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PM highlights women's empowerment as NDA govt marks 12 yrs in office

New Delhi : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday highlighted the achievements of women across various sectors over the past 12 years, asserting that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government's focus on women-led development has expanded opportunities and empowered women to play a larger role in nation-building.

In a series of posts on social media platform X, Modi said the government's efforts had enabled women to make significant strides in fields ranging from financial inclusion and entrepreneurship to education, healthcare, sanitation, housing, sports, science and governance.

"Over the last 12 years, the NDA Government has worked to further women-led development. And, this is visible across sectors," the Prime Minister said.

"From financial inclusion and entrepreneurship to education, healthcare, sanitation, housing, sports, science and governance, women are playing a prominent role across diverse sectors," he added.

Emphasising the government's approach towards women's welfare and empowerment, Modi said the initiatives undertaken during the past decade were rooted in "dignity, opportunity and empowerment".

"The efforts of the NDA Government are rooted in dignity, opportunity and empowerment. They have helped create an environment where women can realise their full potential and contribute even more strongly to nation-building," he said, using the hashtag #12YearsOfNariShakti.

The Prime Minister also expressed satisfaction over the growing presence of women in emerging and technology-driven sectors, particularly science, space research and innovation.

"I am particularly happy to see India's Nari Shakti make a mark in sectors like science, space and innovation. Their growing participation in emerging fields such as drone technology is opening new avenues of opportunity and transforming development landscape across the nation,"

Modi said. He further underlined the role of Self Help Groups (SHGs) in promoting financial independence among women and said the government was actively supporting such collectives.

"Our Government is actively supporting Self Help Groups, which are going a long way in making women financially independent," he said.

The Prime Minister's remarks came as the NDA government highlighted its achievements since assuming office at the Centre in 2014. Over the years, the government has launched several schemes aimed at improving the socio-economic status of women, including initiatives focused on financial inclusion, sanitation, housing, maternal health, entrepreneurship and skill development.

The government has also sought to encourage greater participation of women in leadership roles, science and technology, and emerging sectors such as drone operations and startups.

The hashtag #12YearsOfNariShakti has been used by the BJP and the government to showcase the contribution of women and the impact of various welfare and empowerment programmes implemented during the NDA's tenure.

PM Modi mourns passing of shooting legend Jaspal Rana

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday expressed deep grief over the passing of veteran Indian shooter and renowned coach Jaspal Rana, describing his death as a profound loss to Indian sports and the shooting fraternity.

In a post on social media platform X, the Prime Minister paid tribute to Rana's remarkable contributions to Indian shooting, both as an accomplished athlete and as a mentor to young talent.

"Deeply saddened by the passing of Shri Jaspal Rana Ji. His passing is a profound loss to the world of Indian sports," Modi said.

Highlighting Rana's achievements on the international stage, the Prime Minister said, "He brought immense glory to the nation through his extraordinary achievements in shooting. Equally remarkable was his contribution as a mentor, shaping and guiding young athletes with great dedication."

Modi noted that Rana's commitment to excellence and discipline had earned him widespread respect across the sporting community. "His unwavering commitment to excellence, discipline and service to the sporting world earned him immense admiration," he said.

Extending condolences to the bereaved family and the sports fraternity, the Prime Minister added, "My thoughts are with his family, friends and the entire sporting fraternity in this hour of grief. Om Shanti."

Jaspal Rana was one of India's most celebrated shooters, winning multiple medals at international competitions, including the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games. A specialist in pistol shooting, he played a key role in popularising the sport in India and later devoted himself to coaching and nurturing the next generation of shooters. His contributions to Indian shooting earned him several national honours and a lasting place among the country's sporting icons.

The news of his demise prompted an outpouring of tributes from athletes, coaches and sports administrators, who remembered him as a champion competitor and a dedicated mentor whose influence extended far beyond the shooting range.

World Bank lowers global growth projections to weakest level since COVID-19 amid West Asia conflict



Washington: The World Bank has lowered its global growth forecast to its weakest level since the Covid-19 pandemic, warning that the economic fallout from the conflict in West Asia is spreading well beyond the region and putting additional pressure on countries around the world.

In its latest Global Economic Prospects report released on Thursday, the global lender projected world economic growth of 2.5 per cent in 2026, down from 2.9 per cent a year earlier. Global inflation is expected to average 4 per cent, reflecting continued price pressures across many economies.

The downgrade comes as rising energy costs linked to the US-Israeli war with Iran continue to ripple through global markets, with higher energy prices leading to surging inflation, as well as increasing the risk of central banks keeping interest rates elevated for longer periods of time, or otherwise tightening their monetary policies for further containment of price growth.

It further warned that developing economies were the ones bearing the brunt of this crisis, due to facing higher import costs, weaker growth prospects and increasing pressure on public finances.

To help cushion the impact, the institution said it was making up to USD \$60 billion available immediately for developing countries. That figure could possibly rise to as much as US\$100 billion over the next 15 months, depending on demand and evolving economic conditions.

As per the latest report, growth projections for around two-thirds of all economies have been revised down since the World Bank's previous assessment in January.

The bank said geopolitical tensions, ongoing conflicts and uncertainty in global markets continue to weigh heavily on investment, trade and consumer confidence.

Indermit Gill, the institution's chief economist, said ending conflicts would be one of the most effective ways to improve economic prospects, particularly for the more vulnerable and poorer countries that often suffer the greatest consequences despite being far removed from the fighting.

"The first thing is to end the conflict in Ukraine, in the Gulf, and in Central Africa, and not start any new wars," Gill said.

