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Incessant rain derails Mumbai again

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Heavy rain continued to lash Mumbai for the fourth consecutive day on Tuesday, crippling normal life as waterlogging disrupted movement across several parts of the city and adjoining areas.

According to the Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis' office, at least seven people have died across Maharashtra while nearly two lakh hectares of farmland in Vidarbha have been affected.

Air travel has been severely hit. Data from Flightradar showed 155 departing flights delayed and 102 arrivals behind schedule at Mumbai airport.

The incessant showers have thrown normal life out of gear in several areas including Dadar, Matunga, Sion, Andheri and Parel with roads and streets submerged in water. Heavy flooding was also witnessed in areas like Byculla, Kalachowki, Thane, Ghatkopar, Vidyavihar, Vikhroli, and Bhandup.

The Central Railway suspended its local train services on the harbour line between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) and Kurla stations



Pic: Bhushan Koyande

due to submergence of tracks in a section after heavy rains. It also suspended the services on its main line between CSMT and Thane as the rail tracks got waterlogged.

In Vasai-Virar and Nalasopara, floodwaters entered roads, shops and residential areas, leaving residents stranded. Commuters faced difficulties as traffic slowed to a crawl

and accidents became frequent on inundated stretches.

IMD warning

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the downpour is expected to intensify, with forecasts of heavy to very heavy rainfall over the next four days. Vashi recorded the highest rainfall in the region, while Navi

Mumbai too was among the worst affected.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) data showed that between 8 am on August 18 and 7 am on August 19, the city's central zone received 178.56 mm rainfall, the eastern zone 190.50 mm and the western zone 220.82 mm. Poor drainage in low-lying areas worsened flooding, while large

potholes hidden under submerged roads added to commuter woes.

Public transport also remained affected. The suburban train services on Western lines reported delays of nearly 10 minutes due to water accumulation on tracks at vulnerable points.

With forecasts predicting more downpours, Mumbai continues to

grapple with overflowing drains, waterlogged streets and mounting fears of further disruption.

Mumbai witnessed a dramatic sight as the Mithi River swelled to the danger mark amid heavy rains. For years, the river had appeared almost lifeless, with low water levels that made it barely recognisable as a river. However, the recent downpour changed everything, transforming Mithi into a forceful and fast-moving stream.

A video shared on X by civic activist Vidyasagar Jagadeesan captured the Mithi River in full fury as it swelled to the danger mark in Mumbai. "Mithi river looks like a real river today," the caption of the post reads.

NDRF in action

The NDRF and the SDRF have stepped in to rescue over 300 people from Nanded district after torrential rains flooded several parts of the region. They will conduct a large-scale relief and rescue operation in the area.

The district has been reeling under floods, especially in the Mukhed taluka. About 5-6 villages have been flooded in the area.

Thane-Navi Mumbai Airport elevated road cleared

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government on Tuesday approved the construction of a 25-km-long elevated corridor to link Thane with the upcoming Navi Mumbai international airport and also underground Metro Line 11 from Wadala depot in Mumbai to the iconic Gateway of India.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

The panel cleared several major infrastructure projects aimed at boosting transport connectivity and urban development across key cities, including Mumbai, Pune, Thane, Navi Mumbai and Nagpur.

A statement from CM office said Fadnavis hoped the initiatives would accelerate the state's development and modernise public transport systems.

The committee approved the construction of additional railway lines to strengthen the Pune-Lonavala corridor. This will improve regional connec-



Devendra Fadnavis

tivity and ease traffic congestion in Pune, while also supporting industrial, residential, and commercial growth along the route, it said.

Under phases 3 and 3A of the Mumbai Urban Transport Project (MUTP), the state approved the procurement of 268 fully air-conditioned local train coaches. These trains will feature metro-style automatic doors and upgraded amenities. The new rakes will replace the old open-door trains in phases.

Notably, ticket fares will remain unchanged, CM Fadnavis said.

The cabinet cleared the construction of a 25-km-long elevated corridor to directly link Thane with the upcoming Navi Mum-

bai International Airport.

The project will provide high-speed connectivity for commuters and businesses in the region.

The much-anticipated Metro Line 11, a 16-km fully underground corridor from Wadala depot to Gateway of India, has been approved. The Rs 24,000 crore project will be funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Key stations will include Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Chowk and Horniman Circle.

The project also includes a joint commercial complex with BEST, generating additional revenue for the transport body.

A new township has been approved for development in Nagpur, alongside the construction of a new ring road to support urban expansion and decongest existing routes, the statement said.

As part of Phase 1 of the Pune Metro project, Balajinagar, Bibwewadi, Swargate and Katraj stations have been approved, further enhancing the city's urban mobility.

Psephologist apologises for Maharashtra voter data

New Delhi: Political analyst and psephologist Sanjay Kumar on Tuesday apologised for his post on Maharashtra elections, which reported a considerable fall in voter numbers in two assembly seats compared to the recent Lok Sabha elections.

He said an error occurred while comparing 2024 Lok Sabha and assembly election data, attributing it to a misread row by the data team.

"I sincerely apologise for the tweets posted regarding Maharashtra elections. Error occurred while comparing data of 2024 LS and 2024 AS. The data in row was misread by our Data team. The tweet has since been removed. I had no intention of dispersing any form of misinformation," Lokniti-CSDS co-director wrote on X.

Reacting to Kumar's apology, BJP IT cell chief Amit Malviya accused him of consistently misrepresenting election projections to favour Congress, calling the Maharashtra data a case of "confirmation bias."

India-China relations have made steady progress: PM

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, saying that India-China relations have made 'steady progress' since last year.

Glad to meet Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Since my meeting with President Xi in Kazan last year, India-China relations have made steady progress guided by respect for each other's interests and sensitivities," he wrote in a post on X.

PM Modi said that stable, constructive and predictable relations between India and China will promote regional and global peace.

"I look forward to our next meeting in Tianjin on the sidelines of the SCO Summit. Stable, predictable, constructive ties between India and China will contribute significantly to regional as well as global peace and prosperity."

During the meeting, the Chinese Foreign Minister handed over the invite of the Shanghai Cooperation



Organisation (SCO) Summit to PM Modi, which he will be attending this year. The SCO Summit is being held in Tianjin on August 31 and September 1.

PM Modi thanked Chinese President Xi Jinping for the invitation to the SCO Summit and conveyed his acceptance. He is scheduled to meet the Chinese President during the SCO summit.

Wang Yi also shared his

positive assessment of the bilateral meeting with EAM S Jaishankar and the 24th Meeting of the Special Representatives, which he co-chaired with NSA Ajit Doval during his visit.

"Prime Minister emphasised the importance of maintaining peace and tranquillity on the border, and reiterated India's commitment to a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable resolution of the boundary

question," the PMO said in a press release.

Healthy relations

Following his meeting with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that the warming of ties between India and China holds great significance ahead of PM Modi's visit to China for the SCO Summit.

The Chinese side attaches great importance to the Prime Minister's visit to China to attend the SCO summit at our invitation. We believe that the Indian side will also make your contribution to a successful summit in Tianjin," the minister said. The Chinese Foreign Minister appreciated the developments in the bilateral ties since the meeting of PM Modi and Xi Jinping in Kazan last year, noting that it "pointed the direction for the development of our bilateral relations and provided impetus for the proper settlement of the boundary question." -PTI

UK Royal Navy's first-ever Hindu chaplain

By Aditi Khanna

London: The UK's Royal Navy has appointed its first-ever Hindu chaplain, the first non-Christian to be appointed for the official role of offering spiritual support to fellow naval officers based on the tenets of Hinduism.

Bhanu Attri, originally from Himachal Pradesh, took over his new role last week after undergoing a somewhat different course from other Navy cadets.

He went through six weeks of officer instruction, including sea survival with four weeks at sea aboard the warship HMS Iron Duke, and three

weeks focused on the role of a military chaplain.

"To become the first-ever Hindu chaplain in the fleet is a profound honour," said Attri.

"As a Hindu brought up in India, the chance to represent individuals from other diverse religions brings meaningful representation for the Hindu community and reflects the Navy's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and spiritual care for all," said the 39-year-old.

"My family feels immense pride, a pride grounded in generations of faith, service, and resilience," he said.

The Hindu Council UK (HCUK) welcomed the move

after proposing Attri as fitting the criteria for the role: personal fitness both physical and mental, principled in faith and philosophy, reflective and pastoral; professional eligibility of education equivalent to Hindu scriptural degree level and post accreditation experience in leadership capacity, with a sound sense of spirituality and interfaith relations; and general outlook for integration into the British culture and having good English communicative skills.

"The training can be arduous, which requires medical fitness standards, ready for duty 24/7 at short notice," said HCUK's Anil Bhanot, Hindu



Bhanu Attri

Advisor to the UK's Ministry of Defence (MoD). "MoD careers are sometimes

neglected by our Hindu youth and we will try and do more community meetings at temples to raise awareness. British Hindus have settled here from all corners of the world, and although our spiritual bhoomi (land) is India, our karmabhoomi is the United Kingdom and MoD represents our protective arm," he said.

Attri was among 148 new officers among the so-called "leaders of tomorrow", including warfare specialists, engineers, overseas and all cadets who joined from civilian life who completed their "Initial Officer Training" last week.

After up to 29 weeks of demanding instruction at Britan-

nia Royal Naval College (BRNC) in Dartmouth, south-west England, they transformed from civilian to sailor and formally passed out at a BRNC ceremony in front of friends, family and senior naval officers.

"We live in a perilous world and as a service we must respond to the challenges to our nation's security, also with confidence - and that means we need people like you that can offer leadership of the highest quality," said Andrew Burns, Vice-Admiral and the Royal Navy's senior operational commander who was the guest of honour at the ceremony.

"There is no greater commitment than to serve your coun-

try, and to lead others to do the same," he said.

The training is designed to teach the basics of serving in the military, such as drill and uniform, through the fundamentals of leadership, seafaring, naval history and strategy.

In addition to extensive time in the classroom and on the parade ground, cadets head out on to Dartmoor to learn and develop leadership and teamwork skills, spend time at sea aboard an operational warship, and conduct training on specialist Vahana boats on the River Dart and in the English Channel.

-PTI

Rains Wreak Havoc Across State

Death toll crosses 21; CM reviews status



By Quaid Najmi

Mumbai: As large parts of Maharashtra continued to reel under the monsoon fury for the fourth consecutive day, the statewide death toll climbed to at least 21, with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis closely monitoring the situation in the state's 36 districts.

The battering rains have disrupted normal life with trails of deaths, missing persons, crops devastated and untold misery for lakhs in Mumbai, Marathwada, Vidarbha and Konkan regions, reviving memories of the July 26, 2005 deluge.

With rainfall figures remaining in 3-digits for the past 3 days, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) has been hit hard with delays or disruptions in the suburban train networks, major and arterial roads, the two highways flooded, rail tracks, vicini-

ty of stations inundated, causing huge hardships to the commuters.

Hundreds of commuters were seen trudging on the railway tracks in places like Vasai, Nalasopara, Ghatkopar, Mulund, Kalyan, Sion, Kurla, and certain other stations on the Western Railway, Central Railway and the Harbour Line networks.

Scores of big and small vehicles were stuck in the waters submerging the city roads and highways across Mumbai, and towing vans rushed to the rescue of four-wheelers in some places, but two-wheeler riders preferred to drag their vehicles to the nearest garage.

The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) authorities advised intending domestic and international passengers to check the status with their respective airlines before venturing out and allow extra time to

reach the airport given the incessant rains and traffic conditions.

Officials said that over 10-lakh hectares of farmlands have been destroyed with the highest 2-lakh hectares in the Vidarbha region alone, said Deputy CM Ajit Pawar, after attending the review meeting today.

The IMD has announced a Red Alert for Mumbai, Thane, Palghar, Raigad, besides Orange Alert for Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg and other districts, fisherfolk on Maharashtra-Goa coast warned against venturing into the angry Arabian Sea, a holiday for past two days for all schools-colleges, a work-from-home for government staffers and other precautionary measures.

As per official reports, more than 800 villages have been affected in the usually dry Marathwada region, water levels are alarmingly high in several talukas of Raigad-Ratnagiri.



Indian Army's Sudarshan Chakra corps rescues hundreds in Nanded

Nanded: Responding to a SOS from the Maharashtra government, the Indian Army's Sudarshan Chakra Corps has rushed a rescue column to bail out thousands of people stranded in the flood-ravaged Nanded district, officials said here.

Till Tuesday, at least 21 rain-related deaths were reported across the state including eight in Nanded where a cloudburst-triggered deluge created massive havoc and destruction, and more than 300 people have been rescued.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that at least eight persons perished in the Nanded which has been clobbered by rains since Sunday, besides 2 rain-linked fatalities in Beed, one each in Hingoli, Gadchiroli, Akola, plus 2 in Mumbai.

The Sudarshan Chakra Corps has rushed a rescue column of 65 comprising rescuers, engineers and medics which are helping the State Disaster Response Force, local police and district officials.

Temporary camps have been set up to shelter the people evacuated from inundated villages, with Raawan, Bhaswadi, Bhingoli and Hasnal bearing the brunt of the flood waters from the overflowing Lendi Dam.

With 80 percent of Hasnal still inundated, the local authorities said that of the five reported missing yesterday, the bodies of four were recovered and a search continues for one person in the ongoing operations.

"The Army columns are actively relocating families to safer areas. Medical camps and food distribution points have been established to extend immediate humanitarian relief. Equipped with advanced rescue gears, our teams are prepared to ensure safe evacuation of stranded residents," the Army officials said today.

Of those rescued under challenging conditions with intermittent rains, nearly 180 persons were administered first aid, and food provided to over 450 people, Nanded Collector Rahul Kardile describing the situation as 'currently under control'.

Kardile said that though the rainfall situation has eased somewhat with water levels receding, the Godavari and Painganga rivers are still in a spate, and a strict vigil is being maintained on the unfolding flood crisis.

Serious Misconduct Two cops suspended

THANE: Two constables of the Thane police have been suspended on charges of serious misconduct, negligence, and falsification of official records, an official said on Tuesday.

The action has been taken against constables Dattatray Namdev Jadhav and Shivaji Bharat Garje, following an independent inquiry, he said.

According to officials, Jadhav, who was serving as a duty distribution officer at the Thane Police Headquarters, was found guilty of preparing fake entries in the duty register on August 4.

Jadhav allegedly manipulated the duty register to create false entries, misleading senior officials.

In a related incident, Garje, tasked with escorting prisoners, reportedly allowed unauthorised transport of two prisoners with the help of eight policemen.

This action has previously led to the suspension of nine other officers.

-PTI

BOB Chess Tournament Atharva, Manasi, Shivansh win titles

By Correspondent

Mumbai: Atharva Deshmukh, Manas Hathi, Shivansh Giri, Ahan Kataruka, Zian Nagrecha and Liya Krishnan won the titles in their respective groups in the Bank of Baroda trophy rapid chess tournament organized by the Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh (RMMS) and Ideal Sports Academy on the occasion of Independence Day.

