedom under Convention No. 87.” Similarly in 1959, the CoE reasoned in its General Survey of 1959, that “there is a possibility that a prohibition on strikes may run counter to Convention No. 87.”

It is surprising to note that the employer group never openly opposed such interpretation except in 1989 when they, for the first time, questioned "the interpretation of the right to strike within the fold of Convention no.87 and constitutional competency of these supervisory bodies to pass 'conclusive interpretations' and fix liabilities on State-parties." Labour scholars like Prof. Tonia Novitz and Jeffery Vogt, who represented the Workers' Group at the proceedings, showed this trend in detail in their book that the Court also quoted in its opinion.

By 2012, this had already become a full-blown 'institutional crisis,' when the employer group refused to shortlist any item pertaining to the right to strike in the 2012 Survey. This not only called into question



the CoE's competency to prepare the Annual Survey based on its expert discretion but also prevented, for the first time, the CAS from considering an issue that had been shortlisted for it by the CoE in the Survey.

The crisis with passage of time deepened as the employer, joined by some Government-parties, would not relent their assault on the CoE's consideration of the right to strike. Consequently the entire presentation machinery of the ILO's supervisory system got stuck. And so, the Governing Body was compelled to refer the matter to the ICJ under Article 37 of its constitution. It was the first time that the ILO had referred a matter to the ICJ for an advisory opinion on any controversy.

The Court was confronted not only with a legal quandary but also with an existential crisis stemming from the internal disharmony and polarization within the ILO system (thirty-six governments, along with the Workers' Group, recommended judicial intervention, while other factions opposed this move). The Court took recourse to the Vienna Convention on Laws of Treaties ('VCLT') for interpretation of the Convention No. 87. The Court examined the question referred under Articles 31 and 32 of the Vienna Convention.

Firstly, the Court examined impugned articles of the Convention no. 87 namely Article 2, 3 and 10. These articles exist in an organic cycle, resembling

a Holy Trinity of the legal framework of Convention No. 87, and act as the primary bulwark protecting the collective interests of workers when they unite.

The Court referred to them in unison to signify that the heart and soul of the Convention No. 87 lies in this trinity. The Court analyzed the ordinary meaning of the keywords contained in this trio in accordance with the rules of interpretation laid out under Article 31(1) of the VCLT. The Court noted that Article 2 allows workers to form or join organizations of their choosing whereas Article 10 gives these organizations an objective or mission to “further and defend their interests.”

It is to be noted that to avail the protection of the Convention No. 87, a worker can't act alone but has to undertake concerted "activity" under Article 3. The Court then turned to the last part of the trio – Article 3, that has been in the eye of the storm since 1952. The Court connected the dots of Article 2 and 10 with "activities" and "programs" protected under Article 3 to materialize how organizations maintain and secure their interests under the framework of the Convention No. 87.

Applying the same principle of ordinary rule to Article 3, the Court concluded that the ordinary meaning of these keywords – activities and programs, are so broad and liberal that it includes all possibilities and dimensions of activities including strike-action. Conse-

quently, the Court pronounced when the Holy Trinity is understood in conjunction, it implies that the right to strike is past the basic framework of Convention No. 87.

The Court cemented the right to strike as part of the basic framework of freedom under the Convention No. 87 by analyzing it in light of the context, object and purpose of the VCLT. Article 31(2) of the VCLT provides 'Preamble' as a touchstone for examining context, object and purpose. The Court held that the object and purpose of Convention No. 87 is "improving labour conditions and attain sustained progresses" and towards this strike-action is one of the 'one of main activities and tools' used by workers." The Court noted that the effective exercise of fundamental freedom necessitates undertaking of collective action including the right to strike on part of workers' organizations. Hence, it concluded that the right to strike existed as an encompassed right to freedom of association under the Convention No. 87. This 'encompassed right' status of the right to strike has transcended its level beyond merely a trade union activity.

The ICJ examined whether there exists any common 'subsequent practice' or 'subsequent agreement' regarding the right to strike amidst all State-parties to Convention No. 87 in accordance with the Article 31(1) of the VCLT.

BJP's National Political Strategy Of Splitting Opposition Is Disgusting

In the pursuit of gaining strength in the Parliament of India – both in the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha – the ruling BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has adopted a national political strategy of splitting the opposition political parties; that has reached its height of shamelessness on July 9, 2026 creating a feeling of deeper disgust among lovers of democracy and fair ethical and moral politics. The party has renominated three TMC leaders for Rajya Sabha, who had resigned from the House between June 8 and 11. These former TMC MPs are Sukhendu Sekhar Ray, Sumitra Dev, and Prakash Chik Baraik. BJP had got them resigned from the Rajya last month, because it was not able to split TMC in the House. TMC had 13 MPs in the Rajya Sabha, and a split and merger with the BJP or any other party required 9 MPs to form a separate group. To legally break away without losing seats, two-third of party's elected legislators must agree to merge with another political party or form a new political entity. When BJP could not legally do so, they got the said MPs resign from the membership creating vacancy in the Rajya Sabha. Thereafter, Rajya Sabha election was necessitated for the vacant seats and date of election was announced to be held on July 24. BJP then gave part

ticked to the same three MPs, after they formally joined the BJP on July 24. BJP has just won West Bengal election in May, and has 208 seats in the Legislative Assembly. Hence, BJP is in a position to send all the three MPs in Rajya Sabha again, but now as BJP MPs.

However, in Lok Sabha, BJP succeeded in getting 20 out of 28 Lok Sabha MPs to form a separate entity. TMC in Lok Sabha is thus broken, and the splinter group has merged into NCPI, which is a little known party of the North East, though originally registered in West Bengal. It should be noted that NCPI supports BJP and is part of NDA. Lok Sabha Speaker is yet to approve this merger, and TMC is contesting it demanding that the rebel MPs must be disqualified. There in Kolkata, over 60 out of 80 TMC MLAs have formed a separate group under the leadership of Ritabrata Banerjee, whom the Speaker of the Assembly has recognized as the leader of the opposition. Armed with the decision of the Speaker, the splinter group has claimed that they are the "real TMC" and also has applied to the Election Commission of India for recognition. Mamata Banerjee will have to fight against this conspiracy of the BJP, so that as founder of the party she can retain the name and party symbol. Nevertheless, experience in Maharashtra shows that neither Sharad Pawar could retain his



party NCP's name and symbol, not Uddhav Thackeray his party Shiv Sena's name and symbol. Thanks to the murky politics of the BJP, which has been alleged of adopting a strategy of splitting the opposition political parties and even toppling the opposition government. It was only in the early 2026, BJP had got 7 AAP Rajya Sabha MPs to form a separate group and merged with the BJP. Seven Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha MPs formally merged with the BJP, following their removal from key party leadership positions. The MPs involved are Raghav Chadha,

Sandeep Pathak, Dr. Ashok Kumar Mittal, Swati Maliwal, Harbhajan Singh, Vikramjit Singh Sahney, and Rajinder Gupta. This switch reduced AAP's representation in the Upper House from 10 to just three members, while boosting the BJP's strength to 113. Currently, BJP's own strength in the Rajya Sabha is 114, which will go up to 117, after the election of the renominated former TMC MPs on BJP ticket. Though, BJP's tally will thus increase to highest in party's history in Rajya Sabha, it will still be six less than majority on its own, which it badly needs. Majority mark in the Rajya

Sabha is 123. Nevertheless, there are three independents that are supporting the party, while there are also seven nominated members. Altogether, their number will reach 127, that is four more than simple majority. BJP's allied in the NDA had another 26 MPs, and therefore, the total seats of the NDA in Rajya Sabha will be 153, which is 11 lower than the 164 to reach the two-third majority for passage of any constitutional amendment in the House, which the BJP leadership is trying to accomplish – especially in the matter of delimitation among others.

Focus on Safety and Infrastructure Across Six Districts



MLA Gorantla Butchaiah Chowdary said funds would also be allocated to develop all ghats from Dhavaleswaram to Venkatanagaram. District Minister Kandula Durgesh welcomed Minister Narayana and presented him with a memento. The inspection was attended by RUDA Chairman Boddu Venkata Ramana, Joint Collector Y. Megha Swaroop, Municipal Commissioner Rahul Meena, Assistant Collector Kshitij Aditya Sharma, Irrigation SE G. Srinivasa Rao, Tourism Regional Director N.V.V.S. Murthy, Municipal Corporation officials, engineering officers, and representatives of various departments.

(Health & Family Welfare), stressed the importance of creating greater awareness on population stabilization and reproductive health. He noted that the global population has reached 8.3 billion, while India continues to be the world's most populous country, underscoring the need for responsible family planning and informed healthcare choices. Chief Medical Superintendent (CMS), Vijayawada Division, Dr. A.V.S.K. Prasad, who presided over the programme, highlighted the role of family planning and gender equality in achieving sustainable development. He said access to quality reproductive healthcare enables young people to make informed decisions about their families, leading to healthier communities and improved quality of life. Medical officers conducted an interactive awareness session on various family planning methods and reproductive healthcare services. Railway beneficiaries actively participated in the session, sought clarifications and gained valuable information on making informed family planning decisions. The programme concluded with a renewed commitment to spreading awareness on population-related issues and promoting responsible decision-making for a healthier and sustainable future.