"War anywhere is bad for poor people everywhere."

Rahul Gandhi, Kharge mourn Jaspal Rana, hail his lasting contribution to Indian Shooting

New Delhi: Senior Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday expressed profound grief over the demise of legendary shooter and celebrated coach Jaspal Rana, describing him as one of India's greatest sporting icons whose contributions transformed the country's shooting landscape and inspired generations of athletes.

In a post on social media platform X, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said he was "deeply saddened" by the passing of Rana, whom he described as one of India's finest shooting champions and an inspirational mentor.

"Deeply saddened by the passing of Jaspal Rana ji, one of India's finest shooting champions and a mentor who inspired generations of athletes," Gandhi said.

Highlighting Rana's influence beyond his competitive achievements, Gandhi noted that his commitment to excellence and his service to Indian sport would be remembered for years to come.

"His dedication to excellence and his immense contribution to Indian sport have left an enduring mark on our nation," he said, while extending his sympathies to the bereaved family and the sporting community.

"My heartfelt condolences to his family, loved ones, and the entire sporting fraternity," Gandhi added.

Delayed monsoon keeps Mumbai hot and humid; temperature hits 32°C

Mumbai : Mumbai city sweltered at 32 degrees Celsius Friday as a delayed monsoon prolonged the hot and humid conditions across the metropolis, the India Meteorological Department said.

Temperature touched 32°C at 10 AM with humidity at 71%, making it feel like 40°C, weather data showed. Maximum temperature is expected to hover around 33-35°C during the day, while minimum will be around 29-30°C.

IMD forecast partly cloudy skies with a 41% chance of light rain or thundershowers. However, sustained monsoon rainfall is unlikely before June 15, officials said.

The delay marks a contrast to last year, when Kerala early, has stalled over Konkan. Mumbai and adjoining Thane are likely to witness only intermittent pre-monsoon showers until the system advances further, IMD sources said.

Skymet too projected monsoon onset over Mumbai around June 15, with a margin of one day on either side. A low-level cyclonic circulation developing over the Arabian Sea off Goa coast by June 13 may trigger rains between June 14-16.

Meanwhile, Air Quality Index remained 'Moderate' at 61, with PM2.5 as the primary pollutant. UV index was recorded at 5-7, indicating high exposure risk.

Modi elevated India's global standing during 12-year tenure: Fadnavis

Mumbai : Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 12-year tenure is significant not merely because of its duration but because it has enhanced India's stature and recognition across the world.

Congratulating Modi on becoming one of the longest-serving Prime Ministers, Fadnavis reviewed the achievements of the NDA government and highlighted the transformation witnessed in both India and Maharashtra under Modi's leadership. He asserted that the country has made historic progress in the fields of economy, social welfare, infrastructure and global diplomacy.

According to Fadnavis, Prime Minister Modi has received 32 international honours so far, including 24 of the highest civilian awards conferred by various countries. He also noted that several global rating agencies have recognised Modi as a popular and influential leader.

The Chief Minister pointed out that the NDA is currently in power in 22 states, governing regions that account for nearly 80 per cent of India's population.

Fadnavis further claimed that around 25 crore people have been lifted out of extreme poverty during the Modi government's tenure. He said 81 crore citizens are benefiting from the food security programme, while the Jan Dhan Yojana has enabled 32 crore women to actively participate in the banking system.

Under the 'Lakshmi Kanya' initiative, nearly three crore women across the country have become financially empowered, including over 50 lakh women in Maharashtra.

He added that four crore houses have been completed under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, with work underway on another three crore homes. Welfare initiatives related to healthcare, insurance and social security have also contributed to improving the quality of life of ordinary citizens, he said.

Fadnavis Mocks Raut's Suggestion on Opposition Unity

Responding to Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut's recent suggestion that all opposition parties should unite under the Congress banner and be led by NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) chief Sharad Pawar, Fadnavis dismissed the proposal with the remark, "Beghani Shaadi Mein Abdullah Deewana."

He said there was no need to comment on a proposal put forward by a person who belongs neither to the Congress nor to Sharad Pawar's party. Fadnavis further alleged that the Congress is a "sinking ship" and claimed that no political leader would be willing to board it.

OMG! Raid exposes fake Rabdi Kulfi made with Palm Oil and Starch in Mumbai

Mumbai : In a raid, the Food Safety Department has uncovered a case involving the sale of substandard and misleading products under the label of "Rabdi Kulfi," raising fresh concerns about food adulteration and consumer safety.

Acting on specific information, food safety officials conducted a surprise inspection at a manufacturing unit in Mumbai's Kandivali area on Friday. During the raid, authorities found a large stock of so-called Rabdi Kulfi and other dairy-based products.

Preliminary investigations revealed several irregularities in the manufacturing process, prompting officials to seize the products and initiate further action.

The most startling finding was that the product marketed as traditional Rabdi Kulfi was allegedly being prepared using palm oil, starch and other low-cost ingredients instead of milk, kulfi. Officials said the practice amounted to misleading consumers and compromising product quality.

The inspection also revealed serious labelling violations. information about ingredients, while others lacked mandatory labelling requirements altogether. Officials stated that such practices constitute violations of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and are considered serious offences under food safety regulations.

Samples of the seized kulfi and cream products have been sent to an accredited laboratory for detailed analysis. The test results are expected to provide clarity on the composition, quality and potential health implications of the products. Based on the findings, authorities said administrative and legal action would be initiated against the manufacturer. Penalties could include fines and cancellation of licences if violations are established.