In the under-13 group, FIDE rated sub-junior chess player Manas Hathi (5 points) won the title by defeating FIDE rated Shlok Pawar (4 pts) in the decisive fifth round of the group stage.

In the under-11 group, FIDE rated Shivansh Giri defeated FIDE rated Dhairya Bijalwan (4 pts), who was leading until the decisive fifth round, and jumped to the first place.

A total of 162 players, including FIDE rated sub-junior chess players from various districts, participated in the competition and 90 winners and runners-up were awarded.

The winners were felicitated in the presence of FIDE instructor Rajababu Gajengi and Shiv Chhatrapati Award winner Leeladhar Chavan.



Results

Under-14 group: 1. Atharva Deshmukh (4.5 pts), 2. Arian Devrukhkar (4 pts), 3. Mumukshu Mitkar (4 pts), 4. Niv Wingole (3.5 pts), 5. Advik Aggarwal (3.5 pts), 6. Arjun Padhariya (3.5 pts).

Under-13 group: 1. Manas Hathi (5 points), 2. Shlok Pawar (4 pts), 3. Nand Pathak (4 pts), 4. Hussaina Raj (4 pts), 5. Maitreyi Bera (4 pts), 6. Anay Bhangre (4 pts).

Under-11 group: 1. Shivansh Giri (4.5 pts), 2. Dharish Bijlwan (4 pts), 3. Shlok Pawar (4 pts), 4. Mrunmayi Davre (4 pts), 5. Nitik Palkar (4 pts), 6. Laksh Parmar (3.5 pts).

Under-10 group: 1. Ahan Kataruka (5 pts), 2. Nitya Banga (4 pts), 3. Aaradhya Puro (4 pts), 4. Shivansh Giri (4 pts), 5. Adit Gokhale (4 pts), 6. Laksh Parmar (3.5 pts).

Under-8 group: 1. Zian Nagrecha (4.5 pts), 2. Manva Parkar (4 pts), 3. Ishi Singh (4 pts), 4. Rihan Dubey (4 pts), 5. Hasti Shah (3.5 pts), 6. Jitej Gadge (3 pts).

Under-7 group: 1. Liya Krishnan (4.5 pts), 2. Nirvana Daryanani (4 pts), 3. Chaitanya Nagarale (3.5 pts), 4. Riyan Gala (3.5 pts), 5. Anish Agarwal (3.5 pts), 6. Sanchit Kale (3 pts).

Female Cop Dragged Drunk auto driver nabbed

Satara: A shocking case of assault on a policewoman has emerged from Satara district, where a drunk autorickshaw driver dragged a woman traffic police constable for nearly 200 metres while recklessly hitting several vehicles on the way. According to a report published by a media house, the incident occurred on Monday in the Molacha Odha area and was caught on CCTV cameras installed at nearby shops.

The victim, identified as constable Bhagyashree Jadhav, was on duty when she noticed the accused driving dangerously near Khandobacha Maal. When she attempted to stop the autorickshaw, the driver allegedly grabbed her collar and pushed her.

In the scuffle, Jadhav's raincoat got entangled in the rear of the vehicle, leaving her trapped and dragged along the road. Shocked commuters and bystanders witnessed the harrowing scene as the rickshaw sped through traffic. Several vehicles were hit during the incident before the driver was finally stopped.

State Ranking Carrom Ambika, Ghufra emerge winners



By Correspondent

Mumbai: Mumbai's Ambika Harith and Mohammed Ghufra emerged as winners in the women's and men's categories of the first state ranking carrom tournament organized at Juhu Vile Parle Gymkhana.

In the women's final, Ambika Harith easily defeated Mumbai's Mitali Pathak 24-11, 25-0. In the match for third place, Samruddhi Ghadigaonkar of Thane overcame Prajakta Narayankar of Mumbai Suburban 25-17, 25-4.

In the men's final, Mohammed Ghufra won

against Pune's Abhijit Tripankar in two straight sets 25-8, 25-22. In the third place match, Jalgaon's Sandeep Dive thrashed Wajid Ansari of Mumbai Suburban 25-4, 25-8.

In the women's semifinals, Ambika defeated Prajakta Narayankar 8-25, 23-16, 25-20 in a three-set thriller. In this match, Ambika had a nominal lead of only 1 point at the end of the seventh board (21-20) in the third set. But taking advantage of starting the innings on the last board, she won the third set. On the other hand, Mithali had an easy but unexpected victory over Samruddhi Ghadigaonkar 21-10, 25-15.

In the men's semis, Ghufra defeated Wajid Ansari 19-14, 25-7, while Abhijit Tripankar beat Sandeep Dive 19-3, 19-10.

The winners were given prizes at the hands of Gymkhana president Anil Mahesh, vice president Vijay Mehta, honorary secretary of Maharashtra Carrom Association Arun Kedar and treasurer Ajit Sawant.

AYURVEDIC CANCER CLINIC

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The Maharashtra state cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday gave approval for waiver of Stamp Duty for setting up a 100-bed hospital at the Integrated Ayurvedic Cancer Clinic and Research Centre at Tata Memorial Centre in Mumbai. The Cabinet also reviewed the situation arising out of heavy and incessant rains and floods across the state.

The Cabinet approved provision of two hectare 50 R land to Savitribai Phule Mahila Sahakar Industrial Estate Limited, Kolhapur in Group No. 697/3/6, Kasba Karveer, B Ward, Kolhapur.

The Cabinet gave approval to regularise the encroachment on government land in Vengurla area of Sindhudurg district in accordance with the rules.

Further, the Cabinet gave clearance to regularise the temporary service of 17 employees working on various posts in Group-C (Technical) cadre in Government Medical Colleges and Hospitals in the state.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet also reviewed the situation arising

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Devendra Fadnavis

out of heavy rains and flash floods in various parts of Maharashtra.

CM Fadnavis said the agricultural land of 12 lakh acres has been damaged while the cattle stock has been hit. In Nanded district eight people died in a cloud burst like situation.

He said the NDRF and SDRF have been alerted due to high tide in the evening. The government is closely coordinating with neighbouring states for discharge management of dam water.

As far as Mithi River is concerned, nearly 500 people have been evacuated to safer places after it crossed the danger mark. He said that the District Collec-

tors have been authorised to provide financial aid to affected people as per the NDRF rules.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde visited the rain affected areas in Thane city and visited the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation control room to monitor the situation.

Similarly, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and Disaster Management Minister Girish Mahajan visited the state emergency operation centre and reviewed the situation arising out of heavy rains and floods in various parts of the state.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My clients, Mrs. Usha Puransingh Atwal, Mr. Kailash Puransingh Atwal, and Hema Puransingh Atwal, all an adults are willing to register a Release Deed. They are the only legal heirs and claimants of late Mr. Puransingh Dansingh Atwal, who expired on 14.03.2025.

In respect of Flat No.A/201, MANSA CHSL, Indralok Phase-4, Bhayandar (East), Thane - 401105, the said flat was acquired by executing a registered Agreement for Sale dated 02.11.2006, vide registered Document No. TNN-7/8399/2006. As per Share Certificate No. 5, bearing distinct Nos. 141 to 145 (both inclusive), issued by MANSA CHSL, on 15th February 2011 in favour of late Mr. Puransingh Dansingh Atwal and Mr. Kailash Puransingh Atwal, they were the owners and members of the said flat.

And in respect of Unit No. 807, 8th Floor, Sunkate - Vanworld 4, Building No. 7, Village Tiwari, Naigaon (East), Taluka Vasai, District Palghar - 401208, admeasuring 37.78 sq. mtrs. carpet area, being part of New Survey No. 30, Hissa No. 3(P), Survey No. 35, Hissa Nos. 1(P) and 2(P), the said unit was acquired by executing a registered Agreement for Sale dated 04.05.2023, vide registered Document No. VSI-3/9363/2023, between Sunkate Realty Limited, DDPL Goble Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd., Unicorn Infra-Project & Interest Pvt. Ltd. and Late Mr. Puransingh Dansingh Atwal, Mrs. Usha Puransingh Atwal, and Mr. Kailash Puransingh Atwal. They were the owners of the said unit.

All Persons/entities including an individual, Hindu Undivided Family, a company, banks, financial institutions, non-banking financial institutions, a firm, an association of persons or a body of individuals whether incorporated or not, lenders and/or creditors having any benefits, titles, claims, objections, demands or rights or interest in respect of the said Premises or any part thereof by way of inheritance, sale, transfer, share, mortgage, pledge, charge, lease, lien, sub-lease, tenancy, sub-tenancy, license, assignment, tenancy, gift, exchange, encumbrance, family arrangement/settlement, release, relinquishment, devise, bequest, succession, maintenance, easement, trust, possession, decree or order of any court of law, contracts / agreements / memorandums of understandings, letter of intent/ heads of terms, partnership, lis pendens, reservation, power of attorney, option, right of first refusal, preemption or any liability or any commitment or otherwise of whatsoever nature is/are hereby required to intimate in writing, along with documentary evidence to the undersigned at his office at Shop no. 2, Yusuf Mohd. Chawl, Bandongari, Ashok Nagar, Kandivalli (East), Mumbai 400 101 within a period of 14 (Fourteen) days from the date of publication of this notice of such claim, if any, failing which, it shall be presumed that there is/are no claim/s and such claim/s, if any, shall be considered to be waived and abandoned and will not be enforceable/ binding on my client thereafter.

Date : 20/08/2025

Advocate Ganesh M. Gupta
MO. 9987866477,
Email: - adv.ganeshmgupta13@gmail.com

Monsoon Mayhem In Mumbai



All pics: Bhushan Koyande



Monorail Stuck MMRDA blames overcrowding

Mumbai: A Monorail train (RST-4) was stalled between Bhakti Park and Chembur, near Mysore Colony station on August 19. Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) conducted preliminary checks and revealed thapt due to overcrowding, the total weight of the train rose to around 109 metric tonnes. It exceeded its designed capacity of 104 metric tonnes. "This excess weight caused a break in the mechanical contact between the power rail and the current collector, cutting off the electricity supplied required to run the train," an official said. MMRDA then immediately dispatched a team of technicians to the site and, as per SOP, deployed another mono to tow stalled mono. Normally, in such situations, the stalled train is towed to the nearest station. However, because of the excess weight, it could not be towed and therefore, a rescue operation had to be carried out with the help of the Fire Brigade. The overcrowding was triggered by the closure of the Indian Railways Har-

bour Line owing to heavy rainfall in Mumbai. Despite repeated efforts by security personnel to regulate boarding and prevent excessive crowding, the surge in commuter demand overwhelmed the system. It is important to note that the Mumbai Monorail is a low-capacity transit system, intended to serve specific corridors and not designed for sudden high-volume loads akin to suburban railways or metro systems. "MMRDA is committed to safe and secure journey by its Metro and Mono rail systems, the incident happened primarily due to overcrowding, MMRDA requests all commuters to kindly follow the instructions of the security and technical teams deployed for ensuring smooth operations during the emergency situations," a statement issued by it read. MMRDA worked alongside the BMC and emergency services to provide passenger assistance, de-board affected commuters safely, and restore power and operations at the earliest. Immediate corrective actions were underway.

IndiGo passenger bus catches fire

Mumbai: An Indigo airlines passenger bus caught fire at Mumbai Airport on Tuesday amid heavy rains, causing disruption and raising safety concerns. In an official statement, the airline has called it a 'minor incident,' assuring that all measures were taken on time as "IndiGo follows the strictest protocols in ensuring safety" "In a minor incident, one of our coaches caught fire while it was inactive for a few hours and parked at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport Mumbai on August 19, 2025. The fire was immediately extinguished. We are investigating the incident to ascertain its cause and confirm that no personnel were injured and no damage to any other asset. IndiGo follows the strictest protocols in ensuring safety across all on-ground and flight operations for passengers and staff." Mumbai rain has disrupted flight operations. At least eight flights were diverted to Surat, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad.

Mumbai to get 268 new AC trains

CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE ON INFRA CLEARS SEVERAL PROJECTS

By Correspondent

Mumbai: The cabinet sub-committee on infrastructure under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis that met on Tuesday took a slew of decisions that includes purchase of 268 new AC trains for Mumbai under Mumbai Urban Transport Project (MUTP), elevated road between Thane and Navi Mumbai International Airport, Metro Line 11 project, third and fourth tracks on the Pune-Lonavala suburban railway line and a new city in Nagpur among others. These decisions are expected to provide a modern transport system and a new direction and pace of development to the cities of Mumbai, Pune, Thane, Navi Mumbai and Nagpur, said CMO officials. "In order to modernise the suburban railway service, in today's meeting approval was given for the purchase of new trains under Phases 3 and 3A of



the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Plan (MUTP). In the first phase, as many as 268 fully AC trains will be purchased. These trains will be equipped with automatic door closing facility and high-quality amenities like the metro. The old doorless trains will be pushed out of service in phases, and these modern trains will be made available to the passengers instead," said Chief Minister Fadnavis, after the meeting. He clarified that after shifting to AC trains, there will be no change in the ticket prices. He also said that the purchase of trains will start after the approval of the Central Government.

"Approval has also been given for the construction of the third and fourth tracks on the Pune-Lonavala suburban railway line. This decision will make the Pune-Lonavala corridor more efficient and provide the necessary connectivity for industrial, residential and commercial development in the area. It will also help in reducing the increasing traffic pressure in Pune city. Along with this, approval has been given for two new stations, Balajinagar-Bibwewadi and Swargate-Katraj, under Phase I of Pune Metro," the CM added. The cabinet subcommittee also cleared the construction of a 25-km elevat-

ed road between Thane and Navi Mumbai International Airport. This project will provide a fast and dedicated communication route to Thane, Navi Mumbai and the adjoining industrial areas. "The ambitious project of Metro Line 11 in Mumbai has got the green light. A 16-km-long, completely underground line will be constructed from Wadala Depot to the Gateway of India. This metro will run from important places like Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Chowk and Hornimal Circle. This project is worth about Rs 24,000 crore, and funds will be made available for this from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). This line will provide great relief to Mumbaikars in terms of transportation," said the Chief Minister. In addition, a commercial complex will be set up under a joint development project with BEST, from which BEST will get additional income.

HC functions for half day

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on Tuesday functioned only till 12.30 pm due to incessant rains in the city. Normally, the HC functions from 11 am to 5 pm. Heavy rains battered Mumbai on Tuesday, affecting road and rail traffic and leading to the closure of government offices. In a notice issued in the morning, the high court said due to heavy rains and bad weather forecast as well as difficulties for advocates and staff members in commuting, all courts will function only till 12.30 pm. All officials/staff members are permitted to leave the office by 1pm, the notice said. A day after rains pounded the city, heavy showers continued on Tuesday as well, crippling normal life. Several lawyers appeared online to argue their matters before the HC on Monday and Tuesday. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a 'red alert', forecasting extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places in Mumbai and adjoining districts on Tuesday. -PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Mumbai, Thane, Kalyan Dombivali, Vasai-Virar are seeing an absolute collapse of governance. Instead of doing photo ops the Ministers should have ensured that Municipal Corporations are ready to tackle the heavy rains."