The Convocation was attended by Sri Mayur Patnala, Founder-Chairperson and Global CEO of Nirman Organization, Hyderabad, as Chief Guest and Convocation Orator; Prof. K. Madhu Murthy, Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education; Prof. V.V. Subba Rao, Vice-Chancellor of JNTU-GV; along with University officials, faculty members, students, parents and invited guests.

Lions Club Secretary B. Ravichandra, Dr. Satyaveni, Chaitanya Sravanthi Vice-President Vijay Sekhar, Avineesh, Serum Institute Area Manager Ram Ratan, and other dignitaries. Earlier, Dr. Shireen Rahman felicitated Police Commissioner Dr. Shankhabrata Bagchi in recognition of his support for the public health initiative.

directed officials to expedite the project while maintaining the highest standards of quality. Later, Shri Mathur visited the Pushkar Ghat, Markandeya Ghat, Shradhdhananda Ghat, Saraswati Ghat, and Gauthami Ghat to assess the connectivity and arrangements made for the smooth movement of pilgrims between the railway stations and the bathing ghats. A coordination meeting was also held in Rajamahendravaram with senior railway officials and State Government representatives. District Superintendent of Police Shri D. Narasimha Kishore participated in the meeting, where detailed discussions were held on security measures, crowd management, emergency medical services, and passenger facilitation during the Pushkaram. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Sandeep Mathur said that South Coast Railway is fully committed to ensuring a safe, secure, and comfortable journey for the large influx of pilgrims during Godavari Pushkaram. He stated that the Railway administration would work in close coordination with the State Government and the Police Department to provide efficient passenger services and ensure smooth conduct of the festival.

He emphasized that the remaining time before July 14 is

Vijayawada, July 11 (Pen Power): NTR District Collector Dr. G. Lakshminisha appealed to voters who have not yet submitted their Enumeration Forms under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) 2026 to do so before the July 14 deadline. During his visit to Guntupalli in Ibrahimpatnam mandal, he reviewed the progress of the SIR process and said officials are available at the field level to assist voters. He added that special camps will function on both Saturday and Sunday. The district has achieved 82.15% digitization, with 14,07,640 Enumeration Forms digitized so far.



Government Aims to Make Godavari Pushkarams 2027 a Model Spiritual Event
Ministers Dr. P. Narayana and Kandula Durgesh Review Preparations



Rajamahendravaram, July 11 (Pen Power):The Andhra Pradesh government is committed to conducting the Godavari Pushkarams 2027 as a model spiritual event with comprehensive planning and coordination among all departments, said Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister Dr. P. Narayana and Tourism and Culture Minister Kandula Durgesh. Addressing a review meeting at the Rajamahendravaram Municipal Corporation office on Saturday, the ministers said nearly 100 million (10 crore) pilgrims are expected to visit the Godavari during the 12-day Pushkaram festival in 2027. They directed officials to ensure that all arrangements are made well in advance so that devotees can participate without inconvenience. They noted that around 40 million (4 crore) pilgrims took the holy dip during the previous Godavari Pushkarams. Dr. Narayana said the government, under the leadership of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, is utilizing past experience to make the upcoming Pushkarams more efficient and well-organized. He emphasized that all infrastructure created for the festival should become permanent assets for the city.

He said funds are being mobilized through the Hybrid Annuity Model for long-term infrastructure development. In addition to ₹48 crore available with the Rajamahendravaram Municipal Corporation, another ₹32 crore is expected through the Land Regularization Scheme (LRS), while efforts are underway to secure an additional ₹120 crore grant. Development works worth nearly ₹200 crore are being planned.

The minister directed officials to prepare estimates under the AMRUT Scheme, submit details of Transferable Development Rights (TDR) bonds, and formulate a comprehensive action plan for roads, drainage, sanitation, elec-

tricity, drinking water supply, and modernization of key junctions. Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh stressed the need for integrated development not only in Rajamahendravaram but also in Kovvur, Nidadavole, Dhavaleswaram, and surrounding areas. He welcomed the release of an additional ₹60 crore, apart from the previously sanctioned ₹580 crore, for Pushkaram-related development works. He also called for the development of Pendyala, Mukkamala, and Tiparru Ghats under Nidadavole, release of funds to Kovvur and Nidadavole municipalities, and improvement of the 38-km road connecting Kovvur, Vijjeswaram, and Nidadavole. MLC Somu Veerajulu urged all departments to work in coordination to ensure a hassle-free experience for pilgrims and emphasized the importance of permanent infrastructure. He said Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, along with MP Daggubati Purandeswari, is making efforts to secure Central Government funding. MLA Gorantla Butchiah Chowdary said about ₹88 crore is required for widening the Punyakshetram Road, Gadala Punta Road, Srirampuram Road, and Pidimgoyy Road. He also called for a new power substation and additional transformers to permanently address low-voltage issues, besides prioritizing the development of the Janardhana Swamy Temple at Dhavaleswaram. MLA Adireddy Srinivas said all infrastructure works should be completed on time through coordinated efforts so that Rajamahendravaram emerges as an ideal Pushkaram city. The meeting was attended by RUDA Chairman Boddu Venkata Ramana, Joint Collector Y. Megha Swaroop, Municipal Commissioner Rahul Meena, Assistant Collector K. Aditya Sharma, and officials from various government departments.

Millets Offer Better Health and Income Opportunities: Collector

Vijayawada, July 11 (Pen Power):NTR District Collector Dr. G. Lakshminisha said millets are an excellent source of balanced nutrition and provide significant opportunities for income generation. Inaugurating a workshop on value-added millet food products at the RISE Centre in Guntupalli, he encouraged Self-Help Group women to take advantage of the growing demand for millet-based products and become entrepreneurs. Around 80 SHG women participated in the programme, where experts highlighted the health benefits and business potential of millet-based food products.



India remained fastest-growing economy under PM Modi: Union Minister Giriraj Singh

Patna : Union Minister Giriraj Singh backed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of making India one of the world's top three economies, saying the country had maintained its economic growth from the COVID-19 pandemic until now despite criticism. Speaking to reporters in Patna, Singh said India had emerged as one of the world's fastest-growing economies under the Prime Minister's leadership. "... India is the only country that has maintained its economic growth from the time of the pandemic until now under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. Despite criticism from those with a negative outlook, the Prime Minister has continued to accelerate India's development, making it one of the world's fastest-growing economies," Singh said.

His remarks came a day after Prime Minister Modi, while addressing the Indian community at the "Melbourne Meets Modi" event in Australia, said India's aspiration to become one of the world's top three economies was driven by the motto, "Grow more, achieve more." Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister said India was progressing towards becoming



a developed nation, with every achievement inspiring the country to set even bigger goals. "The India of the 21st century is working towards the goal of becoming a developed nation. When one dream is realised, a new one is born. It used to be said that one lamp lights a thousand others; today, I say that one dream gives birth to another--thousands of dreams emerge. When one goal is achieved, an even greater resolve takes its place. This is an India that believes in 'Grow More, Achieve More.' We are a nation of 1.4 bil-

lion people, brimming with aspirations," PM Modi had said. "We aspire to become one of the world's top three economies as soon as possible, driven by the motto 'Grow more, achieve more,'" the Prime Minister added. Highlighting India's technological and infrastructure growth, PM Modi said the country had become the world's second-largest 5G market and was rapidly developing indigenous 6G technology. He also noted the expansion of metro rail services to more than two dozen cities, making India's metro network the third larg-

est in the world, and said the country was expanding its semi-high-speed rail network through services such as the Namo Bharat Rapid Rail and Vande Bharat trains. Prime Minister Modi is on a three-day official visit to Australia from July 8 to 10. During the visit, India and Australia announced 18 major outcomes covering defence, maritime security, energy, critical technologies, education, mining, research and cultural cooperation, further expanding the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

"Govt should pay special attention": Ambala reels under waterlogging as IMD forecasts heavy rain in Haryana

Ambala : Morning rainfall caused waterlogging in several parts of Ambala, disrupting normal life and affecting schools and markets, even as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast widespread rainfall and heavy showers across Haryana over the coming days. Rainwater accumulated in several low-lying areas, including the city's Kapda Market (cloth market), causing inconvenience to residents and traders. Water also entered the premises of Government High School No. 7 in the market area, prompting authorities to deploy pumps to drain out the accumulated water and restore normalcy. Speaking to news agency, Mamata Gupta, in-charge of Government High School No. 7, said the continuous rainfall since Thursday night had affected both the market and the functioning of the school. "I work as an in-charge at Government High School No. 7, Kapda Market. It has been raining heavily since last night, which is affecting the Kapda Market and the entire city. This is affecting our school as well because there isn't enough water in the Kapda Market. This is affecting the number of students as well, but we are teaching the students who are coming to the classes. We are teaching them," she said.

Residents also expressed concern over the recurring problem of waterlogging during the monsoon and urged the authorities to im-



prove drainage infrastructure. "The government should pay special attention to this issue. In the rainy season, there is a lot of disturbance in Ambala. There are a lot of problems... The government should pay special attention to this... The BJP government has been here for a long time. But no one is paying attention to this issue. We are not doing any work to mitigate the waterlogging issue. The biggest work in Ambala is waterlogging," a resident told news agency. The resident also said that the problem was not solely the government's responsibility and called on the public to play its part. "It is the government's fault as well. They didn't plan this properly. It is our fault as well.

We throw plastic in the sewage. We should support the government in this," the resident added.