The Food Safety Department has urged consumers to carefully check product labels, ingredient lists and brand details before purchasing food items.

Officials noted that enforcement drives against adulterated and misbranded food products have intensified across several states in recent months. Similar violations involving kulfi, falooda and dairy products have been detected in earlier inspections, highlighting the need for stricter compliance and consumer awareness.

Authorities reiterated their commitment to taking stringent action against businesses that compromise public health by manufacturing or selling unsafe food products.

Mumbai witnessed the earliest onset of the monsoon on record. In 2025, the rains reached the city on May 26, bringing an early start to the season. This year, residents are instead facing several additional days of humid and uncomfortable weather before widespread rainfall is expected.

The southwest monsoon, which reached



rabdi and other ingredients typically used in authentic products carried inaccurate

Authorities found that some products carried inaccurate

Siddaramaiah denies bias in Backward Class grant allocation

Bengaluru: Former Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday rejected allegations of discrimination in the allocation of grants by the Backward Classes Welfare Department, asserting that the preliminary sanction process was carried out strictly in accordance with government norms and without favouring any particular community.

In a clarification issued amid criticism over the distribution of grants to backward class organisations, Siddaramaiah said the department had granted preliminary approval for projects worth Rs 71.85 crore for the construction of community halls and student hostels benefiting around 155 backward class associations and organisations across the state.

He emphasised that the approved list was only a preliminary sanction and not the final list of beneficiaries.

Responding to allegations that the Kuruba community had received a disproportionately higher share of the grants, Siddaramaiah said the number of applications submitted by Kuruba organisations was significantly higher than those from other communities.



"The grants were sanctioned after examining applications received by the department. No discrimination was intentionally made against any community," he said.

He added that applications submitted by organisations belonging to several other backward communities were also under consideration and would be processed in the coming days.

According to the former Chief

Minister, preliminary approvals have been issued for projects benefiting communities including Kuruba, Madiwala, Lingayat, Vokkaliga, Besta, Balija, Golla, Jeti, Kumbara, Arasu, Helava, Savita Samaj, Uppara, Ganiga, Kuruhina Shetty, Halakki and Reddy, among others.

Siddaramaiah clarified that the order issued by the department does not amount to the release of funds. Beneficiary organisations must first

submit required documents, including building licences from local bodies, three-year audit reports and other records, through the respective district administration to the Backward Classes Welfare Department.

He said grants would be released in three phases based on the progress of construction works and periodic reviews conducted by the government.

Explaining the allocation formula, Siddaramaiah said existing government guidelines mandate that 70 per cent of grants be earmarked for communities falling under Category 1 and Category 2A, while the remaining 30 per cent is reserved for communities under Categories 3A and 3B.

He maintained that some communities received larger allocations primarily because a greater number of eligible groups belong to Categories 1 and 2A and because of the volume of applications received.

The clarification comes amid a political controversy over the distribution of welfare grants, with opposition parties and some community leaders alleging bias in the selection of beneficiaries.

Telangana emerging as major logistics hub, ready for future investments: Sridhar Babu

Hyderabad: Telangana is rapidly emerging as one of India's most promising logistics destinations, backed by strategic infrastructure investments, progressive policies and a future-focused vision, State IT and Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu said on Friday.

Delivering the keynote address at the International Conference on Shipping and Logistics 2026 (ICSL 2026), organised by the Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI) at HICC, the Minister said logistics is the backbone of economic growth, connecting manufacturers, farmers, businesses and markets.

He noted that in today's global trade environment, resilience, speed, reliability and adaptability have become as important as efficiency.

Highlighting Telangana's achievements, Sridhar Babu said the state contributes nearly five per cent to India's GDP, ranks seventh among merchandise-exporting states and recorded ex-



ports worth over Rs 1.61 lakh crore during 2024-25. Despite being landlocked, Telangana has transformed its geographical position into a strategic advantage through strong multimodal connectivity, Logistics Policy 2.0, expanding air cargo infrastructure and the upcoming Mega Multimodal Logistics Park at Manoharabad.

Inviting investors and industry leaders to partner with the state, the Minister said Telangana is ready to support industry, connect markets and build the logistics ecosystem of the future.

FTCCI President Ravi Kumar said Hyderabad is well-positioned to emerge as India's premier hub-and-spoke logistics destination, while Logistics Committee Chairman Kamal Jain said the conference brought together policymakers, industry leaders, technology providers and academia to discuss the future of India's logistics sector.

The conference featured panel discussions on cargo infrastructure, multimodal freight transport, AI-driven logistics, and workforce development.

Bihar CM mourns death of three SHOs, driver in Begusarai road accident

Patna: Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary on Friday expressed deep sorrow over the death of three Station House Officers (SHOs) and a vehicle driver in a tragic road accident in Begusarai district.

In his condolence message, the Chief Minister described the incident as "extremely sad and painful."

The four victims, including three police station heads from Madhepura district, were killed when their car col-

lided with a truck on National Highway-31 under the Sahebpur Kamal police station area of Begusarai late Thursday night.

"This irreparable loss is a profound shock to the entire police family," Choudhary said.

He prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls and conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. The Chief Minister also assured that the Bihar government stands

firmly with the grieving families during this difficult time and will extend all possible support to them.

The deceased include the SHOs of Belari, Arar and Ratwara police stations in Madhepura district, along with the driver of the vehicle. All the three officers were returning to Madhepura by car after completing a training programme in Patna, when the accident took place.

Police have initiated an investigation into the accident.