Aaditya Thackeray, MLA, Shiv Sena (UBT)

NCB conducts drug awareness campaign

Mumbai: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Mumbai Zonal Unit undertook a comprehensive drug awareness campaign in the last few days. This initiative formed part of the Nationwide Drug Awareness Campaign launched by NCB on August 15 and August 16 to sensitise citizens about the ill effects of drug abuse and to mobilize community support for a "Drug Free India." The Mumbai Zonal Unit of NCB organized multiple outreach and training activities aimed at raising

awareness and spreading knowledge about the consequences of drug abuse and trafficking. The key programmes included: **Training Officers** A detailed training session on the provisions of the NDPS Act, relevant judgments and case studies was conducted at Mumbai International Airport for Officers of Mumbai Customs. The session was addressed by the Additional Director and Superintendent of NCB Mumbai and was attended by approximately



75-80 Customs Officers. **Students educated** NCB staff interacted with

around 250-300 students, spreading the message of a drug-free society and highlighting the impor-

tance of youth participation in the fight against drugs, in the spirit of Independence Day. An outreach programme was conducted for passengers and the public, reinforcing the dangers of drug use and trafficking at Kalyan Railway Station. **Special play** A Street Play (Nukkad Natak) and public awareness event were organized at Gateway of India, focusing on the ill effects of drug consumption and

the societal damage caused by trafficking. NCB Mumbai conducted another mass awareness activity at CST Railway Station, sensitizing commuters and the general public against drug abuse. Through these initiatives, NCB Mumbai reiterated its commitment to creating a Drug Free India by involving enforcement agencies, students and the general public in collective action against drug abuse and trafficking.

Presidential Reference Hearing

What’s wrong with consulting the court? says Supreme Court

New Delhi: A five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on Tuesday took a firm stance against objections raised by Kerala and Tamil Nadu regarding the maintainability of a Presidential Reference under Article 143(1) of the Constitution.

The bench is led by Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai and comprises Justices Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, P.S. Narasimha, and Atul S. Chandurkar.

When the Hon’ble President is seeking views of this Court, what is wrong in that? Are you really serious?” the bench asked, with a hint of disbelief.

On Article 200 and President Murmu’s 14 questions

On April 8, 2025, a two-judge bench delivered a landmark judgement in the ‘State of Tamil Nadu vs. Governor of Tamil Nadu’ case, ruling that neither Governors nor the President may indefinitely delay action on bills passed by legislatures.

The court delineated that under Article 200, Governors had only three options: to assent, withhold (and return for reconsideration), or reserve a bill for presidential consideration with strict timelines enforced.

Any delay beyond these windows is liable to judicial

review (unless justified).

Soon after, President Droupadi Murmu invoked her power under Article 143(1) on May 13 by referring 14 questions to the Supreme Court.

These queries challenge whether the Court may impose timelines on the President and Governors, whether such actions infringe discretion under Articles 200 and 201, and if the Court can chart procedure where the Constitution is silent.

The opposition

The Kerala and Tamil Nadu governments opposed this reference, arguing that the issues are no longer res integra (open questions), and that safe jurisdiction should be by way of a formal review petition rather than an Article 143 reference.

Senior Advocate K.K. Venugopal, appearing for Kerala, contended that once a judgement settles an issue, a Presidential reference cannot be used to circumvent review procedures.

However, the top court rebuffed these objections, reminding lawyers that its role under Article 143 is purely advisory, and not applicable for appellate review. CJI Gavai stressed: “We are sitting in an advisory jurisdiction,” and not functioning as an appellate bench.

Justice Surya Kant clarified that while the Court could opine that a judgement may be legally questionable, such an advisory opinion does not overrule the earlier decision.

“A view can be overruled, not decision.”

This dispute encapsulates the tug-of-war between judicial oversight and executive discretion.

Attorney General R. Venkataramani, while beginning his arguments, said the court’s extraordinary powers under Article 142 could not be stretched to disturb the constitutional balance.

“The power of Article 142 cannot be used by the judiciary to violate the Basic Structure of the Constitution and take over Executive or Legislative functions,” the AG told the bench.

According to Venkataramani, such judicial directions risk crossing into law-making terrain.

“Article 142 cannot be used to grant deemed assent,” he said, stressing that the provision was never meant to substitute constitutional procedure.

The AG reached back to the Third Judges’ case, which was itself a Presidential Reference that eventually gave birth to the collegium system for judicial appointments.

Quoting from that opinion, he reminded the bench that Article 142 “cannot be used to supplant substantive law” or “to build a new edifice where none existed earlier by ignoring express statutory provisions”.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta urged the bench to see the issue through the prism of constitutional intent and democratic legitimacy.

Beginning his submissions, Mehta clarified that the reference was specific and precise, not a vague attempt to reopen the Tamil Nadu judgement.

The bench, however, reminded him that the April ruling arose from an egregious situation in Tamil Nadu where the Governor had indefinitely withheld bills, forcing the Court to step in.

Justice P.S. Narasimha observed that the conclusion in that case “was not meant to act as a precedent”.

Past intervention

The Solicitor General pointed out that the draft Constitution had originally prescribed a six-week timeline for Governors and the President to decide on bills. It was Dr B.R. Ambedkar who intervened, softening the provision to the phrase “as soon as possible” in Article 200.

CJI B.R. Gavai explained that this phrase could not mean indefinite delay.

“As soon as possible,” he said, must be read as within a reasonable time. The Bench suggested that Ambedkar’s compromise was still intended to keep decisions close to the six-week framework.

Justice Narasimha recalled that the longest withholding of assent came during President Giani Zail Singh’s tenure, when he sat on the Postal (Amendment) Bill.

Defending the role of Governors and the President, Mehta argued they too represent democratic will, even though they are not directly elected.

“The President is elected, and Governors are appointed through the President by the Council of Ministers,” he said.

-PTI



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-PTI



Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde inspects the BMC control room after torrential rains in the city on Tuesday.

Online Gambling Platform

Complaint against Akram for promotion

Lahore: An application submitted to the Cyber Crime Wing of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) – now National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) – in Lahore has sought legal action against former Pakistan cricket captain and star bowler Wasim Akram for promoting a sports betting and gambling platform.

According to the application submitted by one Muhammad Fiaz, the former international cricketer signed up as a brand ambassador for an Indian betting company linked to the platform called Baji. The complainant alleges that a poster and a video clip circulating on social media showed Akram endorsing the platform while urging people to join for an “exciting experience”.

“Wasim Akram signed up for an Indian betting and gambling company as a brand ambassador. A clip



shared on his social media account shows Akram asking people to join the betting app for exciting experience, encouraging fans to rake in dough,” stated the application.

It added that the former cricketer, by associating with the platform, was “promoting gambling in Pakistan”, which is prohibited under the law and banned in all forms.

The complainant went on to seek strict action against Akram under the

Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act of 2016.

While Akram is yet to respond to the complaint against him, the complaint comes amid growing scrutiny over influencers and celebrities promoting betting and gambling platforms in Pakistan.

On Saturday night, popular YouTuber Saad ur Rehman, widely known as Ducky Bhai, was arrested in Lahore after the NCCIA registered a case against him for promoting online gambling applications.

The FIR said that Ducky Bhai among other internet personalities were promoting gambling apps such as Binomo, 1xBet, Bet365 and B9 Game for financial gain, which had resulted in financial losses for people who had been misled into using their savings on these platforms.

He is currently in NCCIA custody on a two-day physical remand.

LFW returns to Delhi in October

New Delhi: The 25th edition of Lakme Fashion Week (LFW) in partnership with the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI) will return to New Delhi from October 8 to 12, marking a milestone in the platform’s 25-year journey.

The LFW, a bi-annual fashion week that takes place in Delhi and Mumbai, hosted the Mumbai edition earlier this year, marking the beginning of the platform’s 25th anniversary celebrations with a gala tribute to its legacy.

Sunanda Khaitan, Vice President, Lakme India, shared, “Lakme Fashion Week has stood at the forefront of shaping the narrative of Indian fashion and beauty for over a quarter of a century.”

She continues that the new season will honour that legacy but also evolve it with fresh ideas and a commitment to innovation. Just like every other edition, the aim is to set benchmarks, launch talent, and reimagine global fashion.

The celebration will now move to Delhi to celebrate some of the most influential designers and India’s



rich and diverse craftsmanship. The event is a testament to the platform’s impact on the creative economy and India’s evolving global style narrative.

Sunil Sethi, Chairman of FDCI, shared, “We are delighted to bring this landmark fashion event back to the capital this October. At FDCI, the business of fashion remains a key agenda. Our constant endeavour is to create platforms that empower designers, open new markets, and drive meaningful engagement between creativity and commerce.”

Organised by Lakme, Reliance Brands Ltd., and FDCI, LFW is considered India’s premier fashion platform, which showcases designs from leading designers and often sets industry trends. The names of the expected designers have not been revealed yet.

-PTI

Rahul’s jeep injures cop

Patna: During the ‘Voter Adhikar Yatra’ in Bihar on Tuesday, a policeman was injured in an incident involving a car carrying the leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi. The open-top jeep ran over the officer’s feet on a crowded street filled with the politician’s supporters and security personnel in Nawada.

Immediately, fellow policemen and supporters of Gandhi pushed the vehicle backwards to rescue the injured policeman.

He was seen limping away after being freed from under the car’s wheels. Gandhi, who was standing in the open-top jeep, immediately took a water bottle and handed it to his supporters to assist the injured officer. He later approached the policeman to inquire about the nature of his injury.

The BJP criticised the Congress party over the incident. Party spokesperson Shehzad Poonawala mocked the Congress march, calling it the “Crush Janta Yatra,” and stated, “Rahul Gandhi’s car crushed a police constable, who was critically injured. The dynast did not even get down to check on him.”



Rains lash out New Delhi on Tuesday.

Pic: PTI

New airport in Speaker’s constituency approved

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet on Tuesday cleared a proposal to set up a new airport at Kota-Bundi in Rajasthan at an estimated cost of Rs 1,507 crore.

The airport, to be completed in two years, will have an annual passenger handling capacity of 2 million and 1,089 acres (around 440.06 hectares) of land is being provided free of cost by the Rajasthan government for the project.

Briefing the media after the Cabinet meeting, Information & Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said the green-field airport project at Kota-Bundi will be funded by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) through its internal accruals.

Kota-Bundi constituency is represented by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the proposal for developing a green field airport at Kota-Bundi at an estimated cost of Rs 1,507 crore, according to an official release.

The state government has transferred 440.06 hectares of land to AAI for the

airport, which will be suitable for operation of narrow body Airbus A321 type aircraft.

“The project includes construction of a terminal building spanning an area of 20,000 sqm capable of handling 1,000 Peak Hour Passengers (PHP) with annual capacity of 2 Million Passengers Per Annum (MPPA), Runway 11/29 of dimensions 3200m x 45m, Apron with 07 parking bays for A321 type aircraft, two Link Taxiways, ATC cum Technical Block, Fire Station, car park and allied works,” the release said.

Vaishnav said the airport will significantly improve regional connectivity and promote the local economy.

AAI will fund the project through its internal accruals and is expected to be completed in 24 months.

The new airport will be coming up around 23 kilometres away from the existing airport, Vaishnav said.

According to the release, the existing Kota airport is owned by AAI but cannot be developed for commercial operations due to inadequate land availability and urbanisation around the airport.

-PTI

First Sikh manager of British football club

By Aditi Khanna

London: Leicester-born Ashvir Singh Johal made history on Tuesday by becoming the first British Sikh manager of a professional English football club when he took charge of Morecambe FC in Lancashire, north-west England.

Johal, 30, has dedicated ten years to Leicester City football club, coaching young players in the academy.

His new role follows the

completion of his Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Pro Licence with the Football Association (FA) in June, making him one of the youngest recipients of the highest qualification in management and football coaching.

“I think the fans can expect someone who is extremely hard-working and really proud to represent them and their town, make sure they have got a team that really represents them on the pitch,” said



Johal, in his first interview conducted by the club following his appointment.

“Every single day that I am here, that’s my responsibility and it’s something I’ll make sure I achieve and

make sure we don’t leave a day when we are not working towards that objective,” he said.

I think the immediate priority is going to be to identify the players that we need in this building to make sure Morecambe Football Club this season can perform well in the National League. For me, that’s the priority,” he said.

Who is Ashvir Singh Johal?

Johal’s appointment

marks a new era for the Shrimps, as Morecambe FC is known, ushering in a fresh journey under new ownership.

Morecambe FC praised Johal’s “excellent reputation” as a forward-thinking coach and leader, bringing extensive experience in player development, tactical innovation, and building high-performance cultures.

“His appointment marks an exciting new era for the Shrimps as the Club continues its journey under

fresh ownership and renewed ambition,” the club said.

The announcement of the new manager comes just days after the approval of the club’s takeover by the consortium Panjab Warriors, following the sacking of its previous boss.

“This is more than a business venture; it’s a commitment to the fans, the town, and the future of Morecambe FC,” said Gurpreet Singh of Panjab Warriors.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The Nitish Kumar-led government has become ‘khattara’ (rickety) and it needs to be urgently replaced. The youth have resolved that they will remove from power this old and rickety government, and ensure that Rahul Gandhi is the PM after the next Lok Sabha polls.”

Tejashwi Yadav, Leader, RJD

INDIA Bloc VP Candidate

From farmer’s family to Supreme Court

OPPOSITION’S NOMINEE JUSTICE B. SUDERSHAN REDDY ROSE THROUGH RANKS

New Delhi: The Opposition INDIA bloc has picked former Supreme Court judge Justice B Sudershan Reddy as its candidate for the upcoming Vice-Presidential election. He has been fielded against NDA candidate CP Radhakrishnan, the current Governor of Maharashtra and one of the tallest leaders of the BJP in Tamil Nadu, for the September 9 election.

Here are 5 things to know about Justice Reddy (retd):

Justice Reddy (retd) was born on July 8, 1946, to a farmer family in Akula Mylaram village of then Ibrahimpatnam taluka in the Rangareddy district of present-day Telangana.

He obtained a law degree from Osmania University in Hyderabad in 1971 and was enrolled as an advocate with the Andhra Pradesh Bar Council. He handled writ and civil cases in the Andhra Pradesh High Court.

Before becoming a judge, he had worked as a government pleader in 1988-90. He briefly worked as Additional Standing Counsel for the central government in 1990 and was also the legal adviser and standing counsel for Osmania University.

He became a permanent judge of the Andhra



Pradesh High Court in 1995. He was appointed the Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court in 2005. He became a Supreme Court judge in 2007; retired in 2011.