Meanwhile, the IMD has forecast widespread rainfall across large parts of North India over the next few days, with heavy to extremely heavy rainfall likely in several states. The weather office has also issued warnings for thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds. According to the IMD's daily weather bulletin, fairly widespread to widespread rainfall is likely over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh over the coming days. Heavy rainfall has been forecast over Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi from

July 10 to 13. The IMD has also predicted heavy rainfall over West Uttar Pradesh on July 10 and 11, East Uttar Pradesh from July 10 to 13, Punjab on July 11 and 12, Jammu and Kashmir on July 11 and 12, and Uttarakhand from July 10 to 15. Uttarakhand is expected to receive heavy to very heavy rainfall, with extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places on July 10. The weather office said the current spell of rainfall is being driven by an active monsoon system and advised people to remain weather-aware, avoid unnecessary travel to flood-prone areas during periods of intense rainfall, and follow official weather updates and advisories.

Delhi HC admits victim's appeal against acquittal in 2019 Shahdara businessman murder case, issues notice to respondents

New Delhi : The Delhi High Court has admitted a victim's appeal challenging the acquittal in the 2019 murder case of Shahdara businessman Vijender Sharma and issued notice to the respondents, while directing them to renew or furnish fresh bail bonds before the Joint Registrar of the High Court. A Division Bench comprising Justices Prathiba M Singh and Vikas Mahajan recently admitted the victim's appeal preferred by Rahul Sharma, the son of the deceased, who approached the High Court challenging the acquittal of his relatives and their associates who allegedly killed his father, Late Vijender Sharma.

The appeal has been filed under Section 413 read with Section 528 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, challenging the January 31, 2026 judgment

passed by the Additional Sessions Judge-02, Shahdara District, Karkardooma Courts, whereby the respondents were acquitted of offences under Sections 302/34 and Sections 120B, 147, 148 and 341 of the Indian Penal Code arising out of FIR registered at Police Station Shahdara. According to the appellant, the incident took place in 2019 when the deceased was returning home from his shop. It is alleged that he was attacked by the assailants, resulting in multiple injuries. The appellant stated that he rushed his father to GTB Hospital, where his last statement, treated as a dying declaration, was recorded. As his condition deteriorated, he was shifted to Max Hospital, Patparganj, where he later succumbed to his injuries. Advocates Ujwal Ghai and Arpit Sharma, ap-



pearing for the victim, submitted that the deceased had been brutally killed by his brothers and their associates while the appellant was accompanying his father and had witnessed the entire incident. They argued that the appellant's testimony remained consistent throughout the trial, but the trial court failed to ap-

preciate the same. The counsel also relied upon the dying declaration allegedly made by the deceased before the concerned police officer in the presence of the appellant.

They further submitted that there was a clear motive behind the crime, as the deceased had earlier lodged several complaints with the police expressing apprehension that his brothers might kill him owing to an ongoing property dispute between them. Admitting the appeal, the High Court accepted notice on behalf of the State and directed that notice be served upon the private respondents through the Investigating Officer. The Bench further directed that the bail bonds already furnished pursuant to the trial court's judgment be renewed or fresh bail bonds be furnished before the Joint Registrar. The Court also directed the Registry to requisition the trial court record, prepare the appeal paper book with proper indexing, pagination and bookmarks, and provide digitised copies to the parties on request. The matter has been listed before the Joint Registrar on July 30, 2026, for furnishing or renewal of bail bonds and before the Division Bench on September 15, 2026.

SC to hear pleas for independent probe into Ram Temple Trust finances on July 13

Ayodhya : The Supreme Court is set to hear petitions seeking an independent probe into the alleged financial irregularities of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust in Ayodhya on July 13. The petitions are listed for hearing before a bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana. Meanwhile, Mahant Dinendra Das Maharaj, a member of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple Trust, has refuted the reports that the trust has blocked the VIP darshan pass IDs of Champat Rai, Anil Mishra, and Gopal Rao and confirmed that passes are indeed being issued using Champat Rai's ID. "There is no issue as of now. This is

still in place. I have no details otherwise; the existing system still continues," he said. Earlier on Thursday, Dinendra Das reiterated his complete faith in the Uttar Pradesh police and administration. His statement came as the Ayodhya Police initiated custodial interrogation of Anukul Mishra, one of the three primary accused in the case. Speaking to news agency, Mahant Dinendra Das dismissed concerns regarding the security and management of donations, asserting that operations remain unaffected.

"We have faith in Ram Lalla, and the Chief Minister and the administration are fully aware and involved. We have full faith in the police; they are per-

forming their duty. They will catch the thieves in every way and will also punish them," he stated. The alleged embezzlement has triggered a heated political row in Uttar Pradesh, with the Special Investigation Team (SIT) continuing its probe into the irregularities. A preliminary probe by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) pointed towards serious security lapses in the counting room of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, stating that staff here allegedly concealed wads of cash in their clothes, pockets, shoes, and other personal belongings and suggested that the alleged theft was "systematic" and repeated, rather than being isolated incidents.

Himachal, Uttarakhand Reel From Landslides, Mizoram, Tripura Battle Floods



Mizoram: Rain continued to wreak havoc across the country, with more landslides in the hill states of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh blocking crucial highways, and flooded rivers in the northeastern states forcing authorities to evacuate people to safer areas. At least five more people died in incidents related to rain, even as parts of the country, including Delhi-NCR and Rajasthan, saw a dry day after days of incessant heavy showers. In Himachal Pradesh, heavy to extremely heavy rains disrupted normal life in many parts, blocking roads, damaging bridges and uprooting trees. Schools remained closed in many parts of the state. A 70-year-old man was killed after being hit by falling boulders from the hillside onto the Buanda-Chwai road in Kullu. In Solan district, two persons sustained injuries after a boulder hit their vehicle in the Arki area. In Shimla, commuters faced inconvenience as 27 link roads were closed for vehicular traffic, officials said. Incidents of rockfall were reported along the Kalka-Shimla National Highway, and between Wagnaghat and Kandaghat, and between Dharampur and Chakki Mod. A landslide threat looms over the Sangla bridge in Kinnaur district, which was constructed last year with the assistance of the BRO and the Indian Army, and any further damage to it could cut off Sangla

Valley, officials said. Sirmour and Solan districts received the most rain since Thursday evening, the local met department said. In Uttarakhand, a teenager died, several people were injured, and schools were closed on Friday as heavy rain battered Uttarakhand over the past 24 hours, triggering landslides and blocking 118 roads across the state, including the Yamunotri National Highway. Officials said that they have stepped up vigilance following the Meteorological Department's forecast of heavy to very heavy rainfall. A 100-meter stretch of the Yamunotri National Highway near Syanachatti in Uttarkashi district was damaged by a landslide, and repair work is in progress at the spot. The Gangotri National Highway faced frequent disruptions due to falling boulders and stones at Nagun and Nalu Pani. Continuous rainfall also caused Ganga, Yamuna, and their tributaries-along with several smaller rivers-to swell. Flash floods triggered by heavy rainfall inundated the Ari area of Mendhar sub-division in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, damaging several houses and leaving dozens of people stranded. Police personnel launched a rescue operation and safely evacuated at least 25 people as floodwaters entered the area, officials said. In Mizoram's Lunglei district bordering Bangladesh, over

80 families were evacuated to safer locations after the Khawthlangtuipei river overflowed following incessant rainfall over the past week, officials said. Landslides, rockfalls and other rain-related incidents have also been reported at more than 29 locations across the state, though no casualty or loss of life has been reported so far, they said. National Highway 54 has been blocked due to a massive landslide on the outskirts of Bualte village in Lunglei district, where several tourists have been stranded for the past four days. The landslide continues to cut off the southern districts of Lawngtlai and Siaha from the rest of the state. The Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei highway has also been blocked due to massive rockfall or landslides at Ngaizel on the southern outskirts of Aizawl, officials said. Heavy downpour for the past few days triggered floods in parts of Tripura, damaging over 4,000 houses and forcing around 11,000 people to seek refuge in relief camps, an official said. No loss of life has been reported till now. In Uttar Pradesh, two people died in rain-related incidents as many parts of the state saw heavy showers. Mawana in Meerut district recorded the state's highest rainfall of 315 mm during the 24 hours ending at 8.30 am, followed by Jansath in Muzaffarnagar with 270.1 mm. According to the IMD, the southwest monsoon

has intensified over Uttar Pradesh due to the presence of an upper-air cyclonic circulation over the central parts of the state and a well-marked low-pressure area over north-west Madhya Pradesh. The IMD's Regional Meteorological Centre in Lucknow issued an orange alert for the state, forecasting heavy to very heavy rainfall at many places till July 11 under the influence of active monsoon conditions. In Noida, a 28-year-old man died allegedly after falling into a roadside drain filled with rainwater while on his way to work in Sector 58. A 60-year-old woman was killed and her husband was injured after their mud house collapsed during heavy rain in Muzaffarnagar district. A 21-year-old farmer died after being struck by lightning in a paddy field in Balrampur, officials said on Friday. In Delhi, after two days of incessant rainfall, the skies were clear in the city and weather experts said the city is likely to witness a dry and warmer week, with the monsoon expected to pick up again in the month. Mahesh Palawat from Skymet Weather said rainfall activity is expected to remain subdued in Delhi until July 15 because the seasonal trough has shifted towards the Himalayan foothills. The weather office in Rajasthan, too, predicted that the monsoon is expected to weaken over the state from Friday, bringing a pause to the ongoing spell of heavy rainfall in the state. Weak monsoon conditions are likely to prevail across the state from July 10-11 and continue for about a week. During this period, the weather is expected to remain largely dry over most parts of Rajasthan, with only isolated places likely to receive light rainfall. Heavy showers lashed a large part of West Bengal, with Cooch Behar in the north-