Omar suggests opening Awantipora air base for civilian flights during Srinagar airport closure

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has suggested opening the strategic Indian Air Force air base at Awantipora in south Kashmir for limited civilian flight operations during the proposed closure of Srinagar International Airport in October this year.

The proposal was raised by the chief minister during separate meetings with union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu in New Delhi, where he expressed concern over the proposed shutdown of Srinagar airport from October 1 to 16 under Phase III of the runway resurfacing project.

A J&K government spokesman said during the meetings, the Chief Minister underscored the importance of maintaining uninterrupted air connectivity to Jammu & Kashmir, particularly during the peak autumn tourism season when the Valley attracts a large number of visitors from across the country.

While acknowledging



that the resurfacing works are essential for operational safety and fully respecting the operational assessment of the Indian Air Force, Omar Abdullah expressed concern over the timing of the final phase of the project, which coincides with one of the busiest periods for the tourism sector.

The chief minister informed the union ministers that air services to the Valley have already been curtailed since April owing to the earlier phases of the resurfacing programme. He noted that a complete suspension of flights during the first half of

October would adversely affect tourism, hospitality, transport, handicrafts and allied sectors that sustain thousands of livelihoods across Jammu & Kashmir.

Highlighting the broader economic implications, Omar said the proposed closure could lead to large-scale travel disruptions and cancellations, causing inconvenience to residents and visitors alike while impacting business activity during a crucial tourism season.

In his meeting with the defence minister, the chief minister requested that the Indian Air Force examine the

possibility of shortening or phasing the final stage of the runway works without compromising safety or operational requirements.

He further requested that, in the event a complete closure of Srinagar Airport becomes unavoidable, minimal civil flight operations, commensurate with the operational capacity of the Awantipora Air Base, may be permitted from the air base during the closure period to ensure essential air connectivity for the region.

Recalling his earlier tenure as Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah noted that during the runway resurfacing works in September 2010, civil flights had successfully operated from Awantipora under a coordinated arrangement involving the ministries of defence and civil aviation.

"We are working on possible alternatives to minimise the disruption & maintain a basic flight schedule as was done in the past when the airport closed for similar reasons in 1998 & 2010," the Chief Minister said.

Inquiry ordered into alleged police misconduct at Kunzer police station

Srinagar: J&K Police on Friday ordered an inquiry into alleged misconduct by police personnel at Police Station Kunzer in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

According to police the incident stems from June 10, when a police team from PS Kunzer was executing a status quo order issued by the Judicial Magistrate 1st Class (JM/C) Tangmarg, in Dhobiwan village and initiated legal and preventive proceed-

ings.

Police said an altercation later reportedly took place inside the police station involving an advocate and police personnel, following which allegations regarding the conduct of police officials surfaced.

"In view of the concerns expressed and in order to ensure complete transparency, fairness and objectivity, SSP Baramulla has directed for a detailed inquiry into the entire sequence of events,

which has been entrusted to a Gazetted Officer," the statement said.

The inquiry shall examine all aspects of the incident, including the conduct of all persons involved, the circumstances leading to the registration of the case, and any allegations of misconduct or use of force.

"Statements of all concerned persons shall be recorded and all available evidence shall be examined," police statement said.

"..It is assured that if any lapse, misconduct or deviation from established procedures on the part of any police personnel is found during the course of inquiry, appropriate action shall be taken and accountability shall be ensured strictly in accordance with law," police added.

The investigation into the registered case and the departmental inquiry will proceed independently, police said.

Focus on "trident" strategy for reviving Bengal's industry and economy: CM Suwendu Adhikari

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Friday unveiled an ambitious "trident-shaped" strategy for reviving industry in the state.

Adhikari said his government will revive manufacturing and attract investment to the state by focusing on a three-pronged strategy of promoting heavy industries, Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) and food and horticulture processing.

Addressing a press conference organised by the BJP to mark 12 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government at the Centre, Adhikari said restoring confidence among investors was essential to accelerating economic growth and creating employment opportunities across the state.

He said the state's new BJP government was working on what he described as a "trident-shaped" development model.

"It is centred on heavy industries, MSMEs, and food and horticulture processing," said the chief minister.

The initiative would include the establishment of processing units and ancillary industries aimed at strengthening the rural and industrial economy.

"We have formed a team and a minister is overseeing the preparations. We are receiving several proposals, but we do not want to make promises that cannot be fulfilled," Adhikari said.

Highlighting the state's industrial potential, he stressed the importance of railway-linked manufactur-



ing and engineering sectors. Referring to the Kanchrapara Railway Workshop, he said its expansion, along with the development of rail-centric industries, could generate substantial employment opportunities. He also added that other railway workshops across the state will be revived and expanded.

"The railway workshops have a tremendous potential to generate jobs. We will focus on expanding them," Adhikari said.

He also revisited the issue of Singur, saying his government would seek to bring the Tata Group back to West Bengal. He noted that the land acquired for the abandoned Nano project was no longer under government control, having been returned to the original landowners. Tata Motors had abandoned their plans to bring out the Nano car from the rural pocket of Singur in Hooghly district, but aborted the project following an intense anti-land acquisition agitation spearheaded by the then principal opposition Trinamool Congress. The Nano

later rolled out from Gujarat's Sanand.

According to him, agriculture and pisciculture are no longer viable on much of the land because of structural alterations made during the earlier industrial project. "The land contains rods, cement and other construction materials, making cultivation difficult," he said.

The CM said his government would welcome investment but would subject prospective investors to rigorous scrutiny before extending support or allocating land.