In March 2013, Justice Reddy (retd) became the first Lokayukta of Goa. However, he resigned months later, in September, on personal grounds.

Justice Reddy’s name was announced at a press conference attended by top Opposition leaders. A Congress leader said that he was the unanimous choice agreed to by all Opposition parties.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge praised Justice Reddy as one of India’s most distinguished and progressive jurists with an eminent legal career. “He has been a con-

sistent and courageous champion of social, economic, and political justice,” said Mr Kharge, hailing him as someone who favored the poor and protected the Constitution and fundamental rights.

The Vice President election will be held on September 9. The last date for submitting nominations is August 21. August 22 is the date for the scrutiny, and August 25 is the last date for the withdrawal of candidatures. The untimely Vice-Presidential election follows the sudden resignation of Jagdeep Dhankhar, officially over health concerns, though sources had later pointed out differences with the BJP that ought to have forced the senior Jat leader to an early exit.

-PTI

Rising Yamuna Levels

Five flood posts set up

Noida: Amid the threat of floods looming over villages adjoining Yamuna due to rising water levels in the river, five flood posts have been set up in Jewar and Rabupura areas here, officials said on Tuesday. They said river water has begun entering the fields in nearby villages such as Falaida Khadar, Karauli Bangar, Mehndipur, Sirauli Bangar, Palahaka and Begumabad.

Jewar Tehsildar Omprakash Paswan said, “All flood posts and control rooms have been activated. Flood posts have been set up at five places in Jewar: Primary School in Nevla, Primary School in Jhuppa, Shiv Mandir in Bhaipur Brahmanan, Upper Primary School in Falaida Bangar and Janta Inter College in Jewar.”

“The situation is under control as of now,” he added. The Old Railway Bridge in Delhi, which serves as a key observation point for tracking the river’s flow and potential flood risks in the national capital, serves as a major observation point for Gautam Budh Nagar district as well. Officials of both Delhi and Gautam Budh Nagar district coordinate over this.

Yamuna water level at Old Railway Bridge reached 205.79 metres, slightly short of the 206-metre evacuation level, at 8 am on Tuesday. The water level in the river had touched 205.55 metres on Monday afternoon, breaching the danger mark of 205.33 metres and has been increasing since then.

According to the flood control department, currently the Hathnikund barrage is releasing around 38,361 cusecs of water and Wazirabad is releasing 68,230 cusecs every hour.

-PTI



Officer Trainees of the Indian Foreign Service called on President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Tuesday.

Pic: x

Haryana Teacher Death

Mobile internet suspended for 48 hours

Chandigarh: Amid widespread public outrage over the death of a 19-year-old teacher, the Haryana government on Tuesday ordered the suspension of mobile internet, and bulk SMS and dogle services, while allowing voice calls, in Bhiwani and Charkhi Dadri districts for 48 hours.

Manisha’s body was found in a field in Bhiwani on August 13. She had been missing since August 11, after leaving school, purportedly to inquire about admission at a nursing college. The death caused massive outrage, with people blocking key roads in the district and the opposition parties, including the Congress, demanding a CBI probe.

Although the order does not make a reference to the teacher’s death, sources said it has been issued in the wake of developments pertaining to the case.

Issued by Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department, Sumita Misra, the order said that internet suspension will be in force from 11 am on August 19 till 11 am on August 21.

“It has been brought to my notice by ADGP/CID, Haryana and Deputy Commissioner, Bhiwani & Charkhi Dadri vide their requests dated August 19 that there is an apprehension of causing tension, annoyance, agitation, damage to public and private property and disturbance of public peace and tranquility in the district Bhiwani and Charkhi Dadri... This order is issued to prevent any disturbance of peace and public order,” it said.

The order further stated that the internet could be misused to spread inflammatory material and false rumours through social media or messaging ser-

vices to disrupt peace and damage public assets.

“In order to stop the spread of misinformation and rumours through various social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter on mobile phones and SMS for facilitation and mobilisation of mobs of agitators and demonstrators who can cause serious loss of life and damage to public and private properties by indulging in arson or vandalism and other types of violent activities,” it said.

Meanwhile, the emergence of a “suicide note” in the death case on Monday turned the investigation on its head.

Bhiwani Superintendent of Police Sumit Kumar had said the note was found near Manisha’s body in a bag, which also had her Aadhaar card and other documents. He also said that there was proof of

Manisha buying insecticide.

“In the viscera sample, the presence of insecticide has been confirmed in the body. So, there is self-purchase, there is a suicide note, there is poison in the body,” he said.

The playschool teacher’s family members, however, have insisted that she was murdered.

The opposition parties have also flayed the BJP-led state government, claiming that the alleged murder was proof of a breakdown of law and order under the saffron party.

Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda said the role of the state government and police had been negligent and irresponsible, and an “unfortunate attempt is being made to prove the whole case as a suicide.”

-PTI

Saradha Ponzi Scam

Court acquits accused Sudipto, Debjani

Kolkata: In a significant development in the infamous Saradha chit fund scam, a Kolkata court on Tuesday acquitted Sudipto Sen, the owner of the Saradha Group, and Debjani Mukherjee, a key director in the company, in three cases linked to fraud. Despite the acquittal, both remain in custody, with over 200 cases still pending against them across various jurisdictions.

The Bankshall Court cleared Sen and Mukherjee of charges in three FIRs filed in 2013 at the Hare Street police station, which alleged fraud involving Rs 10-15 lakh. These cases were among the earliest registered against the duo after the scam came to light.

Representing Debjani Mukherjee, lawyers Shuvojit Bal and Abhijit Bal argued that key witnesses failed to substantiate the allegations. Of the 50 witnesses listed, testimonies were not recorded from at least 15, and alleged victims could not establish fraud or breach of trust.

“The court found no



conclusive evidence of fraud in these three cases, leading to their acquittal,” said lawyer Shuvojit Bal.

Speaking after the verdict, Sharvari Mukherjee, Debjani’s mother, said, “The truth has triumphed to some extent. It has taken time. But this is the first acquittal, and we hope more will follow.”

Despite the acquittal, Sudipto Sen and Debjani Mukherjee will remain in judicial custody. The two face over 200 criminal cases filed by individuals across West Bengal.

Investigations by two

central agencies — the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Financial scrutiny by SEBI, the country’s capital markets regulator.

In 2013, after the scam broke out, Sen and Mukherjee fled to Sonmarg in Kashmir, where they were arrested and brought back to Kolkata. Since then, they have been lodged in jail, with Debjani briefly released on parole in 2023 for a few hours.

The Saradha scam, which came to light in 2013, is one of India’s largest Ponzi schemes. Thousands of investors, mainly from West Bengal, Odisha, and Assam, lost their savings after the collapse of the chit fund company. The fallout led to widespread protests, political controversy, and a multi-agency investigation that continues to this day.

While Tuesday’s court verdict marks a small legal victory for the accused, the road ahead remains long and fraught, with multiple high-stakes cases still in motion.

-PTI



Private bus travelling from Madurai to Bengaluru overturns in Hosur, Tamil Nadu on Tuesday.

Pic: PTI

Four-year-old dies of rabies

Davanagere (Karnataka): A four-year-old girl who was undergoing treatment for dog bites has died of rabies, a senior official said on Tuesday.

The victim, Khadeera Banu, passed away on Sunday after being treated for the last four months, Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health (IGICH), Bengaluru, director, Dr Sanjay K S, said.

Banu, a resident of Shastri Layout in Davanagere, was attacked by a dog on April 27 while playing outside her house. She was admitted to a lo-

cal private hospital with multiple dog bites on her face and body.

According to Dr Sanjay, she was referred to IGICH in May when her condition worsened.

“She was admitted in the ICU here and after tests, rabies was confirmed due to the presence of antibodies,” said the director.

The girl was discharged for home care after about a month once her condition was stable, he added.

She was brought in again in August and was unresponsive, requiring emergency intubation, he

said.

According to him, it was a case of dumb rabies, where the disease causes paralysis and not aggression. Responding to various news reports that the family had spent nearly Rs 8 lakh on treatment, the IGICH director said, in Bengaluru, the family was not charged.

“It is quite possible that they have spent a lot of money in the private hospital in Davanagere,” he said.

The girl’s father is a street vendor and her mother is a homemaker.

WB Guv proposes reforms for migrant workers

Kolkata: A day after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced a scheme to rehabilitate migrant labourers from West Bengal allegedly harassed outside the state, Governor CV Ananda Bose put forward a set of recommendations to address the challenges faced by these workers, a well-placed source in the Raj Bhavan said on Tuesday.

The recommendations, sent to both the Centre and the state government, came amid growing concerns over alleged incidents of exploitation, lack of social protection, and poor living conditions that many Bengali migrant workers endure in the states where they work, he said.

Bose, in his recommendations, sent to the Centre, has stressed the creation of a ‘West Bengal Migrant Workers’ Registration Portal’, signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with major destination states, and appointing labour welfare officers (LWOs) in key migrant hubs, he said.

PTI has a copy of the recommendations made by the governor.

“He also recommended developing affordable hostels for the migrant labourers, introduction of the ‘One Citizen One Ration Card’ in lieu of the ‘One family One Ration Card’ scheme, alongside establishing ‘skill training centres in high migration districts,” the official told PTI.

Bose sought facilitation of certification of informally acquired skills, creation of a 24x7 multilingual helpline, legal aid and mediation services, and special monitoring of the placement agencies.

“The proposed West Bengal Migrant Workers’ Registration portal is a multilingual, Aadhaar-linked platform designed to register and track migrant workers. Once registered, each worker would receive a ‘Migrant Worker Card’, both in physical and digital formats, serving as a portable identity document across states,” the official elaborated.

-PTI

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“This is an exercise which is being conducted by the Election Commission of India. We believe that the Commission, as a constitutional authority entrusted with electoral roll revision, will do it fairly and we will cooperate. The moment it is unfair, we will oppose it.”

Amar Patnaik, Spokesperson, BJD

Adults inhale twice the amount of microplastics

New Delhi: Adults in the national capital inhale almost twice as many microplastic particles in summer as they do in winter, with the estimated average daily exposure rising from 10.7 particles in the colder months to 21.1 in the hotter season -- a 97 per cent jump, according to a new study.

The study, titled “Characterization and Health Risk Assessment of Airborne Microplastics in Delhi NCR”, a joint effort by researchers from the Indian Institute of Tropi-

cal Meteorology (IITM), under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, and the Department of Environmental Sciences at Savitribai Phule Pune University, said children and toddlers also face significant exposure.

Children aged 6 to 12 inhale about 8.1 particles a day in winter, rising to 15.6 in summer, while toddlers aged between one to six breathe in 6.1 particles in winter and 11.7 in summer, it said.

Even infants recorded the lowest under one year



inhale 3.6 particles daily in winter, which nearly doubles to 6.8 in summer.

The researchers collected air samples at Lodhi Road, a central Delhi site, during the winter (Janu-

ary to March) and summer (April to June) of 2024 using active pump samplers that captured particles of different sizes, PM10 (tiny dust particles up to 10 micrometers wide), PM2.5 (particles up to 2.5 micrometers) and PM1 (up to 1 micrometer).

The equipment was installed on the terrace of the Indian Meteorological Department building, about 30 metres above the ground, and operated weekly to cover both weekdays and weekends.

Filters were later treat-

ed in the laboratory with hydrogen peroxide to remove organic matter, followed by microscopic and fluorescence analysis to identify fibres, fragments and films.

Suspected plastic particles were tested using special techniques like Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy FTIR and electron microscopes to confirm if they were really microplastics. These tests helped researchers understand what the particles were made of. Extra checks, called blank con-

trols, were used to make sure the results were not affected by any outside contamination.

During winter and summer 2024 the researchers found an average of 1.87 particles per cubic metre in PM10, 0.51 in PM2.5 and 0.49 in PM1. Concentrations gradually rose from January to June, peaking in June.

The study compared Delhi’s daily inhalation exposure of 5.3 to 15.4 particles, 1,935 to 5,621 annually with other cities.

-PTI

US tariffs to have low impact on Indian corporates



New Delhi: Fitch Ratings on Tuesday said India-based corporates have low direct exposure to US tariffs, but sectors that are currently unaffected, including pharmaceuticals, could be hit by further US tariff announcements.

The US has imposed a 25 per cent 'reciprocal' tariff on India with effect from August 7, 2025, and an additional 25 per cent levy will be effective August 27, as a penalty for Russian oil imports.

At 50 per cent, India is subject to maximum tariff among Asian economies on exports to the US.

Fitch Ratings said the risk of second-order effects from existing tariffs is also rising. A US-India trade deal, if secured, would reduce these risks.

"Fitch Ratings believes India-based corporates generally have low direct exposure to US tariffs, but

sectors that are currently unaffected, including pharmaceuticals, could be hit by further US tariff announcements," it said in a statement.

Russian crude accounts for about 30-40 per cent of crude imports for Indian oil marketing companies (OMCs), with its discounted price supporting their profitability, the rating agency said.

It currently assumes a minimal direct tariff impact on Indian IT service companies and domestically focused sectors such as upstream and downstream oil and gas, cement and building materials, engineering and construction, telecoms, and utilities.

"However, if US tariffs are sustained at levels significantly higher than in other Asian markets, we see moderate downside risks to our projection that

the economy will grow by 6.5 per cent in FY26. This would weigh on the operating performance of more Indian companies," Fitch said.

Pharmaceuticals, one of India's biggest export earners, could come under strain if the United States announces fresh tariffs, Fitch Ratings has warned in a new Fitch Wire report.

The rating agency said while Indian corporates generally have low direct exposure to current US tariffs, the pharmaceutical industry remains vulnerable to future trade measures. The US is a key market for Indian drugmakers, and any tariff imposition could ripple across the sector.

As per the report, Biocon Biologics Limited, which focuses on biosimilars, is particularly exposed with about 40 per cent of its rev-

enue coming from the US. The company's products are mainly manufactured in India and Malaysia.

Fitch cautioned that significant US tariffs on pharmaceutical exports could hurt Biocon's performance, adding that passing higher costs to consumers might be difficult in a competitive market, even with steady demand for its medicines.

The warning comes after Washington imposed a 25 per cent reciprocal tariff on Indian goods beginning August 7, 2025, and an additional 25 per cent levy linked to imports of Russian oil effective August 27. These measures have already clouded prospects for several Indian industries.

Automobiles and chemicals face risks too, though exposure remains limited compared with pharma. SamvardhanaMotherson International Limited, which supplies auto components, earns close to 20 per cent of sales from the US but mainly through production bases in the US and Mexico. Fitch noted it had revised the company's outlook to "Stable" from "Positive" earlier this year, citing uncertainty in the global auto sector from tariff disruptions.

Crop-protection major UPL Limited, with about 10-12 per cent of revenue from the US, could also feel the heat. Its products manufactured in India are expected to face tariffs closer to those imposed on Chinese imports.