ern parts of the state receiving the highest 143 mm of rain in 24 hours till Friday morning. School and office-goers faced a harrowing time in the rain-drenched Kolkata as rains continued well past the morning, causing waterlogging and slowing down traffic in several parts of the city, including its IT hub of Sector V in the Salt Lake area. Dum Dum, where the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport is located, recorded south Bengal's highest rainfall at 96 mm, according to weather office data. In Arunachal Pradesh, houses, roads and crops were damaged as fresh floods and landslides were reported across three districts -- West Kameng, Upper Subansiri and Tirap -- in the last 24 hours. The death count in the current wave of floods in Arunachal Pradesh has risen to seven after the body of a woman, who had gone missing, was recovered in Papum Pare district. The Assam disaster management authorities urged people to take precautions following the IMD's prediction of widespread rainfall across the state, including Guwahati, from Friday and for the next few days. This may cause waterlogging, flash floods, slow vehicular movement, and increase the risk of localised landslides in vulnerable pockets. The IMD, in its bulletin on Friday, said fairly widespread to widespread rainfall was likely over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura between July 10-16. It added that subdued rainfall activity was likely over central and south Peninsular India during the next 6-7 days. Rains lashed parts of Haryana and Punjab, too, with Chandigarh receiving light showers during the day. At the Wayanad landslide site in Kerala, one more body was retrieved, taking the total number of persons killed in the disaster to seven.

Mumbai Civic Body Office's Roof Collapses. Building Was Inaugurated 6 Months Ago

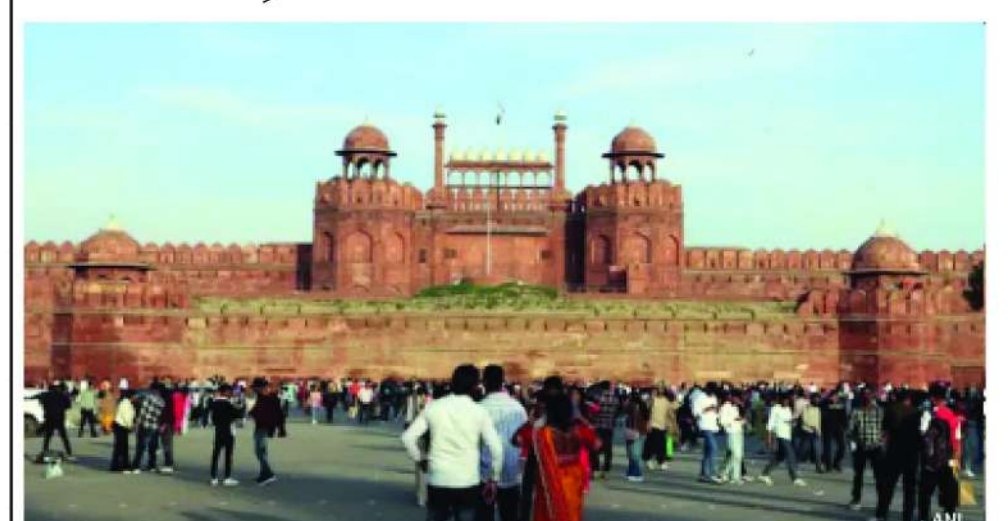


Mumbai: A section of the false ceiling collapsed at one of the newly opened offices of Mumbai's civic body, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), this morning, with a few employees narrowly escaping. The roof collapsed just outside the cabin of the assistant commissioner, Rupali Kadam, at the BMC's K/North Ward office in Jogeshwari. Several cabins at the office, which was inaugurated about six months ago, also witnessed water leakage after rain. Employees raised concerns about the quality of construction materials, alleging poor-quality work in the new building. They demanded that the administration inspect the entire office and undertake immediate repairs, insisting that the work be of high quality this time to ensure there is no threat to staff safety in the future. The incident comes at a time when the BMC -- Asia's richest civic body -- is facing intense

scrutiny over its handling of monsoon rain. Since the onset of the monsoon on June 23, Mumbai, known as the financial capital of India, has seen severe waterlogging in key areas. The city also recorded at least three fatalities due to tree-fall incidents. An 11-year-old student was killed when a tree fell on a moving school bus in suburban Chembur on June 30. On July 4, an 18-year-old man died after a tree branch fell on his head while he was riding a motorcycle with friends in Aarey Colony during heavy rain. A 63-year-old man died after a tree fell on a shop in Kurla (West) on July 5. On July 2, a 55-year-old man was killed after being swept in a manhole amid heavy rain. The manhole cover had been left open due to ongoing maintenance work being carried out by a private contractor, officials said. This week, the Bombay High Court had rebuked the BMC for its failure to secure open man-

holes, questioning why the civic body consistently waits for fatalities before taking preventative steps. A bench of Justices Ajay Gadkari and Kamal Khata on July 6 dismissed the BMC's progress reports and affidavits claiming action taken on the issue of open manholes as "good for nothing and merely an eyewash". The BMC, in an affidavit, informed the court that soon after the incident, the civic body chief held a meeting and ordered the suspension of four officials in charge of the area where the tragedy occurred. The court, however, slammed the BMC, stating that human lives are lost due to the negligence of civic officials. "What you (BMC) have done after such an incident is not important. What you do to prevent such untoward incidents is what matters. Life is precious. Human lives are of paramount importance," the court remarked.

Delhi's Red Fort Gets Bomb Threat, Turns Out To Be Hoax



New Delhi: The Red Fort in Delhi received a bomb threat call, prompting a security response and a thorough sanitisation of the premises, officials said. According to officials, the caller phoned the Mumbai Police Control Room on Friday and threatened to blow up the Red Fort. The officials in Mumbai immediately alerted the Delhi Police Control Room - which informed the North District police. After carrying out necessary checks, the police declared the bomb threat a hoax. The bomb threat comes nearly eight months after 15 people died and over a dozen were injured in a high-intensity vehicle-borne IED blast near the Red Fort Metro Station. Umar-un-Nabi, a

Kashmiri doctor working at Al-Falah University in Faridabad, near Delhi, was driving the Hyundai i20. The incident took place on a day when 2,900 kg of explosives, including ammonium nitrate, were found just 50 km from the capital, in neighbouring Haryana's Faridabad. Sources said that Umar reportedly panicked and triggered the blast after investigators arrested two key members of the module - Dr Muzammil Shakeel and Dr Adil Rather - and seized the explosives. The other key accused in the case were identified as Kashmir residents Muzaffar Ahmed Rather, Mufti Irfan Ahmad Wagay, and Uttar Pradesh's Shaheen Saeed. Some of them also worked at Al-Falah University. The

accused were part of a "white-collar" terror module linked to Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind, an al-Qaeda-affiliated terror group, that was busted just before the Delhi blast. **9 with links to Pak's ISI arrested** In May, nine men with links to Pakistan's intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and fugitive don Dawood Ibrahim were arrested for planning attacks in Delhi, Mumbai, and other parts of the country. According to the Delhi Police's Special Cell, the accused were tasked to attack "vital installations and security personnel". Nuclear facilities, airports, railway stations, and power plants were on their list, sources told.

'Goes Against India's Sovereignty': Government Panel Backs Ban On 'Satluj'



A committee set up by the Centre to examine the content of the Diljit Dosanjh-starrer film 'Satluj' is learnt to have recommended that the ban on its public access through online streaming platforms should remain as the film allegedly goes against India's sovereignty and integrity, government sources said on Saturday. The Honey Trehan-directed film depicts the life of human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra, who investigated the cremation of thousands of unidentified bodies in Punjab between 1984 and 1994, and was abducted and murdered by the state police in 1995. It was pulled from the OTT platform ZEE5 for viewers in India two days after its release on July 3 after the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting cited security

concerns. Subsequently, the ministry set up an inter-department committee (IDC) under the IT Rules 2021 for a detailed examination of the film and recommend the future course of action. The issue turned political in Punjab, with the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) demanding that the ban be lifted, and Shiromani Akali Dal announcing plans to screen the film across the state. Sources said the committee pointed out that the ban on the film under Section 69A of the IT Act was justified. Section 69A empowers the government to block online content on grounds including India's sovereignty and integrity, defence, security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states and public order. The committee comprises repre-

sentatives from the ministries of information and broadcasting, home affairs, electronics and information technology, women and child development, external affairs, defence, and law and justice, among others. It observed that the narrative of the film is not balanced as it whitewashes the acts of the militants while highlighting the excesses committed by the security forces in Punjab during the militancy years. Part III of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, empowers the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to invoke Section 69A of the IT Act under a mechanism meant to oversee OTT content that does not fall within the purview of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

On Camera, Final Moments Of Noida Engineer Who Fell Into Open Drain



Noida: CCTV footage has surfaced showing the last moments of engineer Aryan, 28, who died after falling into an open drain in Noida near Delhi on Thursday. Aryan died after falling into a drain in Noida's Sector 57 while he was on his way to work in Sector 58. The footage shows Aryan wading through a waterlogged road amid heavy rain on Thursday morning. He is seen walking on the edge of the road when his foot suddenly slips. He falls into the open drain, which was about three feet deep. According to initial findings, one of the slabs covering the drain was allegedly unstable, which caused him to fall. People present at the spot pulled him out after a lot of effort and gave him CPR. He was rushed to the district hospital, where doctors declared him dead. In the video, another person is seen rushing to help but steps back, apparently due to an electric shock. It is still not clear whether

Aryan died due to electrocution. Aryan's family has blamed the Noida Authority for alleged negligence, saying the drain was left open and unprotected. Local residents have also raised concerns over the prevalence of such open drains across the city. The incident has triggered public outrage and panic in the area. In a statement released on Saturday, July 11, the police said a shock from a short circuit on an electric pole caused him to fall into the water that had accumulated there due to the relentless downpour. Meanwhile, a blame game has begun between the Noida Authority and the electricity department. Authority officials claim that current spread into the water from a pole located right next to the drain, and that Aryan collapsed after coming in contact with it. The electricity department, however, has outright denied any electrocution. It called it entirely a case of waterlogging and negligence regarding the open drain.