"We want credible business players to come to Bengal. We will examine whether companies have been involved in bank fraud, land fraud or money-laundering investigation. We will also determine whether they genuinely intend to establish industries here or are merely visiting for courtesy meetings or investment summits," he said.

Adhikari maintained that improved governance, industrial expansion and job creation would help revive Bengal's economy and the government has already set the ball rolling.

Sajad Lone questions timing of Omar-Modi meet ahead of NC proposed protest on statehood

Srinagar: Peoples Conference president and MLA Sajad Lone took a dig at Chief Minister Omar Abdullah over his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi, questioning the timing of the interaction ahead of the National Conference's proposed protest at Jantar Mantar demanding restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

In a post on X, Lone said that although he was abroad, he couldn't stop himself from reacting after learning about the meeting between the Chief Minister and the Prime Minister.

Calling the proposed protest "a joke", Lone said there was "a sense of timing" and argued that the Chief Minister should have

met the Prime Minister after the protest instead of before it.

"A start to the proposed protest at Jantar Mantar. What a joke. There is a sense of timing. Even if we will be lectured now that the date had been fixed earlier, CM sahib should have met after the protest," Lone wrote on Thursday evening.

Drawing parallels with the events preceding the August 5, 2019 abrogation of Article 370, Lone alleged that leaders had similarly met the Prime Minister shortly before the constitutional changes and subsequent detentions.

"Why do I get this feeling. They did the same in 2019. And met the same PM sahib a day or so before abrogation. And I think final-



ised who will be housed where after detention," he said, while also taking a sarcastic swipe at the Chief Minister, accusing him of "cracking a joke at the expense of those who voted for him." "I can visualise CM sahib telling PM sahib. Sir we have to do some bit of theatrics. That fake wooden

smile. Sir, Uncle must have briefed you," Lone said

On Thursday J&K Chief Minister called on Prime Minister in New Delhi and discussed a range of key issues concerning Jammu & Kashmir, including the early restoration of statehood, the economic situation and developmental priorities of

J&K. During the meeting, the Chief Minister conveyed the aspirations of the people of Jammu & Kashmir for the early restoration of statehood, underlining that it would mark an important step in strengthening democratic institutions, deepening public participation and advancing the next phase of the region's development.

He requested that the process be taken forward at the earliest.

Last week, after a marathon meeting, the National Conference announced that its legislators and MPs would stage a protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on the opening day of the Monsoon session to press for the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

Child labour, blot on humanity, every child deserves education and dignity: Prem

Patna: On the eve of World Day Against Child Labour, Bihar Legislative Assembly Speaker Prem Kumar said that child labour continues to remain a serious blot on society and humanity, and called upon all sections of society to work collectively to ensure that every child enjoys a safe, secure and dignified childhood.

Addressing the issue, Prem Kumar emphasised that children are the foundation of the nation's future and that safeguarding their rights and well-being should be a shared responsibility. He said the persistence of child labour reflects a challenge that demands sustained public awareness and coordinated action.

The Speaker stated that every child has the fundamental right to a secure childhood, quality education, proper nutrition and a life of dignity. Denying children these basic rights by forcing them into labour, he said, deprives them of opportunities necessary for their physical, emotional and intellectual development.

He observed that child labour not only violates the constitutional and fundamental rights of children but also weakens the country's prospects for progress. According to him, a nation cannot achieve its full potential if its children are compelled to sacrifice their education and childhood for survival. Prem Kumar highlighted

that both the Central Government and the Bihar Government have been implementing several welfare initiatives aimed at eliminating child labour and ensuring that children remain within the education system.

He pointed to programmes such as the Right to Education Act, which guarantees free and compulsory education for children, as an important tool in addressing the root causes of child labour. The legislation, he noted, has played a significant role in increasing school enrolment and reducing barriers to education. The Speaker also referred to the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, describing it as a comprehensive initiative designed to

improve access to quality education and strengthen educational infrastructure across the country. Such measures, he said, encourage children to attend school rather than enter the workforce prematurely. He further highlighted the contribution of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, stating that the programme not only addresses nutritional needs among school-going children but also serves as an incentive for families to send their children to school regularly. Apart from educational interventions, Prem Kumar said various social security measures introduced by governments are helping vulnerable families

City Force Breaks Down Illegal Food Stalls Near Metro Line

Mumbai: The city's local municipal body has removed unauthorized expansions built by food stalls and restaurants in the Seven Bungalows area. These structures were built right under the Versova Metro

Station.

Videos of the cleanup drive appeared online, showing heavy machinery knocking down the illegal setups. The targeted shops had used up public walkways to expand

their eating spaces, creating narrow bottlenecks in the lanes. City workers supervised the field activity to ensure public spaces were cleared properly.

This action is part of a



larger ongoing citywide effort to clear blocked paths and keep roads open for regular citizens. The Mumbai municipal corporation

has successfully executed a targeted enforcement drive in the Seven Bungalows neighborhood, systematically dismantling unautho-

rized structural expansions built by local food stalls and commercial restaurants.

The localized operation focused specifically on clearing the congested zone located directly beneath the bustling Versova Metro Station, where multiple food outlets had encroached upon public property. By deploying specialized field teams, the civic body aims to reclaim valuable urban space that had been gradually monopolized by private commercial interests at the expense of ordinary

commuters.

This decisive action underscores the city's commitment to restoring spatial order around high-traffic public transit hubs, ensuring that infrastructure remains accessible to the general public.

The enforcement activity gained significant traction across social media platforms after several eyewitness videos of the cleanup drive emerged online, showing municipal workers utilizing heavy machinery to demolish the illegal set-

ups.