China rare earth magnet export curbs impact EVs

New Delhi: China's export restriction on key rare earth magnets has resulted in a supply chain bottleneck and impacted domestic industries, including electric vehicle manufacturers, Parliament was informed on Tuesday.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada said consultations have been held regularly with relevant stakeholders to explore measures to address the issue.

He also said that Ministry of Mines has been working to ensure supply chain resilience for critical minerals, including rare earth elements, which are used in producing rare earth magnets, as they are key materials for different sectors including EVs.

To develop cooperation with countries having rich mineral resources, the mines ministry has already entered into bilateral agreements with governments of Australia, Argentina, Zambia, Peru, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Cote D'Ivoire and international organizations such as International Energy Agency (IEA).

"The recent imposition of export restrictions on key rare earth magnets by China has resulted in a supply chain bottleneck, impacting the Indian industries including electric vehicle manufacturers," he said.

Further, Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL), is engaged in this area by developing collaboration with various organisations based in different countries.



Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani interacts with youth at Platinum Jubilee Session of IIT Kharagpur on Monday. Pic: PTI

Online Gaming Bill gets cabinet approval

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet has approved a bill to regulate online real money gaming platforms, the Press Trust of India reported citing sources.

"The Cabinet has approved the bill to regulate online gaming platforms that involve real money," the source told PTI. "The government is trying to table the bill in Parliament on Wednesday."

The move comes amid a surge in cases of fraud linked to online betting apps and growing concerns over celebrity and influencer endorsements of such platforms. Over the past few months, investigating agencies have intensified their scrutiny of the industry, particularly offshore entities operating without compliance.

Media reports said that the move aims to make a clear distinction between free to play and pay to play games and differentiating skill vs chance-based games. Reports said that this is to regulate online gaming and illegal activities which is dangerous for national interest. While no

celebrities or media firms can promote illegal online betting platforms. This is to enhance esports and video games industry.

The government has tightened its oversight of the sector in recent years. Since October 2023, online gaming has been subject to a 28% GST, and winnings from games are taxed at 30% beginning with the 2024-25 financial year: Offshore gaming platforms have also been brought into the tax net, and authorities can block unregistered or illegal sites.

Last year, new criminal provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita came into effect, making unauthorized betting punishable by up to seven years in jail and fines. Despite this, states retain primary authority to act against illegal betting and gambling, since "betting and gambling" are part of the State List in the Constitution.

The Ministry of Finance has already taken strong measures in this regard, blocking 357 illegal and non-compliant offshore

websites/URLs and freezing nearly 2,400 bank accounts holding around 126 crore. Officials said close to 700 offshore online gaming operators remain under investigation by the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) for tax evasion and regulatory violations.

"So far, 357 websites/URLs of illegal/non-compliant offshore online money gaming entities have been blocked by the DGGI, in coordination with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), under Section 69 of the IT Act, 2000," the Finance Ministry noted in a statement. Recent enforcement actions have also led to the freezing of 392 bank accounts linked to UPI IDs associated with offshore entities, with over 122 crore attached.

The new Bill is expected to provide a legal framework for regulating online money gaming in India, ensuring stricter oversight of endorsements, financial transactions, and consumer protection.

Parl panel pitches for hike in investment rate

New Delhi: A parliamentary panel on Tuesday pitched for raising the investment rate from 31 per cent of the GDP to 35 per cent to achieve the ambitious growth target of 8 per cent. The Standing Committee on Finance also urged the government to maintain sustainable, growth-oriented energy policies that prioritise affordability and efficiency while balancing climate commitments with economic and social objectives.

The committee headed by BJP leader Bhartruhari Mahtab also suggested that the Ministry/Central Electricity Authority (CEA) expedite the development of pumped storage projects (PSPs), recognising their critical role in strengthening energy security and reducing import dependency.

The panel noted that the investment rate must increase to about 35 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) from the current 31 per cent to achieve the ambitious growth target of 8 per cent annually for at least a decade. "Financing this may result in higher levels of

current account deficit (CAD), which is challenging under current global circumstances. This emphasises the need for domestic-led growth, for which deregulation is crucial," it said in its report.

The committee highlighted the collaborative approach through the deregulation task force chaired by the cabinet secretary.

The panel felt that this model of cooperative federalism -- facilitating dialogue with states on best practices in land, labour, capital, and regulatory reforms -- can streamline business processes and foster an investor-friendly environment.

It said tailored fiscal reforms may be promoted in highly indebted states to improve their fiscal health while maintaining their capacity to invest in critical infrastructure and social development. With regard to farm sector, the panel said the vast untapped potential of India's agriculture sector as a pivotal driver for inclusive economic growth.

"To unlock this potential, the committee emphasises a dual approach:

addressing immediate challenges while implementing long-term structural reforms. For short-term stability, the committee observes that the government's strategy such as maintaining buffer stocks; regulating market supplies; and subsidising key food items helps to stabilise food prices and ensure affordable access to essential commodities," the report said.

To further enhance agricultural productivity and foster financial inclusion, the committee recommended acceleration of digital initiatives. "This includes digitising land records and implementing the agri-stack, a technological framework designed to link farmers' produce with banking and credit systems. This would facilitate transparent and timely disbursement of crop loans," it said.

The panel also urged that these digital tools be expanded nationwide, with local youth being trained to assist in data collection, thereby creating employment opportunities and improving data accuracy.

-PTI



BJP MP Dhaval Patel calls on Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at Parliament House in New Delhi. Pic: PTI

Japan deepens presence in US chip manufacturing

Tokyo: Japanese technology giant SoftBank Group plans to take a \$2 billion stake in computer chip maker Intel as it deepens its involvement in U.S. semiconductor manufacturing and other advanced technology in the United States, the companies said Monday.

Shares in SoftBank fell 4% Tuesday in Tokyo following the announcement, which coincided with unconfirmed reports that President Donald Trump is considering having the U.S. government buy a stake in the chip maker.

SoftBank invests in an ar-

ray of companies that it sees as holding long-term potential. It has been stepping up investments in the United States since Trump returned to the White House. In February, its chairman Masayoshi Son joined Trump, Sam Altman of OpenAI and Larry Ellison of Oracle in announcing a major investment of up to \$500 billion in a project to develop artificial intelligence called Stargate.

SoftBank plans to buy \$2 billion of Intel's common stock, paying \$23 per share. That would be about a 2% stake. Intel's shares closed

at \$23.66 on Monday.

"Semiconductors are the foundation of every industry, Son said in a statement. "This strategic investment reflects our belief that advanced semiconductor manufacturing and supply will further expand in the United States, with Intel playing a critical role."

SoftBank posted its first profit in four years in the April-June quarter as it raked in gains from its investment portfolios. It is a major shareholder in Arm Holdings, a British semiconductor and software design company.

UK scraps its Apple 'backdoor' demand

London: Britain abandoned its demand that Apple provide so-called backdoor access to any encrypted user data stored in the cloud, U.S. Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard said Monday.

Gabbard indicated London and Washington had resolved their high-stakes dispute over electronic privacy, writing on X that she and President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance spent the "past few months" working with the U.K. government.

"As a result, the UK agreed to drop its mandate for Apple to provide a 'back door' that would have enabled access to the protected encrypted data of American citizens and encroached on our civil liberties," she said.

The dispute surfaced at the start of the year with a news report that British security officials had issued the U.S. tech giant with a secret order requiring the creation of backdoor access to view fully encrypted material. Apple challenged the order, which raised fears of electronic spying by national security officials.

The British government reportedly served Apple with what is known as a



"technical capability notice" ordering it to provide the access under a sweeping law called the Investigatory Powers Act of 2016, which has been dubbed the snoopers' charter.

The U.K. Home Office did not respond directly to Gabbard's statement, saying it "does not comment on operational matters, including confirming or denying the existence of such notices."

"We have long had joint security and intelligence arrangements with the US to tackle the most serious threats such as terrorism and child sexual abuse, including the role played by fast-moving technology in enabling those threats," the office said. "We will always take all actions necessary at the domestic level to keep UK citizens safe."

Gabbard previously said a demand for backdoor access would violate the rights of Americans and raise concerns about a foreign government pressuring a U.S.-based technology company.

-AP

Vegas tourism down amid immigration crackdown

Las Vegas: Tourism in Las Vegas is slumping this summer, with resorts and convention centers reporting fewer visitors compared to last year, especially from abroad, and some officials are blaming the Trump administration's tariffs and immigration policies for the decline.

The city known for lavish shows, endless buffets and around-the-clock gambling welcomed just under 3.1 million tourists in June, an 11% drop compared to the same time in 2024. There were 13% fewer in-

ternational travelers, and hotel occupancy fell by about 15%, according to data from the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.

Mayor Shelley Berkley said tourism from Canada -- Nevada's largest international market -- has dried up from a torrent "to a drip." Same with Mexico.

"We have a number of very high rollers that come in from Mexico that aren't so keen on coming in right now. And that seems to be the prevailing attitude in-



ternationally," Berkley told reporters earlier this month.

Ted Pappageorge, head of the powerful Culinary Workers Union, called it the "Trump slump." He said visits from Southern California, home to a large Latino population, were also drying up because

people are afraid of the administration's immigration crackdown.

"If you if you tell the rest of the world, they're not welcome, then they won't come," Pappageorge said.

Canadian airline data shows fewer passengers from north of the border are arriving at Harry Reid International Airport in Las Vegas. Air Canada saw its passenger numbers fall by 33% in June compared to the same time a year ago, while WestJet had a 31% drop. The low-cost car-

rier Flair reported a whopping 62% decline.

Travel agents in Canada said there's been a significant downturn in clients wanting to visit the U.S. overall, and Las Vegas in particular. Wendy Hart, who books trips from Windsor, Ontario, said the reason was "politics, for sure." She speculated that it was a point of "national pride" that people were staying away from the U.S. after President Donald Trump said he wanted to make Canada the 51st state.

"The tariffs are a big thing too. They seem to be contributing to the rising cost of everything," Hart said. At downtown's Circa Resort and Casino, international visits have dipped, especially from Canada and Japan, according to owner and CEO Derek Stevens. But the downturn comes after a post-COVID spike, Stevens said. And while hotel room bookings are slack, gaming numbers, especially for sports betting, are still strong, he said.

-AP

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Both the number of medical colleges and quality of medical education are important. The increase in number is required to bring sustainable quality in the medical education and to bring the uniformity of delivering healthcare across the country."

Abhijat Sheth,
Chief, National Medical Commission

Trump begins planning for Putin-Zelenskyy meet



Washington: President Donald Trump said Monday he's begun arrangements for a face-to-face meeting between Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelenskyy to discuss a pathway to end Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while affirming that the U.S. would back European security guarantees aimed at preventing Moscow from reinventing its neighbor once the current conflict ends.

Details of the security guarantees and Trump's efforts to arrange peace talks were still evolving as an extended meeting among Trump, Zelenskyy and other European leaders wrapped up at the White House.

But as they emerged from their talks, the leaders expressed guarded optimism that Trump could be finding momentum in his

quest to fulfill his campaign promise of ending the grinding war.

The "most important" outcome of the meeting was the "U.S. commitment to work with us on providing security guarantees," French President Emmanuel Macron told reporters.

Trump said he would forge ahead with arrangements for a meeting between Zelenskyy and Putin. He spoke by phone with Putin during Monday's talks with Zelenskyy and the leaders of Britain, Finland, France, Germany and Italy as well as the president of the European Commission and head of NATO.

The developments come amid a significant measure of trepidation on the continent that Trump is pressing Ukraine to make concessions that will only further embolden Putin af

ter the U.S. leader hosted the Russian president for an Alaska summit last week.

"I called President Putin, and began the arrangements for a meeting, at a location to be determined, between President Putin and President Zelenskyy," Trump said in a social media post. "After that meeting takes place, we will have a Trilat, which would be the two Presidents, plus myself. Again, this was a very good, early step for a War that has been going on for almost four years."

It was not clear if Putin has fully signed on to such talks.

Russia state news agency Tass cited Putin's foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov saying Putin and Trump "spoke in favor" of continuing direct talks between the Russian and Ukrainian delegations.

Ushakov said they also discussed "the idea of raising the level of the direct Russian-Ukrainian negotiations."

Zelenskyy told reporters following the White House meeting that if Russia does "not demonstrate a will to meet, then we will ask the United States to act accordingly."

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said in an appearance on Fox News that "if Russia is not playing ball" on direct talks with Ukraine, "the United States plus Europe will do more when it comes to tariffs and sanctions" on Moscow.



Vehicles and motorcyclists drive through a flooded road after heavy rainfall in Peshawar in Pakistan on Monday. Pic: AP/ PTI

Air Canada ends strike, operations to restart

Toronto: Air Canada said Tuesday it will gradually restart operations after reaching an agreement with the union for 10,000 flight attendants to end a strike that disrupted the travel plans of hundreds of thousands of travelers.

The union first announced the agreement early Tuesday after Air Canada and the union resumed talks late Monday for the first time since the strike began over the weekend. The strike is affecting about 130,000 travelers a day at the peak of the summer travel season.

Canada's largest airline said flights will start resuming Tuesday evening. Flight attendants walked off the job early Saturday after turning down the airline's request to enter into government-directed arbitration, which allows a third-party mediator to de



cide the terms of a new contract.

The union said the agreement will guarantee members pay for work performed while planes are on the ground, resolving one of the major issues that drove the strike. "Unpaid work is over. We have reclaimed our voice and our power," the union said in a statement. "When our rights were taken away, we stood strong, we fought back — and we secured a tentative agreement that our members can vote on."

Chief executive Michael Rousseau said restarting a major carrier is a complex undertaking and said regu

lar service may require seven to 10 days. Some flights will be canceled until the schedule is stabilized.

"Full restoration may require a week or more, so we ask for our customers' patience and understanding over the coming days," Rousseau said in a statement.

The two sides reached the deal with the help of a mediator early Tuesday morning. The airline said mediation discussions "were begun on the basis that the union commit to have the airline's 10,000 flight attendants immediately return to work." Air

Canada declined to comment further on the agreement until the ratification process is complete. It noted a strike or lockout is not possible during this time.

Earlier, Air Canada said rolling cancellations would now extend through Tuesday afternoon after the union defied a second return-to-work order.

The Canada Industrial Relations Board had declared the strike illegal Monday and ordered the flight attendants back on the job. But the union said it would defy the directive. Union leaders also ignored a weekend order to submit to binding arbitration and end the strike by Sunday afternoon. The board is an independent administrative tribunal that interprets and applies Canada's labor laws. The government ordered the board to intervene.

Indian men charged with violence

London: Four Indian-origin men appeared in court on Monday charged with violent disorder after an armed attack in the West Midlands region of England.