Kerala Boy Dies After Anaesthesia For Lip Cut, Hospital Claims Cardiac Arrest

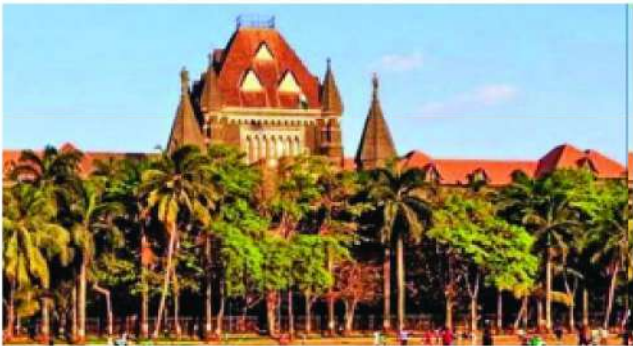
Thiruvananthapuram: An 18-month-old boy who fell unconscious after being given anaesthesia at a hospital in Kerala's Kannur has died, with the police registering a case against a doctor after the family alleged medical negligence. Devansh Shaurya, the only child of T Suraj and Vijisha, residents of Eramam-Kuttoor in Kannur, had suffered a cut on his lip after falling while playing outside his home on July 5. He

was first rushed to the primary health centre in Mathamangalam and given first aid. He was later taken to the Baby Memorial Hospital in Payyannur, where his wound was stitched under anaesthesia. He then allegedly lost consciousness. Shaurya was then shifted to Baby Memorial Hospital in Kannur, where he died at around 9 pm on Friday. The family accused a doctor, Anjali Poduval, of medical negligence, following which

she was charged under Section 125 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which deals with acts endangering life or personal safety and carries a maximum punishment of three months' imprisonment. **Hospital Denies Charge** The Baby Memorial Hospital, which has branches in Kozhikode, Kannur, Thodupuzha, Payyanur and Vadakara, denied the allegations of medical negligence.



Bombay High Court Order On Protecting Dissent Is Welcome At The Present Moment



Democracy has no space for blind surrender. The right to dissent makes media the fourth estate, with its sanctity under Article 19(1)(a) in the Constitution of our country. Every citizen has the right to freedom of speech, and despite this constitutional safeguard, the effective exercise of this right in India under the BJP rule faces daunting challenges today.

This the government has sought to achieve by the use of stringent laws such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, the misuse of central investigative agencies, such as the Enforcement Directorate and the Central Bureau of Investigation, against political opponents, journalists, and members of civil society, and the inefficiency of the judicial system to provide timely relief to undertrial dissenters. It is in

this background that the Bombay High Court's observation dealing with citizens' right to protest when their fundamental rights are attacked assumes special significance. Protest in any form, hunger strike, sitting on Dharna in the open, under the hot sun, as the students and youth are engaged presently, even setting up library has been treated as provocation. Books are destroyed, students and other participants in the protest faced attack by police. The attitude of police, though employed in the service of people in a country where the government is by the people, of the people and for the people, has been engaged in cruelly suppressing the mass of people in discontent over the stand of the establishment. Citizens have every right to protest any decision taken

by the government and if they are deprived of that, it would be the loss of entire democratic space. In fact the citizens in the country, without having the rights would only be turned into passive architects of democracy. Bombay High court reacting to the slapping of cases against citizens that protested against the police action against them just as they opposed the stand of the police, said that people are pushed into being slaves of the system. The single judge bench of Bombay High Court, Justice Madhav Jamdar, was following the Constitutional path only and acting on the principles that confirm that Judiciary is the custodian of right to freedom and deter any attack against it. Justice Jamdar must be profusely thanked for his contention when he said in no uncertain terms that we are living in times when there is common ground receding, and polarization is getting wider. He also pointed out that they label and criminalise dissent, and crack down on opponent, thus create distrust against opponents. In fact democratic institutions are used to shrink the democratic space itself. The petitioner referred in this case was

Saeed Ahmad Abdul Wahid Chaudhary. According to his statement, he is general secretary of Social Democratic Party of India. Among his activities, are organising and taking part in protests on issues which are often complicated, touching off the concerns of the popular masses. They also call for an open discussion on several sensitive and still unresolved issues like rights of minorities, that need space to express grievances. They do not prefer to go with state wielding extraordinary measures against them or strip them of their freedom.

As Justice Jamdar asked the police to explain if all these steps lead to enslave people for government, he actually pointed at institutions bending to power, putting lines that separate them and imperiling spaces for checks and balances to come lose. Justice Jamdar's order has broken open the chink, and the echoes are there in the system. His order has opened a flood gate in the system and the state must not challenge it. It is a moment for reflection. Justice Jamdar sought to know why an externment order was issued by Mumbai Police relying on FIRs related to earlier pro-

tests by the petitioner where slogans including 'BJP government murdabad', 'Amit Shah murdabad' were raised. Referring to the recent exam paper leak case and the petitioner's contention, he inquired why citizens cannot stage protests or raise slogans."It is the right of the citizens to protest. The petitioner has just raised slogans like 'BJP government murdabad', 'Amit Shah murdabad'... Why can't citizens raise such slogans and why externment orders for such slogans?" Justice Jamdar said. Cautioning the police, he said they were servants of the public and not that of top government functionaries. Petitioner Chaudhary had challenged the December 3, 2025 externment order of Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone 6- Chembur area). He had been externed for a year. Petitioner Chaudhary's plea claimed that the externment proceedings began with a show cause notice in October 2025 on the basis of multiple FIRs registered against him between 2019 and 2024 relating to protests. He alleged the action kept him away during civic elections, amounting to

"stifling legitimate democratic dissent." Advocates Payoshi Roy and Ibraheem Harbat, appearing for Chaudhary, had submitted that all the FIRs were registered against the petitioner under IPC Section 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) for protests he organised or participated in including those related to the government's decisions on the CAA and NRC, the issue of the Babri Masjid, and the sealing at the Gyanvapi mosque. The lawyers said none of these could attract Section 56 of the Maharashtra Police Act empowering the police to pass an externment order against a person about to commit an offence of causing danger, injury to person or property. Roy said Chaudhary was externed merely for organising or participating in protests without giving him an opportunity to prove himself innocent and, therefore, the action against him should be set aside. The state lawyer pointed to certain slogans raised by the petitioner and other protestors and argued that the action was in accordance with the law as the protests were held despite the police authorities having refused permission.

South Asian Job Seekers Are Having A Harrowing Time In West Asia As Also Europe

Nearly 10,000 job seekers and unemployed youths, mostly from South Asian countries, were killed worldwide in various accidents and mishaps in 2025, as their quest for work/migration abroad ended in tragedy. In addition a large number of people were also reported missing. International agencies and human rights organisations, expressing concern over the increasing death toll, among such people, have called on United Nations member countries to set up a separate authority asap to deal with the problem.

The magnitude of the phenomenon can be appreciated from a telling piece of statistics: since 2014, over 84,000 deaths among migrants have been recorded so far. Mostly illegal migrant victims tried to reach various countries in Europe or the US/Canada areas, travelling hundreds of miles over land and risking their lives to enter targeted countries, carried precariously in overloaded, derelict ships. Only days ago in June this year, a major shipwreck occurred near the Greek coast, killing at least 82 people. From Pakistan around 350 people were being carried in an overloaded ship. Addressing a meeting of the 47 member UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, the Pak representative said the human cost of such accidents was unacceptable. Most attending countries agreed that existing gaps in meeting minimum security norms must be plugged more effectively asap, to prevent such mishaps.

Gambian authorities according to reports, strongly urged upon the UN to improve existing rescue mechanism and methods, to reduce casualties. Many migrants were using some African ports as their first meeting point, from where the rest of the journey continued. Such accidents not only took heavy toll of lives from developing countries, but also hit their relatives back home hard economically and emotionally. Very often, specific information regarding the fate of the victims and the circumstances of their demise did not reach the affected families. This created problems in securing compensations from insurance authorities or job recruiters in the targeted countries. The plight of the illegal migrants was especially hard, as their 'private' unofficial travel agents/sponsors often remained uncommunicative.