The footage captured the rapid removal of extended metal awnings, temporary seating arrangements, and unauthorized counters that local shop owners had constructed outward onto the public walkways.

Over time, these unauthorized expansions had completely taken over the pedestrian pavements, forcing daily metro commuters to walk on the busy main road and creating dangerous traffic bottlenecks in the narrow lanes.

Police Officer Hurt After Heavy Tool Falls from Machinery

Mumbai: A 37-year-old police constable named Dilip Dhamke suffered serious leg injuries when a heavy attachment broke off a large excavator. The incident occurred while the machinery was being loaded onto a transport vehicle. The constable was driving past the spot on his motorcycle when the lifting belt holding the heavy metal piece snapped. The equipment crashed down directly onto his bike, causing severe damage.

A police team quickly arrived at the scene

to help. The operator of the machinery tried to run away on foot but was caught by onlookers, who noticed he was under the influence of alcohol. The police have taken the operator into custody. They have filed an official case against him under local transport and safety laws for reckless behavior.

A 37-year-old police constable, identified as Dilip Dhamke, was injured in a mechanical accident in Mumbai when a heavy attachment detached from a large excavator.

Rescue Team Saves Four Youths Trapped in Broken Elevator

Navi Mumbai: Four young individuals were safely brought out by emergency teams after being trapped inside a broken elevator in Kharghar for about 30 minutes.

Firefighters quickly arrived at the building after receiving an emergency call. They used specialized rescue tools to pry open the jammed metal doors while the youths waited inside.

A video of the rescue operation showed the team successfully creating a gap in the door. The relieved youths quickly climbed out of the elevator as soon as there was enough space.

Thanks to the quick arrival and efficient work of the response team, the situation was resolved smoothly. All four individuals were evacuated safely without any injuries.

An emergency response unit successfully rescued four young individuals who became trapped inside a malfunctioning elevator in the Kharghar node of Navi Mumbai. The group was confined within the

stalled lift car for approximately thirty minutes before emergency protocols were fully executed to secure their release. Upon receiving an urgent distress call from the building management, localized firefighting teams were dispatched to the high-rise structure to handle the situation. The incident highlights the critical importance of rapid-response networks and specialized equipment in resolving mechanical infrastructure failures within expanding urban residential zones.

The rescue operation was initiated immediately as first responders arrived at the scene and established verbal contact with the trapped occupants to ensure their safety and calm their anxieties. Utilizing heavy-duty specialized rescue equipment, including hydraulic spreaders and pry tools, the firefighters focused their efforts on manually overriding the jammed metal doors of the elevator shaft. The technical team carefully calculated their leverage points to force open the alignment without causing a

secondary mechanical failure or dropping the elevator car. Throughout the tense half-hour process, the response team maintained continuous communication with the youth to monitor ventilation levels inside the shaft.

The technical precision of the extraction was captured in a mobile video recording that later circulated online, documenting the exact moment the rescue technicians successfully created a viable structural gap in the reinforced doors. The footage showed the relieved individuals systematically climbing out of the compressed space as soon as the opening was wide enough to permit a safe exit. Thanks to the efficient coordination, rapid arrival, and mechanical expertise of the localized fire brigade, the high-stress scenario was resolved without any operational delays. All four individuals were evacuated from the elevator shaft in stable condition, requiring no immediate medical attention or emergency hospitalization.

Local Auto Driver Inspires Public by Working with Oxygen Support



Mumbai: A local auto-rickshaw driver has caught the attention of many people online after a video surfaced showing him working while carrying a portable oxygen cylinder.

The video shows the driver managing his daily routine with the medical tank placed right next to his seat. The footage quickly spread across social media, drawing praise from viewers who admired his strong work ethic under tough conditions. The clip has started online conversations about the

hard work of everyday laborers.

Many people called his story a great example of resilience, showing how some individuals must balance severe health challenges with the daily need to provide for their families. An auto-rickshaw driver in Mumbai has captured the admiration of thousands online after video footage surfaced showing him operating his vehicle while relying on a portable oxygen cylinder. The viral video, which quickly spread across multiple so-

cial media platforms, depicts the driver managing his daily passenger routes with the essential medical tank placed securely right next to his driver's seat. The footage has drawn widespread praise from viewers who expressed deep respect for his determination and strong work ethic under such challenging personal circumstances.

The clip has sparked important online conversations regarding the grit and daily struggles faced by unorganized laborers and transport workers.

Editorial

On the Threshold of Change!

The public outcry erupting in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir is not merely an outburst of local discontent; it is an explosion of popular sentiments that have been suppressed for decades. It appears that the patience of citizens living under the shadow of economic crisis, political neglect, and restrictions on human rights is running out. In this context, the issue of occupied Kashmir has once again moved to the center stage of international discourse, offering clear indications that the region's future stands at a new historical crossroads.

The territory of Jammu and Kashmir held by Pakistan represents more than just a border dispute between two nations; it is a raw, lingering wound from the unfinished business of India's Partition. The consequences of political decisions made in 1947, Pakistan's military interventions, and the complexities of international politics continue to impact the lives of millions today. The question of how much autonomy actually exists in this region which has styled itself as 'Azad Kashmir' (Free Kashmir) for decades has once again confronted the world. The widespread agitation that has erupted in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in recent days, the harsh crackdown that followed, and the mounting local discontent clearly signal that the region has reached a pivotal historical juncture.