West Midlands Police said Hardeep Singh, aged 28 from Hounslow in west London; Harpeet Singh, 25, from Leicester; Mukesh Kumar, 30, from Wolverhampton, and Lakwinder Singh, 26, from Smethwick appeared before Wolverhampton Magistrates Court following reports of armed disorder involving bladed weapons on Friday morning.

Two others arrested as part of the investigation into the attack in Arbour Drive of Bilston, Wolverhampton, have been released on bail while police enquiries remain ongoing.

"Three people were taken to hospital with injuries which were not life-threatening. We've so far arrested six people in connection with the incident and four men have now been charged with violent disorder, wounding and possession of an offensive weapon," the statement said.

-PTI

Ship with food aid for Gaza nears Israeli port

Limassol: After setting off from Cyprus, a ship loaded with 1,200 tons of food supplies for the Gaza Strip was approaching the Israeli port of Ashdod on Tuesday in a renewed effort to alleviate the worsening crisis as famine threatens the Palestinian territory.

The Panamanian-flagged vessel is loaded with 52 containers carrying food aid such as pasta, rice, baby food and canned goods. Israeli customs officials had screened the aid at the Cypriot port of Limassol from where the ship departed on Monday.

Some 700 tons of the aid is from Cyprus, purchased with money donated by the



United Arab Emirates to the so-called Amalthea Fund, set up last year for donors to help with seaborne aid. The rest comes from Italy, the Maltese government, a Catholic religious order in Malta and the Kuwaiti nongovernmental organization Al

the international charity World Central Kitchen and a U.S. military-run docking facility known as the Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore system.

Cypriot Foreign Ministry said Tuesday's mission is led by the United Nations but is a coordinated effort — once offloaded at Ashdod, U.N. aid employees would arrange for the aid to be trucked to storage areas and food stations operated by the World Central Kitchen. The charity, which was behind the first aid shipment to Gaza from Cyprus last year aboard a tug-towed barge, is widely trusted in the battered territory.

-AP

Jaishankar embarks on visit to Russia

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday embarked on a three-day visit to Moscow to further strengthen the "time-tested" India-Russia partnership.

The visit comes against the backdrop of strains in India's ties with the US following President Donald Trump doubling tariffs on Indian goods to 50 per cent that included an additional penalty of 25 per cent for purchasing Russian crude oil.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), announcing Jaishankar's trip, said he will co-chair the 26th Session of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation to be held on Wednesday.

Mr. Jaishankar and his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov are also expected to discuss the latest initiatives by the Trump administration to bring peace to Ukraine.

During the visit, the External Affairs Minister will review the bilateral agenda and share perspective on regional and global issues with the Russian Foreign Minister, the MEA said.

Model booked for video shoot in mosque

Lahore: The Akbari Gate Police have registered a case against model Azbia Khan and photographer Zain Shah for shooting a video at the historic Wazir Khan Mosque in Lahore without prior permission, violating the sanctity of the mosque.

The case was filed following a complaint from Mohammad Awais, an official with the Walled City Lahore Authority (WCLA), after a video showing the model in what was described as an "inappropriate" outfit was posted on social media. The video, recorded four days ago, quickly gained attention and sparked public outrage.

According to the WCLA official, the actions of the model and photographer had caused harm to the reputation of the department and were seen as disrespectful to the mosque's sanctity. "The video was shot without any authorization, and the model's attire was not appropriate for a mosque setting," Awais stated in his complaint.

This incident mirrors a similar controversy in August 2020, when a case was filed against actor Saba

Qamar and singer Bilal Saeed for recording a music video at the mosque. The backlash over that incident led to the Punjab Aqaf and Religious Affairs Department banning film and drama shoots at mosques and shrines in the province.

The WCLA official emphasized that the mosque, known for its rich history and architectural significance, should be respected by all visitors. "Respect for religious sites is paramount, and such actions cannot be allowed to undermine their sanctity," Awais added.

Following the registration of the FIR, the police are investigating the matter further, with both the model and photographer expected to face legal consequences for their actions. The case serves as a reminder of the importance of respecting cultural and religious heritage in public spaces, especially those with historical significance like the Wazir Khan Mosque.

The Lahore police have confirmed that they are looking into the incident and will take appropriate action as the investigation progresses.

Hamas accepts Arab ceasefire proposal on Gaza

Rafah: Hamas said Monday it has accepted a new proposal from Arab mediators for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip as Israel indicated its positions haven't changed, while Gaza's Health Ministry said the Palestinian death toll from 22 months of war has passed 62,000.

U.S. President Donald Trump appeared to cast doubt on the long-running negotiations that Washington has mediated as well.

"We will only see the return of the remaining hostages when Hamas is confronted and destroyed!!! The sooner this takes place, the better the chances of success will be," he posted on social media.

Israel announced plans to reoccupy Gaza City and other heavily populated areas after ceasefire talks appeared to break down last month, raising the possibility of a worsening humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza,

which experts say is sliding into famine. Plans to expand the offensive, in part aimed at pressuring Hamas, have sparked international outrage and infuriated many Israelis who fear for the remaining hostages taken in the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that started the war. Hundreds of thousands took part in mass protests on Sunday calling for their return.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We are very stern and firm on this issue. We are strongly against any terrorist attack. We stand by the Indian government and the people of India."

Cho Hyun,
Foreign Minister, Republic of Korea

Rapid melting of Italy's glacier worries geologists

Rome: Italy's Ventina glacier, one of the biggest in northern Lombardy, has melted so much due to climate change that geologists can no longer measure it the way they have for the past 130 years.

After this year's hot summer, geologists discovered that the simple stakes used as benchmarks to measure the glacier's retraction each year are now buried under rockslides and debris that have made the terrain too unsteady for future in-person visits.

The Lombardy Glacio-

logical Service said Monday that it will now use drone imagery and remote sensing to keep track of the ongoing shrinkage.

Geologists say that the Ventina glacier has already lost 1.7 kilometers (1 mile) in length since the first measuring benchmarks were positioned at the front of the glacier in 1895.

The melting has accelerated in recent years, with the glacier losing 431 meters (471 yards) in the last 10 years, nearly half of that since 2021, the service said. It's another example of



how accelerating global warming is melting and shrinking Europe's glaciers, causing a host of environmental and other impacts.

"While we could still hope until the 1980s that

there would be normal cycles (of retraction) or at least a contained retraction, in the last 40 years something truly striking has occurred," said Andrea Toffaletti, a member of the Lombardy Glacio-

logical Service.

Italy's mountain glaciers, which are found throughout the Alps and Dolomites in the north and along the central Apennines, have been receding for years, thanks to inadequate snowfall in the winter and record-setting hot summers. Glaciers always melt some in summer, with the runoff fueling mountain streams and rivers.

But the hot summers are "no longer able to guarantee the survival of the winter snowpack," that keeps the glacier in-

EDITORIAL

Monsoon Meltdown

For Mumbai, the monsoon is less a season than a recurring humiliation. Each year, torrents of rain descend on India’s financial capital. And each year, the same grim rituals unfold: flights circling helplessly above the city, trains creeping along tracks like rusting toys, highways turned into fetid canals, and schoolchildren stranded in flooded buses. The downpour that pummeled the city on Monday (177mm rain in just a few hours) brought with it a script as predictable as the tides. Water submerged low-lying roads, nallahs overflowed into arterial highways and weary citizens wading through waist-deep muck. The police put up a brave show of rescues, while the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) declared a token half-day holiday for schools.

But the truth is starker: the flooding of Mumbai is not an act of God. It is an act of governance or the lack of it. Despite decades of warnings, expert reports and tragedies, the city remains incapable of handling a seasonal deluge. The monsoon has become an annual stress test that the state consistently fails. Each deluge exposes the rot in the civic machinery: silted drains left uncleared, encroachments tolerated for profit and an infrastructure built for ribbon-cutting ceremonies rather than resilience.

The BMC, India’s richest municipal corporation, commands a budget larger than several Indian states. Yet when the rains arrive, the world’s sixth-most populous metropolis resembles a medieval village. Transport and commerce get instantly derailed, forcing airlines to plead with passengers to arrive early while office workers trudge through filthy water to reach home. The Bandra-Kurla Complex, Mumbai’s much-touted business hub, clocked over 100mm of rain only to see its swanky boulevards morph into swamps.

Officials will protest that extraordinary rain is to blame. While the city did record upwards of 100mm in just twelve hours, Mumbai’s vulnerabilities are not new. As far back as 2005, when nearly a thousand people died in catastrophic flooding, reports urged the city to expand stormwater drains, protect its mangroves and invest in sustainable urban planning. Successive governments promised action. However, two decades later, the same warnings echo unheard. Politicians promise ‘long-term solutions.’ Each red alert from the meteorological office is treated as though it were an unforeseen calamity rather than a predictable weather event.

Cities from Jakarta to New Orleans grapple with the collision between urbanisation and climate. But what sets Mumbai apart is the mismatch between its wealth and its decrepitude. Here is a metropolis that fancies itself India’s gateway to the world, home to billionaires and Bollywood, yet it cannot guarantee that a child will return home dry during a monsoon downpour.

Ultimately, the tragedy of Mumbai’s rains lies in the normalisation of collapse. Citizens expect nothing better, having grown inured to the annual choreography of chaos. A truly global city would have treated the 2005 deluge as its final warning. Instead, Mumbai has made its peace with the deluge. Unless accountability replaces complacency, the monsoon will continue to remain a civic indictment.



By
Prasad Dixit

In India’s noisy democracy, civility has become a scarce commodity. The tone of debate—in television studios, press conferences and parliament itself—has coarsened beyond recognition. Those who recall earlier decades speak wistfully of an era when political opponents still treated one another with courtesy, and when the opposition, while critical, stood by the government at moments of national trial.

In the early years after independence, Jawaharlal Nehru was known for treating his adversaries with respect. Indira Gandhi, during the 1971 war with Pakistan, received unflinching support from across the aisle, without bickering over numbers of casualties or costs. In 1991, when India’s economic model collapsed and the government was forced into radical liberalisation, opposition parties lent the minority Congress government crucial backing, refraining from opportunistic attacks. Even in the fractious 1990s, when instability was the norm, the rapport between P.V. Narasimha Rao and Atal Bihari Vajpayee was such that Rao nominated his rival

Rather than indulging in what-aboutery, the opposition must show what responsible dissent looks like in a democracy.

DEMOCRATIC DECORUM

Trump, tariffs and the test for India’s opposition



to represent India at the United Nations in Geneva.

Such anecdotes are often attributed to the Congress party’s supposedly democratic character. Yet that view misses the asymmetry of the times. In the first three decades after independence, the opposition was weak, fragmented and posed little threat to the ruling party. It was easy for Congress to act magnanimous when it was secure in its dominance. As opposition forces began to mature, forming governments of their own, the calculus changed. After 2014, when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) became the first non-Congress party to win a majority in parliament on its own, cordiality largely evaporated.

The change is visible in parliamentary debates. Unlike 1971, when the opposition rallied behind the government, the debate over Operation Sindoor saw opposition MPs ask whether America had mediated the ceasefire and demand casualty figures, ignoring India’s stated position that Pakistan alone could halt escalation. More recently, opposition leaders have raised doubts about electronic voting machines (EVMs), questioned voter lists, and demanded contradictory electoral reforms: digital voter rolls on the one hand, a return to ballot papers on the other. The same ambivalence was seen on economic policy. The farm laws, in line with India’s own liberalisation agenda of 1991, were opposed in the streets. The Goods and Services Tax (GST), long advocated as a unifying reform, was derided as the “Gabbar Singh Tax.” India’s growing stature abroad, inevitably provoking counter-moves by adversaries, was portrayed as a failure of foreign policy.

It is true, of course, that the BJP was guilty of similar behaviour when in opposition. It opposed Aadhaar, multi-brand retail, GST and disinvestment, only to embrace them once in power. It also stalled parliament and justified ob-

struction as a democratic weapon. Yet there is an important distinction. The BJP had little experience of governing on its own. It had not grappled with the hard trade-offs of power: between populism and prudence, between short-term pain and long-term gain, between national aspiration and international compulsion. The Congress had. Having presided over wars and economic crises, it knew the importance of a responsible opposition in moments of national trial.

That makes the present failure more glaring. The ruling party can always differentiate itself through governance. But the opposition, particularly the Congress, with its long years of experience, had the chance to differentiate itself by embodying the democratic responsibility it once claimed as its hallmark. Instead, it has allowed itself to be dragged into the same cycle of obstruction and what-aboutery it once decried.

History offers a sobering lesson. In 1971, unity at home helped India prevail on the battlefield. In 1991, political consensus made radical reform possible. Today India faces challenges of comparable scale: a volatile security environment and mounting economic pressures, not least from the United States, whose administration has shown a readiness to weaponize tariffs against India. These are moments that call for national resolve, not partisan sniping.

The temptation to fish in troubled waters is strong. Raising doubts about institutions may win airtime and ener-

gise a party base. But it corrodes trust in democracy itself. Opposing reforms for the sake of opposition may yield temporary advantage but leaves the country weaker in the long run. When opposition leaders disparage India’s rising global profile as a failure, they signal to foreign capitals that domestic politics may yet undo what diplomacy achieves.

None of this is to suggest that the opposition should fall silent. Its duty is to question, scrutinise and challenge. A responsible opposition does not rubber-stamp government policy. But it does distinguish between issues of partisan politics and matters of national interest. It offers alternatives instead of only obstruction and opportunism.

The Congress and its allies insist that their stance is no different from what the BJP once adopted. But that is precisely the point. India cannot afford an opposition that is merely a mirror image of the ruling party at its worst. A weary electorate, cynical of constant acrimony, might well reward the first party that demonstrates maturity.

India’s opposition today faces a choice. It can continue trading insults and suspicions, questioning institutions and rejecting reforms, thus hoping to score points against the government. Or it can rise to the occasion by showing that it has learned from history and that it understands what it means to oppose responsibly in a democracy.

Tariffs from Washington and turbulence on the borders are stark reminders that India’s challenges do not pause for domestic squabbles. The government will respond with policy. Whether the opposition responds with maturity will determine not just its own fortunes, but the health of Indian democracy.

(The author works in the Information Technology sector. Views personal.)

INDIA’S FORGOTTEN HISTORIANS

Excavating Civilisation: A.S. Altekar and India’s Ancient Historical Imagination

In the decades after Independence, India’s past was often narrated through a narrow lens. As a result, many of the country’s finest historians, once influential, slipped into obscurity. This series revisits their lives and works to show how these keepers of Clio shaped the way Indians understood themselves.



By
Shoumojit Banerjee

Anant Sadashiv Altekar had the air of a man who was happiest with dust under his fingernails. Whether bent over an excavation trench in Bihar’s summer heat or weighing Gupta gold coins, he exuded the patient determination of a scholar committed to the evidence before him. In the mid-20th century, before India’s historical discourse calcified into hardened ideological camps, Altekar’s blend of archaeology, numismatics and textual scholarship produced histories that were both rigorously empirical and attentive to India’s civilisational depth.