The official attitude of the 'destination' countries, too, was not always helpful. Feelings had hardened over the years in most developed countries, as rightwing parties that strongly oppose migration from Africa or Asia, especially if illegal, have become stronger. India as the world's leading country in sending abroad job seeking migrants, accounts for a large part of the fatal toll. On average, 20 would be Indian migrants get killed daily in their search for better lives abroad. Between 2021 and 2025, according to official sources, nearly 38,000 Indians had died.

Smaller countries like Nepal and Bangladesh too, had their problems. The average daily death toll for aspiring Bangladeshi migrants was 13 while even for Nepal, it was 4. In 2024 alone, 4813 Bangladeshis lost their lives. Interestingly, Pak authorities did not always release details about how many of their citizens are killed or wounded after they leave home for better jobs and facilities. As for Nepal, a curious feature is that even when they 'make it abroad' some of the migrants commit suicide, accounting for around 13/14% of the deaths that occur. While Nepalese authorities, (as with Bangladesh), make special efforts to set up cordial bilateral official communication channels with as many countries as possible, to avoid serious problems, they cannot always control unpredictable individual behaviour from individual citizens.

Official studies indicate that migrants tend to commit suicide or take extreme steps to address their post migration issues to secure relief from permanent problems they feel cannot be solved. Many suffer from problems resulting from mounting debt, the failure to send back home required remittance amounts, poor working conditions at office and place of residence, lack of social support, etc. Despite best efforts made by Consular authorities, it is not always possible for concerned diplomatic staff to address the individual problems of people. Interestingly, accidents apart, most of the deaths of migrants occur in the Middle East, in the oil rich Gulf countries. Around 80%+ of deaths of Indian migrants occurred in these countries. Bangladesh also reported most deaths occurring in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE Oman and Bahrain. The local government authorities usually cite sudden cardiac arrests or natural causes the reason for most fatalities, but local reports also suggest that other attendant factors are at play — such as overwork, exhaustion, poor working conditions, exposure to high temperatures and heat in outdoor work and so on. This is not to suggest that there is any move officially or otherwise in India or elsewhere in South Asia to reduce the flow of migrant traffic to the Gulf region Along with China, Mexico and Ukraine, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan are among the highest exporters of manpower to the world at large. The sheer volumes of remittances the migrants send back home is too large a part of their respective national budgets, if not of their overall economy.

PoK At Crossroads: A New Protest Movement Is Challenging Islamabad

Pakistan-administered Kashmir has once again emerged as one of South Asia's most politically volatile regions. What began as protests over soaring electricity bills, inflation and governance has now evolved into a broader political movement questioning the relationship between Islamabad and the territory it officially calls "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" (AJK). The latest flashpoint is the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), which has issued Islamabad a 48-hour ultimatum over a 38-point charter of demands. The movement has threatened what it calls the "grand and final" phase of agitation ahead of regional elections scheduled for July 27, potentially setting the stage for one of the biggest confrontations between local residents and Pakistan's federal establishment in years. The protests are about far more than electoral politics. They expose decades of accumulated frustration over constitutional limitations, economic grievances, political representation and the distribution of the region's abundant natural resources. The immediate trigger is the controversy surrounding 12 legislative assembly seats reserved for refugees who migrated from Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan after Partition. JAAC argues that the arrangement distorts democratic representation. While approximately 33 lakh residents living in Pakistan-administered Kashmir elect only 33 territorial constituencies, around 4.36 lakh registered refugee voters in Pakistan elect 12 assembly members. Protesters argue that this disproportionately expands Islamabad's influence over the region's

politics.

The Pakistan-administered Kashmir Supreme Court recently ruled that these seats enjoy constitutional protection and cannot simply be abolished through executive action, leaving constitutional amendment as the only route for reform. For JAAC, however, the issue has become symbolic of a larger complaint—that key political decisions affecting the territory are ultimately determined outside the region. JAAC is a relatively new organisation, having emerged in 2023, but it has rapidly transformed itself into the most influential civil society platform in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Initially, its demands centred on subsidised electricity generated from local hydropower projects, lower wheat prices and relief from inflation. Large demonstrations compelled Islamabad to announce financial concessions, giving the movement credibility among ordinary residents.

Its latest 38-point charter goes considerably further. It seeks greater political autonomy, constitutional reforms, increased local control over natural resources, electoral reforms and accountability in governance. The movement's growing popularity suggests that economic grievances have merged with longstanding political frustrations.

Pakistan describes the territory as "Azad" or "Free" Kashmir. Yet its constitutional status remains unusual. Unlike Pakistan's provinces, Pakistan-administered Kashmir is not formally incorporated into Pakistan under Article 1 of the Constitution. It has no representation in Pakistan's National Assembly or Senate.

Instead, it operates under its own constitutional framework, while important matters—including defence, foreign affairs and significant aspects of governance—remain under the authority of institutions linked to Islamabad. Another controversial provision requires candidates seeking election to affirm support for the territory's eventual accession to Pakistan. Those advocating independence or alternative constitutional arrangements have long argued that this narrows political space, while Pakistan maintains that the provision reflects its position on the Kashmir dispute. Critics of Islamabad have, over many years, alleged interference in local politics, including the influence of Pakistan's security establishment over governments in the territory. Human rights organisations and independent analysts have also raised concerns over restrictions on freedom of expression, preventive detentions in some cases and limits on political activity. Pakistan rejects accusations that democratic processes are systematically manipulated, maintaining that elections are conducted under constitutional procedures. Nevertheless, the recurring emergence of protest movements reflects a perception among sections of the population that local institutions possess only limited autonomy. Perhaps nowhere is public anger stronger than over economic issues. Pakistan-administered Kashmir possesses significant hydropower potential and abundant forests and mineral resources. Massive hydroelectric projects generate electricity that supplies large parts of Pakistan. Many

residents argue that the communities living around these projects receive inadequate compensation while paying high electricity tariffs despite being located near the source of generation. These economic complaints have become central to JAAC's campaign. Residents also point to unemployment, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, limited industrial development and poor investment despite the region's strategic importance. For many young people, migration has become one of the few viable economic options. Pakistan-administered Kashmir occupies a sensitive position along the Line of Control separating it from the Indian Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The security environment has historically resulted in a significant presence of Pakistani military and security agencies. Some political activists have alleged arrests of protest organisers and excessive force during demonstrations. Certain activists have claimed that hundreds have been detained and dozens killed during crackdowns in recent years. These allegations have not been independently verified and are disputed by Pakistani authorities. International human rights organisations have periodically expressed concern over restrictions on civil liberties in both Indian-administered and Pakistan-administered parts of the former princely state, underscoring that human rights concerns are not confined to one side of the Line of Control.

India's constitutional position has remained unchanged since Independence. New Delhi regards the entire former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir—including

territories administered by Pakistan—as an integral part of India.

See also Chinese Part In Bangladesh Teesta Project Alarms India

The Indian Parliament reinforced this position unanimously in its 1994 resolution, calling upon Pakistan to vacate territories under its control. The issue has acquired renewed political prominence under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), whose leaders have repeatedly asserted that Pakistan-administered Kashmir will eventually return to Indian administration. While such statements are politically significant, successive Indian governments have avoided outlining any military roadmap, recognising the enormous strategic risks associated with any attempt to alter the status quo between neighbours. The origins of the dispute continue to shape contemporary politics. After the accession of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir to India in October 1947, Indian forces were airlifted to defend the territory against tribal forces from Pakistan, supported by elements of the Pakistani military. The subsequent war ended with a United Nations-mediated ceasefire in January 1949, leaving Pakistan in control of roughly one-third of the former princely state. Within India, a long-running political debate continues over Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's decision to accept the ceasefire and refer aspects of the dispute to the United Nations. Many BJP leaders and some retired military officers have argued that India could have recovered additional territory

had military operations continued. Other historians contend that the military situation was more complex, that logistical challenges were substantial, and that the ceasefire reflected wider diplomatic and strategic considerations of the time. The debate remains one of independent India's most enduring historical controversies. A Liability for Pakistan, A Continuing Challenge for India. For Pakistan, repeated protest movements reveal the growing difficulty of governing a strategically vital but politically restless territory. For India, Pakistan-administered Kashmir remains both an unresolved territorial claim and a persistent security concern linked to cross-border militancy, diplomacy and regional stability. Neither side appears willing to fundamentally alter its position. Yet the emergence of JAAC suggests that local concerns—electricity prices, employment, constitutional rights, representation and governance—are increasingly taking centre stage alongside the larger India-Pakistan dispute. Whether Islamabad responds through reforms or greater security measures will shape the region's immediate future. As the July 27 elections approach, Pakistan-administered Kashmir once again finds itself at the intersection of local aspirations, national politics and one of the world's longest-running territorial disputes. The coming weeks will determine whether the latest movement becomes another passing episode of unrest or develops into a sustained challenge to Islamabad's management of the region.