Today, Pakistan's economy is grappling with a severe crisis. Soaring inflation, a heavy debt burden, energy shortages, and unemployment have already made life difficult for ordinary citizens. Pakistan-occupied Kashmir has also borne the brunt of this situation. The movement launched by the Joint Awami Action Committee focusing on issues such as electricity tariffs, rising prices of essential commodities, political representation, and local rights has gained significant momentum in recent days. The organization was banned, numerous activists were arrested, and large-scale security forces were deployed to crush the agitation. Violent clashes resulted in loss of life, internet services were suspended, and serious questions regarding human rights were raised. These events have once again cast doubt on Pakistan's democratic system.

From India's perspective, this region has always been an integral part of its sovereign territory. Maharaja Hari Singh merged Jammu and Kashmir with India by signing a legal instrument of accession in October 1947. Subsequently, Pakistan seized a portion of this region through a tribal invasion. While a ceasefire brokered by the United Nations later established the Line of Control, this did not legitimize Pakistan's occupation. In 1994, the Indian Parliament unanimously passed a historic resolution reaffirming the stance that the entire Jammu and Kashmir region including the areas held by Pakistan is an integral part of India. This position remains a cornerstone of India's foreign policy to this day.

The significance of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir extends beyond mere territory; the region is highly sensitive from cultural, religious, strategic, and economic standpoints. The Sharda Peeth in the Neelam Valley is regarded as an ancient seat of learning for Indian culture. Scholars from across the Indian subcontinent once flocked there for study, yet today, this heritage stands neglected. Furthermore, there have been long-standing grievances regarding the imposition of Urdu and Punjabi influences on local languages and cultural identities. A struggle persists to preserve languages such as Pashoto, Shina, Hindko, Balti, and Pahari. History has repeatedly shown that when a region's language and culture are weakened, the historical identity of that society is also jeopardized.

Concerns are also consistently being raised regarding demographic changes in Gilgit-Baltistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. A sense of alienation is growing among locals, who feel relegated to a secondary status in political decision-making processes. Amidst this, the conflict over reserved seats in the legislative assembly has intensified in the run-up to the upcoming elections. Local citizens feel that decisions regarding their future are made in Islamabad, while they are merely presented with a façade of nominal autonomy. Consequently, a movement that began with economic grievances has now transformed into a struggle for political dignity and representation.

China's role in this entire equation is equally significant. Although the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is considered an economic lifeline for Pakistan, a substantial portion of it passes through territory claimed by India. For this reason, India has firmly opposed the project from the outset. By raising the issue of sovereignty, India has consistently articulated its stance on the international stage. While China's growing investment has heightened the region's strategic importance, there is little evidence to suggest that local citizens have reaped the expected economic benefits.

Following the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, India adopted a clearer and more assertive stance regarding Jammu and Kashmir. Subsequently, references to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan began to feature more prominently in India's official discourse. In the Indian Parliament, on diplomatic platforms, and in various government statements, it is consistently reiterated that this territory is an integral part of India. Consequently, India closely monitors political developments in the territories under Pakistan's control.

However, this issue cannot be viewed solely through the lens of nationalism. The residents of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir are, first and foremost, human beings. Ensuring their access to security, dignity, development, education, healthcare, and democratic rights is also a responsibility of the international community. The situation is further exacerbated by actions such as firing upon protesters, internet shutdowns, mass arrests, and the practice of equating dissent with terrorism. History has repeatedly demonstrated that suppression, rather than dialogue, is not a sustainable long-term solution for governance. The events unfolding in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir today are not merely a symbol of local discontent; they represent the struggle for self-respect waged by the people of that region. For India, this issue transcends a mere border dispute; it encompasses historical, cultural, and constitutional rights. Conversely, for the citizens living there, it is a question of living with dignity. Consequently, the times ahead will prove decisive for the region. While it is difficult to predict the direction the situation will take, one thing is certain: the hearts of the people cannot be won through the threat of the gun. Ultimately, the course of history aligns with the aspirations of the people. Developments in occupied Kashmir demonstrate that truth, no matter how long it is suppressed, cannot be buried forever. As the aspirations for justice, dignity, and self-respect among the people of that land intensify, so too will the pressure to find a definitive resolution to this issue.

Therefore, there is a need to view the developments in this region not merely through a strategic lens, but against the touchstone of human values and historical reality. History has repeatedly proven that the legitimate expectations of the people ultimately pave the way for change, and that very moment becomes the decisive turning point in any conflict.

Reform Linked MoUs signed with Manipur and Bihar under Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0

As a remarkable step towards sustainable, assured, and citizen-centric rural drinking water supply across India, reform-linked Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed today under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) 2.0 with two States (Manipur and Bihar).

The reform-linked MoU mandates a Gram Panchayat-led, service-based and community-centred model of rural water governance, aligned with the objectives of Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 and seeks to ensure that every rural household has access to drinking water supply in adequate quantity and of prescribed quality on a regular basis, through strengthened community participation (Jan water supply systems, thereby enhancing the living standards of rural communities contributing to long-term water security aligned with the national vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

The MoU with Manipur was signed in the presence of the Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri C.R. Patil, and Chief Minister of Manipur, Shri Yumnam Khemchand Singh.