Born in 1898 in Mhakave, a village in Maharashtra’s Kolhapur district, Altekar came of age when Indian nationalism was just finding its voice and the tools of modern historiography were only beginning to be applied to the subcontinent’s past. Educated at Pune’s Deccan College and

Part 1: The venerable scholar of Ancient India decoded our past with spade, coin and manuscript before ideology buried much of it.

later occupying prestigious chairs at the Banaras Hindu University and the Patna University, he straddled the transition from colonial scholarship to independent India’s historical self-fashioning.

His scholarship clung to a deceptively simple ideal that the past should be allowed to speak for itself. And that past spoke to him in the most tangible ways. In 1936, while excavating at Kotah in Rajasthan, Altekar uncovered a pair of stone pillars inscribed in the Vikrama era year 295 (AD 238), among the oldest such inscriptions known. Two decades later, at Kumhrar in Patna, he confirmed earlier theories that the site was once a Mauryan complex supported by massive stone columns - an architectural feat matching anything in the Hellenistic world. But it was at Vaishali in 1958 that Altekar made perhaps his most evocative find of a soapstone casket said to contain the relics of the Buddha, now on display in the Patna Museum.

If the earth yielded treasures to Altekar, so did the soil of rural fields. In 1946, villagers near Bayana in Rajasthan stumbled upon a buried hoard of over 1,800 gold coins from the Gupta period.

Altekar, by then the foremost authority on ancient Indian coinage, catalogued the find in loving detail. The Bayana Hoard remains one of the richest single sources for understanding Gupta iconography, political reach and economic sophistication. It was no accident that in 1947 he became the first chairman of the Numismatic Society of India. Coins for him were not inert relics but voices from the past that spoke of kingship, religion and trade in Ancient India.

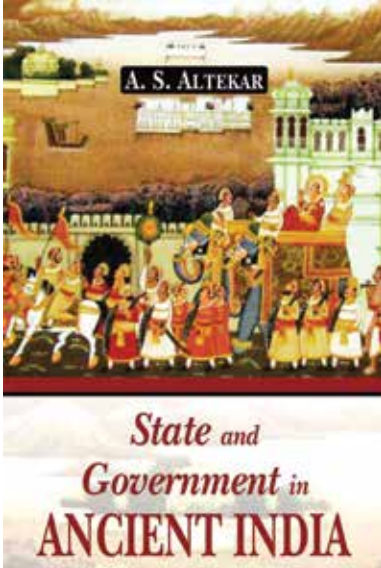
His textual output was as impressive as his fieldwork. Altekar’s ‘Edu-



cation in Ancient India’ (1934) was an ambitious survey of the subcontinent’s educational systems from Vedic times to the eve of the Delhi Sultanate. Drawing on Sanskrit and Pali inscriptions and accounts of foreign travellers, Altekar reconstructed a world in which centres like Nalanda and Takshashila flourished, yet he also controversially argued that literacy and institutional learning declined in the later medieval period. Critics such as German Indologist Hartmut Scharfe would later dismiss this, but even his detractors grudgingly acknowledged Altekar’s marshalling of an unprecedented range of sources.

More enduring still was Altekar’s ‘The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization’ (1938), the first sweeping attempt to track the status of women in ancient times.

Decades before ‘gender history’ became a formal field, it was Altekar who traced shifts in property rights, marriage customs and education. His complex conclusions were neither a romanticisation of the past nor a simple tale of decline. While he noted constraints tightening in certain periods, he also pointed to examples of female agency in religion, politics and literature. Given today’s increas-



ingly caricaturish debates, Altekar’s erudite treatment offers a reminder that history rarely conforms to activist slogans.

A late classic was ‘State and Government in Ancient India’ (1949) - a meticulous study of political ideas and institutions as gleaned from the Arthashastra, the Dharmashastras and epigraphic records. The book treated ancient Indian polities not as exotic curiosities but as advanced systems with fiscal regimes and foreign policy. Altekar resisted the reductive models that Marxist historians wherein class conflict alone drove political change.

Instead, he treated political culture as a product of both material and ideational forces with religion, law, warfare and diplomacy each playing a part.

Perhaps Altekar’s most prescient work, given today’s culture wars over the Gyanvapi mosque-temple complex, was his ‘History of Benares: From the Earliest Times Down to

1937.’ It serves a fine introduction to Altekar’s oeuvre. This slim but dense chronicle, originally serialised in the Journal of the Benares Hindu University, traced Varanasi’s evolution from prehistoric settlement to a modern urban centre.

Unlike the sanitised narratives favoured by India’s mid-20th century Nehruvian historians, Altekar did not flinch from recording episodes of destruction alongside periods of renewal.

“Benares saw its turbulent phase during 1194 and 1707, with the advent of Muslim rule, prosperity of the city declined rapidly.” The period 1200–1550 was a dark one for Benares as temples were demolished on several occasions, especially by Sikandar Lodi when he conquered the city in 1494.

Altekar acknowledged the few moments of conciliation too. “With Akbar, the imperial policy changed... to a policy of toleration and Benares began to prosper again.” The magnificent Viswanatha temple were rebuilt by Todar Mal at the request of scholar Bhatta Narayana. Later, Shah Jahan’s eldest son, Dara Shikoh, anxious to find a meeting point for Hinduism and Islam, had summoned 150 sanyasis from Benares and translated principal Upanishads into Persian.

The city’s history experienced its darkest phase yet under Aurangzeb, whose reign initially did not disclose his policy of bitter hatred towards Hindus. However, secure after the death of his father, Aurangzeb, on April 9, 1669 issued the demolition of Hindu temples and schools zealously carried out by the governor. Viswanatha and Veni Madhava were pulled down. The Nehruvian era’s embrace of Marxian historiography left little room for Altekar’s brand of

scholarship.

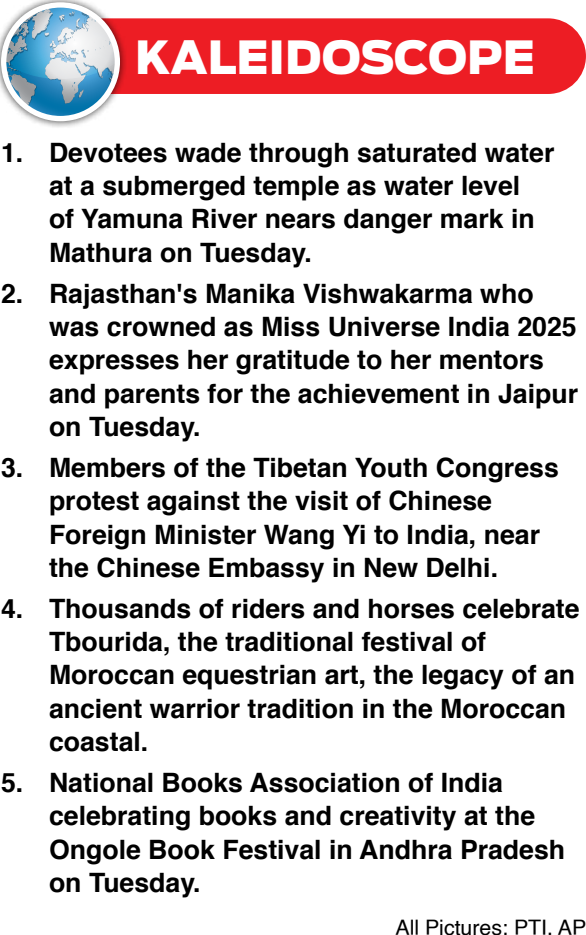
For anyone seeking to truthfully reconstruct India’s ancient past without the ideological filters of the late 20th century, Altekar’s work remains invaluable. His excavation reports are models of descriptive clarity while his numismatic studies offer forensic analysis that still underpins modern catalogues. His thematic surveys drawn from inscriptions, legal texts and foreign accounts are goldmines for comparative research.

To read Altekar today is to recover a style of scholarship that has largely vanished: interdisciplinary without being jargon-laden, nationalist without being chauvinist, empirical without lapsing into obscurantism. He saw the past as a treasury to be understood, not as a quarry for ideological stone-throwing.

The sheer scope of what he attempted is remarkable. Few historians today would dare to write a cradle-to-present survey of women’s history, or of education across two millennia, for fear of disciplinary sniping. Altekar did so because he believed Indian history could not be chopped into neat compartments.

Anant Sadashiv Altekar died in 1960, before the full force of Marxist historiography swept through Indian universities. He did not live to see his work pushed to the margins of syllabi.

As India once again debates its historical memory, Altekar’s works are exemplars that history need not be a zero-sum contest of ideologies. His career was spent piecing together fragments from many sources, allowing the multiplicity of India’s past to stand on its own terms. In doing so, he preserved a record that survives the tides of fashion in historical writing.



KALEIDOSCOPE

1. Devotees waded through saturated water at a submerged temple as water level of Yamuna River nears danger mark in Mathura on Tuesday.
2. Rajasthan's Manika Vishwakarma who was crowned as Miss Universe India 2025 expresses her gratitude to her mentors and parents for the achievement in Jaipur on Tuesday.
3. Members of the Tibetan Youth Congress protest against the visit of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to India, near the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi.
4. Thousands of riders and horses celebrate Tbourida, the traditional festival of Moroccan equestrian art, the legacy of an ancient warrior tradition in the Moroccan coastal.
5. National Books Association of India celebrating books and creativity at the Ongole Book Festival in Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday.

All Pictures: PTI, AP

READERS' VOICE

EPIC Cards, SIR, and the Fight for Accurate Electoral Rolls



By
Satish Joshi

Voter turnout has consistently been low, around 60-65 per cent in both Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly elections, and may drop further due to alleged multiple voting. This means, on average, 35-40 per cent of eligible voters do not cast their votes.

Currently, these apprehensions have been reported to the Election Commission and the Supreme Court of India, while the mandatory Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Bihar's Electoral Rolls is underway. The Election Commission has yet to complete the process and finalise the declaration, and soon the SIR will begin in other states.

A comprehensive review should be undertaken to address apprehensions by revamping the process and procedures enrolment and management of voters. The Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) must be recognised as a true document of nationality, and all citizens should treat it with due seriousness.

However, the voting percentage would increase if the updating of the voters' list were carried out after discrepancies removal, and before the elections are declared. A precise check on the facts and correctness of the voters' list is also required immediately after the elections are over. This post-election updated list could be made available as a reference list for the next elections for Panchayats, Nagar Palika, the Legislative Assembly, and the Lok Sabha.

The EPIC Cards should also have an expiry date (10 years), as in the case of passports and driving licences, to fix the responsibility of voter registration on the Election Com-

mission and the individual voter.

This interactive procedure will be useful in updating the voters' list automatically to a large extent. As it is related to the 'Right to Vote' for the 'citizens' only, this action is a must to maintain solemnity and earnestness.

The updated EPIC should be the first, essential, and compulsory document for issuing any other documents required for permits and licences. This will promote voter registration and updating automatically.

A major shortfall is due to no-shows on election days. This may be a shortfall due to alleged fake voters that cause overcounting of voters in the lists. The reason for the no-show of genuine voters is also a matter of concern and can add to the fake voting, as alleged.

In the current scenario, in Bihar State, the major attention is being drawn to the removal of 65 lakh voters (22 L dead, 36 L permanently migrated outside Bihar, and 7 L names were found included in the voters list for multiple constituencies) under various categories and circumstances as laid down in the procedures following the SIR methods.

This type of issue, therefore, falls under the overnumbering of voter lists. Such issues need to be addressed immediately by updating the voters' list after the elections are over, as a continuous process for ensuring correctness with reasons.

Irregularities due to non-citizens need to be checked by birth certificates and/or by the date of birth, as verified in the educational records of primary to high school levels.

Other documents subsequently released for personal identity (Aadhar Cards), bank passbooks, work,

food (ration card), travel abroad, permits, business, licences, etc., cannot be considered as authorised documents for citizenship. These are issued to facilitate living.

The EPIC cards are to be considered as the document for voting by the true nationals of the country only. It is, therefore, a prime identity and non-transferable. Birth is the proof of being a citizen, subject to MEA rules, and needs to be confirmed through the verified birth and educational records from primary to high school levels only. Other documents are only facilitating the living and are issued by producing the information, which can not establish the true meaning of citizenship.

Recently, the Supreme Court of India passed an order to consider the Aadhar Card as proof of identity for the deleted voters, with the reason that it is the most easily available identity document. The Election Commission needs to exercise the power to consider the birth records over the Aadhar cards.

Further, the Supreme Court of India directed the Election Commission to publish the names of deleted voters in Bihar along with the reasons for their deletion. It also ordered the Commission to issue a notice allowing those who have not yet submitted an Aadhaar Card or EPIC to do so. However, the display of such lists with reasons may lead to the addition of unauthorised and/or non-eligible voters through manipulation.

A life certificate, declaration for non-possession of other EPIC cards, no casting of votes in any other constituencies, present employment, and birth records should also be sought from the listed names of the 65 lakh deleted voters for further disclosure and action.

Ensuring accurate voter lists and recognising EPIC as the definitive proof of citizenship is essential not just for electoral integrity but for strengthening the very foundation of our democracy.

(The writer is a resident of Mumbai. Views personal.)

EXPLAINER

How Trump's Meetings Have Advanced Russian Interests

The current phase of the war in Ukraine continues unabated into its fourth year, with grinding offences and strikes against civilian infrastructure increasingly the norm.

It is, for Ukraine, arguably the most vulnerable that it has been since 2022.

These developments have prompted calls among world leaders to end the conflict. On the surface, United States President Donald Trump's meetings with both the Ukrainian and Russian leaders suggests a balanced approach. In reality, however, Trump's actions primarily benefit Russia.

The Alaska summit

After the recent meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska, Trump declared that their summit had been "very useful." When asked how he would rate the meeting on a scale of one to 10, the president declared the meeting "was a 10 in the sense we got along great."

While Trump and Putin may have hit it off, the issue with such an assessment is that it failed to address the underlying reason for the meeting: Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In this regard, the meeting was far more useful for Putin and Russia than Ukraine and its allies.

Putin managed to stoke tensions, and potentially divisions, among Ukraine's principal supporters by not including Ukraine in the summit. No other countries participated in the summit.

This format caused considerable consternation in Ukraine, where it was feared that Trump would make an agreement without Ukrainian consent, as well as in Europe, where Russian aggression and revisionism is a more direct threat.

Ceasefire demand evaporated

Putin and his negotiators managed to obtain a major concession from Trump at the summit as Trump renounced his own recent calls for a ceasefire.

For Ukraine and its allies, achiev-



ing a ceasefire was a fundamental requirement for any peace negotiations in 2025. This precondition has become more significant as Russia ramps up its attacks on Ukrainian cities and civilians.

Lastly, the very nature of the Alaska meeting itself helped legitimize Russia in international opinion.