FIFA World Cup quarterfinal ticket prices fall after co-hosts exit



New York: Resale prices for FIFA World Cup quarterfinal tickets have dropped following the elimination of co-hosts the United States and Mexico, while FIFA has put nearly 1,200 more tickets for the final on sale at a starting price of USD 7,380. According to ticket marketplace TickPick, the lowest resale price for Friday's Spain-Belgium quarterfinal in Inglewood, California, was USD

1,381, down from USD 3,261 before the United States lost to Belgium in the Round of 16. The lowest resale price for Saturday's England-Norway match in Miami Gardens, Florida, was USD 2,049, compared with USD 3,866 before England defeated Mexico to qualify for the quarterfinals. The platform also listed the lowest price for the Argentina-Switzerland match in Kansas City, Missouri, at USD 1,142, down from USD 2,381 before the Round of 16. Standing outside SoFi Stadium on Friday, Jake van Baarsel said he had bought tickets two days earlier. The 65-year-old from Riverside, California, said he had not planned to attend because ticket prices had been too high. However, after his son informed him that he had secured tickets at a lower price, he decided to buy two tickets for USD 1,000 each so he could attend with his 13-year-old grandson. "It's one of those

things – it's a memory maker for my grandson and me," he said. "So how much money do you put on a memory? So, yes, it's expensive for a game, but we enjoy it." Others who bought tickets well in advance of Friday's quarterfinal paid much more. Lisandro Pineda, 70, of East Los Angeles, said he paid about USD 2,200 a month ago. "The price was too high, I think, but it's a resale, remember," he said. "I didn't want to be left out. I've never been to a World Cup. I didn't go to the one we had before. So I figured, I have the money, I have the time, what the heck, buy the ticket, so here we are." Kourosh Modarress, 68, of Los Angeles, said his family bought hospitality tickets for USD 7,000 each after they failed to secure tickets during one of FIFA's ticket sales phases. "I think it's highway robbery," he said. FIFA had nearly 1,200 Category 2 tickets, priced at USD 7,380 each, on sale on Friday for the

World Cup final on July 19 at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey. The governing body's last-minute ticket sales portal, which had at times listed the match as sold out, showed 1,178 seats available across five upper-tier sections along the sidelines: 282 in Section 344, 299 in Section 343, 139 in Section 335, 443 in Section 334 and 15 in Section 333. FIFA was also selling 68 front-row Category 1 tickets in the lower tier at prices ranging from USD 19,995 to USD 32,970. Hospitality tickets in the Trophy Lounge+ were also available for USD 32,500 and USD 34,500, including food and beverages. Football's world governing body did not immediately respond to a request for comment on why the additional tickets had become available. Resale tickets for the final were available on FIFA's marketplace at prices ranging from USD 7,440.50 to USD 11,499,998.85.

Novak Djokovic vows Wimbledon return despite semifinal loss to Jannik Sinner

London: Novak Djokovic insisted he has no plans to walk away from Wimbledon despite suffering a crushing straight-sets defeat to world No. 1 Jannik Sinner in the semifinals on Friday, saying he hopes to return to the All England Club "at least one more time" as he continues his pursuit of a record 25th Grand Slam title. The seven-time champion's hopes of making it into a 39th Grand Slam singles final were shattered as he succumbed 6-4 6-4 6-4 to Sinner in a comprehensive victory for the Italian, who totally outclassed the 39-year-old throughout. As the 39-year-old left Centre Court to a standing ovation, speculation immediately followed about whether the Serbian great had played his last match on grass. Asked whether he would be back next year, he declared: "I would like to, at least one more time. Let's see." Despite admitting it had been "a good old blowout" defeat, Djokovic insisted his desire to compete at the highest level had not diminished. "Of course, I'm disappointed. I wanted to win Wimbledon.

That's the reason why I'm still pushing myself so hard," he said. The Serb, whose last major title was the US Open last year, highlighted the positives from reaching the last four, and in particular his victory over third-ranked Felix Auger-Aliassime in the quarter-finals. "I'm proud of what I achieved three nights ago. Felix is number three, fourth player in the world. Proven to myself and others that I can still play at the highest level, and I have." Sinner, though, was too good this afternoon and Djokovic said he would not dwell on the result. "I reached the last four of Wimbledon. Losing in straight sets against the best player in the world, okay. It is what it is. But the tournament was positive in terms of the attitude on the court, the fighting spirit, the dedication."

"I mean, it's still there."

Djokovic conceded he was not at his peak against Sinner but stressed it would not dampen his motivation. "A little bitter taste stays as I wasn't at the desired level today. But we turn the next page and we move



on." The 24-times Grand Slam champion will now focus on a record-equalling 25th major title at the US Open later this year which would take him beyond Margaret Court. Djokovic made clear his career remains

powered by desire, not obligation. "I don't have any pressure or no one is forcing me to play. I do it because I really want to and because I still can. I still can play as a top-10, top-5 player."

FIFA WC 2026: Argentina eye semi-final berth against Switzerland in quarter-final clash



Kansas City: Defending champions Argentina will look to march into their second consecutive FIFA World Cup semi-final when they take on Switzerland in the crucial quarter-final clash at the Kansas City Stadium. Without doubt, Argentina have made eye-catching progress in North America, starting with the

three straight Group J wins, inspired by six Lionel Messi goals and an all-time World Cup top scorer record (21 goals and counting) for the mesmerizing talisman. Messi has mustered two more in the knockout phase – including the crucial Round of 16 equaliser against Egypt, but it also took the collective will

and sheer determination of Lionel Scaloni's defending champions to get over the line against both Egypt and Cabo Verde. Indeed, Argentina required an own-goal extra-time winner to finally subdue the debutants in the Round of 32. Another gruelling 3-2 epic followed against the North Africans as the champions hit

three late goals to somehow deny Egypt. Switzerland side who have quietly achieved their stated goal of putting together a best-ever World Cup campaign. Not only have Murat Yakin's men booked the first quarter-final since 1954, but they travel to the Midwest having claimed back-to-back knockout victories for the first time ever in a global showpiece. The Alpine side were clinical in dispatching Algeria 2-0 in the Round of 32 before making light of the absence of breakout star Johan Manzambi to outlast Colombia on penalties after a last-16 stalemate.

How to watch Argentina vs Switzerland live in India

Live streaming and live telecast of the FIFA World Cup 2026 matches will be available on the Zee5 platform and app in India. A subscription will be needed. Live telecast of the FIFA World Cup 2026 will be available on the Unite8 Sports 1, Unite8 Sports 1 HD, Unite8 Sports 2, and Unite8 Sports 2 HD TV channels in India.

Shubman Gill names Roger Federer as his favourite tennis player

Hyderabad: India's Test and ODI Captain Shubman Gill says that the tennis legend is favourite tennis player. "Growing up, a lot of people said he made everything look effortless. But when you play a sport yourself, you realise how much

work goes into making it look that way. People have called me effortless in cricket too, but I know the effort behind it. The elegance and grace Federer played with was special, and that is why I admire him," Gill said on JioStar special tv show.

"The drop shot that Alcaraz plays, it reminds me of the short-arm jab in cricket. I play that shot too, it's my trademark shot. Quick, deceptive, and very effective," he said. On who he is backing to win Wimbledon this year, Gill said: "I'm backing Sin-

ner to win Wimbledon. He is a fantastic player, and he carries himself really well both on and off the court." On who would make a great tennis doubles partner for him, Gill said: "Carlos Alcaraz is the one who I would play doubles with."

Lionel Scaloni backs Lionel Messi's fitness ahead of Argentina's World Cup quarterfinal



Kansas City: Argentina manager Lionel Scaloni dismissed concerns over Lionel Messi's workload on Friday, saying the 39-year-old remained in peak physical condition ahead of his team's World Cup quarterfinal against Switzerland. Scaloni said Argentina's tracking data showed Messi was covering a similar distance in each match as in previous tournaments. "He's not running any more or any less than before. The numbers haven't changed," Scaloni was quoted by Xinhua as saying ahead of Saturday's match at Kansas City Stadium. "The team supports him a lot. Physically, he's prepared extremely well with his fitness coach and that's paying off. He's giving everything." Messi has scored eight goals in the tournament so far and is the joint leader in the race for the Golden Boot alongside France captain Kylian Mbappe, who has

played one more match. Scaloni said Messi's goal-scoring instincts had not diminished with age and backed the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner to continue defying expectations. "People who don't know him might be surprised. At 39, some think he can't rise to the challenge anymore, but as long as he wants to keep playing, he'll continue to do it," Scaloni said. "Anyone who watches him train can't imagine what he was like at 23 under [Pep] Guardiola at Barcelona. That's why, if you ask his teammates, they'll tell you the same thing: He's the best, and he'll remain the best for as long as he wants to play." Scaloni also said Messi would continue to have complete freedom over penalty duties despite missing two spot kicks in the tournament. "It never even crosses my mind to ask him to change. He decides what he wants to do," he said. Likewise,

Scaloni pointed out that Messi was free to decide where he operated on the pitch. In Argentina's round-of-16 victory over Egypt, the forward drifted to the right flank as the defending champion fought back from two goals down, setting up Cristian Romero's header before scoring the equalizer himself. "If he moves (to the right) and a teammate goes inside, that's his decision," the 48-year-old said. "The team adapts around him. The players understand when he's involved in the build-up and moving into those areas. He decides whatever he wants to do." Scaloni acknowledged that the likelihood this would be Messi's last major tournament had provided the team with additional motivation. "We know this will be his last World Cup, and that makes everything even more emotional," he added.