Since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia has courted international opinion. It's been more successful than most people in Europe and North America realize as significant portions of Asia, Africa and Latin America remain ambivalent or even support Russia in its war against Ukraine.

Nonetheless, Russia was always restrained by the condemnation it's received from multiple international organizations, most notably the United Nations and the International Criminal Court.

Zelenskyy's visit to Washington

The benefits that Putin obtained from Trump in Alaska demanded an immediate response by Ukraine. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy promptly arranged a White House meeting with Trump in the aftermath of the Alaskan summit. And he didn't arrive alone: European leaders accompanied him to show solidarity with Ukraine.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio insisted the European leaders weren't on hand to prevent Trump from bullying Zelenskyy, as occurred during their last Oval Office meeting.

That's probably only partly true. Several European leaders — ranging from the president of the Euro-

pean Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, to French President Emmanuel Macron — almost assuredly accompanied Zelenskyy to prevent Trump from forcing the Ukrainian leader into concessions that are detrimental to their interests as well.

Carefully orchestrated

Ukrainian officials sought to carefully orchestrate Zelenskyy's one-on-one Oval Office meeting with Trump. Zelenskyy wore a suit and delivered a letter from the Ukrainian first lady to Melania Trump.

These and other efforts aimed to stroke Trump's ego, and the president's response — in particular agreeing with a reporter that Zelenskyy "look(ed) fabulous" in a suit — suggests it was a success. The same American reporter criticized Zelenskyy for failing to don a suit during his ill-fated February White House visit.

Notably, Trump did not rule out a role for American soldiers in helping to maintain peace in Ukraine during the meeting. Outside observers believe an American presence in Ukraine to maintain any eventual peace is a fundamental requirement for its success.

Hope versus reality

Any direct American involvement in Ukraine would also undermine his support among his political base. One of Trump's key campaign promises was not to involve the U.S. in "endless foreign wars."

A move by Trump to deploy American soldiers to Ukraine would be politically tenuous, as fractures are already emerging among his political base over his handling of the Jeffrey Epstein files.

Trump's cordial meetings with Zelenskyy and European leaders may fuel hope among Ukraine's supporters in the coming days. But any optimism should be tempered by the damage done by Trump's meeting with Putin. Trump reportedly interrupted the meetings in Washington to call Putin.

-The Conversation

Prez Murmu Greenlights Bill

National Sports Governance becomes an Act

THE PRESIDENTIAL ASSENT CAME ON MONDAY, STATED A GAZETTE NOTIFICATION BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

New Delhi: The National Sports Governance Bill has become an Act after President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent to the legislation that promises to overhaul India's sports administration and has been described as a path-breaking reform by Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya.

The Presidential assent came on Monday, stated a Gazette notification by the central government.

"The following Act of Parliament received the assent of the President on the 18th August, 2025 and is hereby published for general information -- The National Sports Governance Act, 2025," it stated.

As has been reported by PTI, the legislation that was ultimately passed by the Parliament carries two major amendments to the bill that was originally presented.

The scope of Right to Information (RTI) has been narrowed to include only those sports bodies that rely on government funding and support, effectively keeping the Board of Con-



trol for Cricket in India (BCCI) out of its purview.

The cricket board had been opposing coming under RTI as it is not dependent on government funding.

"A recognised sports organisation, receiving grants or any other financial assistance from the Central Government under sub-section (1) or from a State Government, shall be considered as a public authority under the Right to Information Act, 2005, with respect to utilisation of such grants or any other financial assistance," the

Act states.

In addition, aspirants for the top positions in national federations will be required to serve just one term in the Executive Committee, instead of the "overly restrictive" eligibility rule of two terms prescribed earlier, to encourage "younger administrators and athlete-leaders".

"...a person shall not be qualified to contest for election or seek nomination to the posts of the President or the Secretary General or the Treasurer, unless such person is a sportsperson of outstanding merit or, has

previously served as a member for at least one full term in the Executive Committee of the National Sports Body or as the President, or the Secretary General or the Treasurer in its affiliate unit," the Act states.

The sports bill, which had been waiting in the wings for over a decade, was passed after extensive consultations by Mr Mandaviya with various stakeholders over the past one year.

It was presented in the Lok Sabha on July 23 and was passed in the Lower

House on August 11. A day later, Rajya Sabha gave its nod to the document following a discussion that lasted well over two hours.

The new law will lead to the creation of a National Sports Board, which will have the power to give affiliation to National Sports Federation and also de-recognise those who commit violations that may range from financial misappropriation to electoral wrongdoing.

A National Sports Tribunal will be instituted for speedy dispute resolution and its decisions would only be challengeable in the Supreme Court to ensure that sports issues are not tangled in lengthy legal proceedings.

In addition, a National Sports Election Panel will be set up to oversee NSF polls that are often mired in controversies.

The Act also gives the central government discretionary power to limit India's international participation in "extraordinary circumstances" and where "national interest" is at stake. **-PTI**



Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher Paul Skenes during a baseball match against Toronto Blue Jays. Pic: AP/PTI

Asian Shooting Championship

Manu wins 10m air pistol bronze

Shymkent (Kazakhstan): Two-time Olympic medalist Manu Bhaker won bronze medals in the women's 10m air pistol individual and team events at the Asian Shooting Championship 2025 in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, on Tuesday.

Bhaker finished with a total score of 219.7 in the final, placing third behind People's Republic of China's Ma Qianke, who won gold with 243.2, and Republic of Korea's Yang Ji-in, who claimed silver with 241.6. Yang Ji-in is the reigning Olympic champion in women's 25m pistol.

This was Manu Bhaker's first individual medal at the Asian Shooting Championships since winning the 10m air pistol gold medal at the 2019 edition in Doha.



Earlier, the Indian trio of Manu Bhaker, Suruchi Singh and Palak Gulia combined to post a total of 1730 in the qualification for a team bronze, just one point shy of South Korea, who claimed silver. China claimed the gold with a dominant 1740, setting a new world record in the process.

For India in the qualification, Manu Bhaker led the charge with 583-18x, highlighted by a perfect 100 in her final series. She finished third to qualify for

the eight-woman individual finals. Suruchi Singh shot 574-20x for 12th place while Palak contributed 573-14x to finish 17th.

Manu Bhaker will also compete in the women's 25m pistol event, scheduled on August 25.

With two medals on Tuesday, India's total medal tally in the senior category at the Asian Shooting Championship 2025 climbs to three. On Monday, Anmol Jain, Saurabh Chaudhary and Aditya Malra clinched silver in the men's 10m air pistol team event.

The Indian senior shooting squad for the Asian competition comprises 35 members competing for medals in 15 events. A total of 129 Indian shooters are also competing in the junior events. **-PTI**

Sinquefield Cup Chess

Pragg outplays Gukesh

GRANDMASTER HAS NOW RISEN TO NUMBER THREE IN WORLD RANKING

ST. LOUIS (USA) : Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa outplayed World Champion D Gukesh in the opening round of the Sinquefield Cup Chess tournament to rise to the third position in live world rankings.

He now shares the lead with the unstoppable Levon Aronian of United States, who outsmarted Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan after the opening round on Monday (August 18, 2025).

In other games of the first round Fabiano Caruana of USA played out a draw with Duda Jan-Krzysztof of Poland while wild card Samuel Savian split the point with American country-mate Wesley So while Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France also drew with another Frenchman Alireza Firouzja.

With eight rounds still to come in the \$350,000 prize money tournament, as many as six players share the third spot behind Praggnanandhaa and Aronian while Gukesh and Abdusattorov are at the bottom of the heap hoping

to open their respective accounts in the next round.

Praggnanandhaa faced the Queen's gambit accepted by Gukesh who played with black pieces.

The solid approach was under the scrutiny early as Gukesh spent a lot of time in a known position and went for a dubious set-up that involved early exchange of queens.

Praggnanandhaa had the Bishop pair as playing with white pieces gave him a distinct advantage.

Making things worse for himself, Gukesh also fell short of time and had to find some really difficult moves to stay in the game.

Relentless, as he is, Praggnanandhaa did not let the position slip out of hand as he won a pawn by force and the rest was easy. The game lasted just 36 moves.

"I don't really know what happened today. I think he was a bit off," said Praggnanandhaa after the game.

Incidentally with this victory, Praggnanandhaa also restored parity with Gukesh in the classical for-

mat in which both have three wins each.

"Last year, I messed up some good positions against him, I think I did not beat him (in classical) for almost two years now, so finally it's good to get a win," noted Praggnanandhaa.

Aronian was quick to find counter play once Nodirbek ran out of steam after a long time trying to attack the black King. The Uzbek Grandmaster had the white pieces and a slightly favourable position but the American stayed put with some good resources. The game should have been a draw but Abdusattorov bungled and lost badly.

Results round 1: R Praggnanandhaa (Ind) beat D Gukesh (Ind); Fabiano Caruana (USA) drew with Duda Jan-Krzysztof (Pol); Samuel Savian (USA) drew with Wesley So (USA); Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb) lost to Levon Aronian (USA); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra) drew with Alireza Firouzja (Fra).

-PTI



Colorado Rockies' Warming Bernabel is doused by teammate Jordan Beck (left) during a baseball game. Pic: AP/PTI

Asia Cup 2025

SKY to lead; Gill vice-captain

Mumbai: Test skipper Shubman Gill was on Tuesday appointed as the vice-captain, while pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah was also included in India's 15-member T20 squad for the Asia Cup starting September 9 in the UAE.

Gill's last T20 match was against Sri Lanka at Pallekele in 2024 and he has now replaced Axar Patel as the deputy of skipper Suryakumar Yadav.

"Gill's form in England was something we expected but he exceeded it all," chief selector Ajit Agarkar said during the squad announcement press conference here.

There were some linger-

ing doubts on Bumrah's availability largely due to the proximity to the home Test series against the West Indies in October.

But the selectors opted to pick and this will be Bumrah's first T20 tournament since last year's World Cup.

Left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav too has been drafted in, while Jitesh Sharma will be the back-up wicketkeeper batter.

Yashasvi Jaiswal was among the five standby players chosen by the selectors. The other players in the standby are Washington Sundar, Prasidh Krishna, Dhruv Jurel, and

Riyan Parag.

"It's unfortunate Jaiswal has had to miss out but he will have to wait," Agarkar said.

India is placed in Group A of the Asia Cup alongside Pakistan, Oman, and UAE.

India squad for Asia Cup:

Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Shubman Gill (vice-captain), Abhishek Sharma, Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Jasprit Bumrah, Jitesh Sharma, Shivam Dube, Arshdeep Singh, Sanju Samson, Harshit Rana, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Varun Chakravathy.

-PTI

BWF World Jr Championships

Tanvi, Unnati, Bhargav to lead

New Delhi: Junior World No. 1 girls' singles player Tanvi Sharma, boys' doubles combination of Bhargav Ram Arigela and Viswa Tej Gobburu, along with Asian Junior Championships bronze medallist Vennala Kalagotla and the experienced Unnati Hooda, will lead a 25-member strong Indian team at the BWF World Junior Championships 2025 in Guwahati.

The mixed team championships for the Suhandinata Cup will be played from October 6-11, while the individual events will take place from October 13-19.

"We are very excited that India will be fielding one of its strongest contingents for the World Junior Championships on home turf. Our squad boasts two World Junior No. 1s and a few players who have already made their mark on the senior circuit, and I am confident that we will see Indian players on the podium this time," said Badminton Association of India Secretary Sanjay Mishra.

The last time India host-

ed the BWF World Junior Championships was in 2008, when Saina Nehwal became the first Indian shuttler to win gold, while RMV Guru Sai Dutt secured bronze in the boys' singles. India has so far won 11 medals in the competition, including four silver and six bronze, and the squad selected for the 2025 edition has enough depth to add to that tally.

The final team for the championships was selected after a thorough trial, which included all members of the Asian Junior Championships team, players ranked in the world junior top 20, BAI singles top 8, BAI doubles top 4 pairs, and juniors ranked inside the BWF senior top 50.

The two-stage round-robin format ensured the most competitive line-up was chosen. Asian Junior Championships girls' singles bronze medallists Tanvi and Vennala were directly selected in the team. According to the rules of the competition, 10 boys and 10 girls from the squad will be selected to play in the mixed team championships. **-PTI**

Experts flag urgent need for alternatives

New Delhi: The humble shuttlecock, the lifeline of badminton, has become the sport's biggest worry with prices of imported feather shuttles more than doubling in the past year amid an acute shortage of raw material in China.

A recent article in French newspaper L'Equipe attributed the crisis to changing food habits in China, where preference for pork over duck and goose meat has reduced poultry farming, and to a global surge in badminton's popularity.

Badminton's Shuttle Crisis

The squeeze has forced India's top stakeholders to admit the sport can no longer depend solely on goose and duck feathers.

"Sooner or later, we have to move away from feathers as a natural product. The sport has grown exponentially, and between China, Indonesia and India alone, we account for nearly two-fifths of the world's population consuming shuttles," chief national coach Pullela Gopichand told PTI.

"The scarcity isn't just about fewer ducks or geese being reared, it's also because more people are playing badminton. That's a good sign, but unless we find lab-grown or synthetic options, we will have a problem. I am confident a breakthrough will come in the next five years."

While reports suggested Gopichand's academy in Hyderabad was left with less than two weeks of shuttle reserves, BAI secretary Sanjay Mishra said



supply to national camps will stabilise this week but admitted the long-term challenge remains.

"Yonex has assured us shipments after August 20, so there's no immediate panic. The shortage hasn't affected the camp or any

tournament. But these shuttles are made of goose and duck feathers, and as demand rises globally, we have to think of alternatives," Karan Dhar, Managing Director of Yonex India, also assured to fast-track deliveries.

Dhar conceded the shortage is severe and unlikely to be temporary.

The price of a tube of high-quality shuttles has soared from Rs 1,200 at the end of 2023 to nearly Rs 3000 now. GST adds 12 per cent to already inflated import prices prompting calls

for government intervention.

"I think that is a possibility wherein maybe the government can be requested if they could reduce the import duties or the taxes that may help in lowering the cost of the physician box making it slightly more competitive," Dhar said

"That discussion is going on. Yes, even they are aware of it. Even the association is having difficulty because of the increase in costs," India has a few production units in Kerala

and West Bengal, but they are limited in scale and quality and have struggled to compete with mass-produced Chinese imports.

Asked what role India can play, Gopichand said: "Shuttle costs are already a big reason why badminton is so expensive. If we can bring them down, the sport will grow even bigger."

"I don't think that we are going to eat duck as much or could produce as much duck feather, that's not going to be the case. But India's research institutions

like IITs can play a role in developing feather-like materials. We cannot remain dependent on the nature of food consumption in one country for the future of an entire sport."

"I think before the entire ecosystem comes to a halt because the bird flu affected it in the past, now scarcity is affecting it, so it's not good that you're dependent on nature in China for an entire sport so it's imperative that we find the right answers quickly," he signed off.

-PTI