Shubman Gill joins Sachin Tendulkar in Wimbledon Royal Box as photo goes viral



London: India's current Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill joined cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar in the Royal Box at the Centre Court at Wimbledon to watch the two men's singles semifinals at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in London on Friday. Tendulkar and Gill were among the celebrities who visited Wimbledon on Friday, and both were welcomed by the Club. Tendulkar was accompanied by his wife, Anjali. A picture of Gill with Anjali and Sachin Tendulkar sitting in the Royal Box was posted by the India Test and ODI captain via his official handle on X, which went viral, causing a lot of excitement among netizens as Gill is reported to be dating Tendulkar's

daughter Sara. Earlier, the official handle of Wimbledon on X posted a photograph of Tendulkar watching the match from the Royal Box on Friday, rejoicing that the cricket royalty was spotted among the celebrities in the box. "Cricket royalty returns to the Royal Box. Welcome back to Wimbledon, Sachin Tendulkar," said the official handle of Wimbledon in its post on X, formerly Twitter. Gill is the fourth Indian captain to receive an invitation to watch Wimbledon from the Royal Box, after Tendulkar, Virat Kohli, and Rohit Sharma. He is also the fourth Indian cricketer to visit the hallowed grass courts of SW18 in 2026, joining the likes of Shikhar Dhawan, Deepthi

Sharma, and Sachin Tendulkar. Another former cricket star, Brian Lara of the West Indies, was also in the Royal Box, an area reserved for special guests invited by the All England Club. Both Gill and Tendulkar met many international celebrities during their time in the Royal Box. Gill met the Fashion ICON, Anna Wintour! Tendulkar, considered one of the greatest cricketers ever, retired in 2013 after playing in his 200th Test match at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. On Friday, Jannik Sinner defeated Novak Djokovic in the second semifinal to set up a summit clash with Alexander Zverev, who ended the dream run of British wildcard Arthur Fery.

Iniyan Pa wins 6th La Plagne Open International Chess Tournament

La Plagne (France): Indian Grandmaster Iniyan Pa triumphed at the 6th La Plagne Open International Chess Tournament, delivering an unbeaten performance in the Masters category here. The tournament, which concluded on Friday, featured 142 players from 20 countries, including 13 Grandmasters and 22 International Masters. Iniyan scored 7.5 points from nine rounds to claim the title. The 23-year-old Indian remained unbeaten, registering six wins and three draws to finish as the clear winner. After receiving a first-round walkover and drawing his second-round game, Iniyan steadily built momentum with two consecutive wins. Following another draw in Round 5, he sealed the title with three successive victories, includ-



ing crucial wins over GM Luca Moroni of Italy, who finished third, and IM Danyil Mosesov of Ukraine, who secured the runner-up spot. Heading into the final round with a one-point lead, Iniyan needed only a draw to confirm the title. He comfortably achieved the result by drawing his final-round

game against IM Aronyak Ghosh of India, securing the championship outright. Aronyak finished joint third alongside Diptayan Ghosh, with both players scoring 6.5 points. The victory marks Iniyan's fourth tournament title this year and his second classical chess title of 2026.

Who's Behind NTR and Allu Arjun's Political Projection?

Out of nowhere, a new rumour started dominating all other discussions in political circles and Tollywood since yesterday soon after some unreliable reports made headlines that leading actors like NTR and Allu Arjun are preparing ground for making their entry into the political landscape with perfect planning.

While those who are close to both actors categorically denied these speculations in quick time as there is no iota of truth in them, some pro-YSRCP media outlets and loyal supporters continue to aggressively push the narrative. While it is quite common for such fabricated stories to occasionally come up in industry circles and among fans of star heroes, what is surprising is that political parties like YSRCP are trying hard to deliberately push the agenda in this instance. The strategic motive of YSRCP behind this relentless propaganda seems to be generate artificial friction within the formidable NDA alliance, where the TDP and Janasena stand as strong partners. Their supportive media channels keep sharing these rumours on purpose. They want the public to believe that these film stars will surely join politics soon and pose threat to TDP and Janasena.

Even after clear denials from the actors' teams, their supporters did not stop. It looks like a planned effort to create a confusion within the coalition parties. NTR comes from Nandamuri family and Allu



Arjun belongs to Mega family. Even though both actors are currently maintaining some distance from their families due to some minor differences, they never gave an impression that the ties are completely broken.

It is well known that both of them are currently focused on their profession with numerous pan-India commitments. So, it is too early to speculate about their future ambitions. But, YSRCP seems very keen to cre-

ate some confusion inside the ruling NDA alliance. In Andhra Pradesh, the TDP and the Janasena party are working together strongly. Both of these parties have deep connections with the huge fan groups of these film stars. The YSRCP hopes that these rumours will cause worry among the alliance leaders.

Using both these actors, the opposition wants to upset both TDP and Janasena supporters at the same time. The timing of

these fake theories point the real intention. Through these baseless news stories, the YSRCP wants to keep the ruling alliance under pressure. They think that if these big actors show political interest, it will surely reduce the strength of both TDP and Janasena parties. In the end, this propaganda shows that the opposition is trying its best to push some of the other fake agendas instead of concentrating on real political issues.

Anirudh Vs Abhyankar: The OG Clash Is On!

Two of the most happening names in the Indian musical sector now is obviously Anirudh Ravichander and Sai Abhyankar. These two young sensations have been delivering quality musical compositions for a while and they're literally ruling the roost these days. Now there is going to be an interesting point of comparison between Anirudh and Abhyankar. This is regarding the genre of films at the two of them are doing currently.

As interesting as it may sound, both Anirudh and Sai are directly working on two films that happen to be based on Hindu war god of Murugan. Anirudh is occupied with the NTR and Trivikram film, while Sai is working on Dhanush and Vetrimaran film. Both these films happened to be the same Hindu mythological aspect of Muruga and they are both simultaneously in production. So, there will be obvious comparison in the quality of the product and also the techni-



cal aspect of these films. Subsequently, everyone is here to witness the kind of musical work that Anirudh and Sai will

be putting up for these respective films, as many great things are expected of them. Both of them are capable to

produce trance like religious synchronisation music and this will be put to test with these two films.

Siddhu Jonnalagadda goes for a new look after a gap

Siddhu Jonnalagadda is looking to script a strong comeback after his last two films, “Jack” and “Telusu Kada,” failed to make an impact at the box office. The actor, who enjoyed immense popularity with the “DJ Tillu” franchise, saw his winning streak come to a halt with these back-to-back disappointments. Now, Siddhu appears to be reinventing himself. The actor is currently busy shooting for two upcoming films and has surprised fans with a stylish new makeover. Sporting a fresh hairstyle and a sharper look, Siddhu exudes confidence in his latest pictures. The transformation has already caught the attention of fans on social media, with many calling it a refreshing change. A new look, a new vibe, and the same effortless swag. Siddhu Jonnalagadda seems ready to begin the next chapter of his career.



Bhagyashri Breaks Down On Stage

For every actor, getting opportunities is important. But turning those opportunities into success is what truly matters. Bhagyashri Borse had several releases in the South, but none of them delivered the breakthrough she was hoping for. That finally seems to be changing with **LENIN**.

Though the film got mixed response, Bhagyashree is receiving appreciation not just for her glamorous screen presence but also for her performance. The encouraging feedback appears to have made the moment deeply emotional for the actress.

Speaking at the LENIN success meet, Bhagyashri broke down while thanking fans for standing by her throughout her journey. She recalled the love and support she received from Telugu audiences over the last one and a half years, saying their messages and appreciation meant everything to her.

Fighting back tears, she described Hyderabad as her Karmabhoomi and made an emotional statement that she wants to do her final film in Telugu as well. Her heartfelt speech and emotional reaction became one of the biggest talking points of the event, with fans showering her with even more love on social media.



Did Bhagyashri Finally Get Her Break with Lenin?

Bhagyashri Borse finally has a reason to smile as Lenin is showing encouraging signs at the box office. While the Akhil Akkineni starrer has opened to mixed reviews, Bhagyashri's performance has emerged as one of the film's biggest positives. The young star acted, danced, and performed all the emotional scenes quite well in Lenin, and this makes her a complete actress. When you look at Telugu cinema, heroines are divided into a few categories. Some can only act, some can dance, and others are glamorous stars.

But Bhagyashree is a complete package and can fit into any role. Be it Andhra King Taluk. Kaantha or Mr Bachchan, she has proved her mettle with different films, but a hit was eluding her throughout her career. Right from day one, the makers were hyping her role, with the likes of Nagarjuna stating that Borse is the heart and soul of Lenin. But that was not the case, as many felt that her role could have been more effective if she had been given more importance in the narrative. But as far as the role she



played is concerned, Bhagyashri has given her 100%. Speaking about her off-screen behaviour, news from the sets is that Bhagyashri is a complete team player and goes all out for the promo-

tional activities. This makes her a great team player and an asset to Telugu cinema if she keeps her head on her shoulders. Only time will tell how she handles her career from here on.

Varun Tej's 'Korean Kanakaraju' finally gets a release date

Varun Tej's horror-comedy "Korean Kanakaraju" (KOKA) will arrive in theatres worldwide on August 7. The film was initially planned for February 2026 release but due to Varun Tej's injury the film got delayed. Directed by Merlapaka Gandhi, the film is being produced by UV Creations in association with First Frame Entertainment and is currently in the final stages of post-production. The makers announced the release date by unveiling a stylish new poster. It features Varun Tej in a rugged avatar, seated confidently with a blood-stained sword in one hand and a grenade in the other, while a group of Korean gangsters stand around him inside a dimly lit warehouse. Ritika Nayak stars opposite Varun Tej, while comedian Satya plays a pivotal role. Thaman provides the music. Varun Tej has seen many flops in the recent years and he is pinning hopes on this quirky comedy entertainer "Korean Kanakaraju".