For Bihar, the MoU signing was done in the presence of Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri C.R. Patil, and Minister of State, Dr. Raj Bhushan Choudhary and Shri Sanjay Kumar Singh, Minister (PHE) Bihar, during separate scheduled meetings. Senior officials from the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), including Shri Ashok K. K. Meena, Secretary, DDWS, Shri Kamal Kishore Soan, Additional Secretary & Mission Director, National Jal Jeevan Mission (NJJM), Joint secretary, and Director were present during the MoU signing. For Manipur, MoU was exchanged between D Senthil Pandiyan, Joint Secretary, NJJM, and Dr. Neil-inthang Teilien, Secretary to Chief Minister, Manipur in the presence of Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri C. R. Patil, Chief Minister of Manipur, Shri Yumnam Khemchand Singh, and Deputy Chief Minister (PHED), Manipur, Shri Losii Dikho.

Marking a pivotal moment in Centre-State collaboration, the MoU with State of Bihar was formally signed after Manipur. The meeting commenced in the presence of Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri C. R. Patil, Dr. Raj Bhushan Choudhary, Minister of State, Shri Sanjay Kumar Singh, Min-



ister (PHE) Bihar and other key officials from the State & DDWS.

The MoU was signed and exchanged by Shri D Senthil Pandiyan, Joint Secretary, NJJM, and Shri Rajesh Kumar, Principal Secretary, PHE Department, Bihar.

Addressing on the occasions, Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri C. R. Patil said that Jal Jeevan Mission, launched under the leadership of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has transformed rural drinking water supply across the country and reduced the drudgery of fetching water especially by women and girls. Under JJM 2.0, now the focus is on sustaining the infrastructures created under the Mission, functionality of tap connections, water quality, source sustainability, O&M, community ownership and regular monitoring as key priorities.

The Minister also stressed the need for water conservation, rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge, catchment area protection using Finance Commission and VB-G RAM G funds. He stressed community-based water quality monitoring and said Gram Panchayats, District Water and Sanitation Missions, State Water and Sanitation Missions and local communities must work together to ensure reliable drinking water services. He reiterated the Government of India's continued support to the State in achieving the Mission's objectives.

Addressing Manipur, he expressed confidence that the state would soon complete the remaining tap connections and join the group of States and Union Territories that have achieved universal rural tap water coverage. Appreciating the resilience shown by the State in continuing implementation despite difficult conditions, Shri Patil remarked that Manipur's

achievements would serve as an inspiring example of commitment to ensuring safe drinking water for every rural household.

To the state of Bihar, the Union Minister asked to ensure proper O&M, and said he is confident that Bihar will complete the remaining work with the same commitment and determination that has enabled it to achieve over 90 per cent coverage. The State's contribution will be important in realising the

works, policy reforms, sustainable funding mechanisms, and community participation. These measures, he said, would help transform the Mission from a government programme into a people-centric movement aimed at securing safe and reliable drinking water services for rural communities.

He appreciated the efforts of the Ministry of Jal Shakti in formulating the guidelines for JJM 2.0 and

achieving significant strides in expanding rural drinking water infrastructure and improving service delivery despite numerous geographical and socio-economic challenges in the state.

He assured that Bihar remains committed to working closely with the Government of India to achieve the shared goal of safe and sustainable drinking water for all.

In his opening remark during signing of MoU with



vision of Viksit Bharat-Viksit Bihar and ensuring improved quality of life for millions of citizens. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister of Manipur, Shri Yumnam Khemchand Singh said, it was a privilege to witness the signing of the Reform-Linked MoU between the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Government of Manipur under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) 2.0. He noted that the next phase of the mission represents a strategic shift from a primary focus on infrastructure creation to ensuring long-term, sustainable drinking water service delivery. He highlighted that JJM 2.0 places emphasis on service delivery, source sustainability, digital monitoring frame-

work, reiterated the State Government's full commitment to implementing the reform agenda and achieving the Mission's objectives for improving the quality of life and ensuring sustainable water security for all.

In his address, Shri Sanjay Kumar Singh, Minister PHE Department of Bihar, said that Bihar has remained firmly committed to ensuring safe and adequate drinking water for every rural household. Even before the launch of the Jal Jeevan Mission, the State Government initiated the ambitious 'Har Ghar Nal Ka Jal' programme in 2016. Under this initiative, an extensive rural water supply network has been developed. However, Central assistance has helped a lot in

Bihar, Shri Ashok K. K. Meena, Secretary, DDWS underscored that the MoU prioritises not just infrastructure setup of pipelines, but sustainable services managed at the grassroots level. He emphasised decentralisation and community ownership, with Gram Panchayats and Village Water & Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) being empowered to manage and operate in-village water supply systems. While stating the importance of the MoU signing with the State and UT, Shri Meena highlighted that the MoU is a shared commitment between the State/UT which ensures the upholding of JJM 2.0 guidelines in order to provide safe, secure and sustainable drinking

water to the rural households.

Emphasising the importance of institutional mechanisms for sustainable water service delivery, the Secretary stressed that District Water and Sanitation Mission (DWSM) meetings should be conducted regularly by all District Collectors. He noted that timely meetings would facilitate the preparation of Village Action Plans and support the certification of panchayats as capable institutions for managing rural water supply systems. The Secretary underlined that district administrations would play a crucial role in monitoring implementation, conducting periodic reviews, and extending necessary support to Gram Panchayats whenever required.

He also mentioned that this step is an initiative which aligns with the fulfillment of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Har Ghar Niranter Nal Se Jal vision.

During the MoU with Manipur, Shri Kamal Kishore Soan, AS&MD, NJJM, in his opening remarks, underscored the importance of Manipur in the development of the North-Eastern region and acknowledged the progress made by the State in the rural drinking water sector over the past two years.

He emphasised that the objective of the Jal Jeevan Mission goes beyond merely providing tap connections; it aims to ensure reliable access to safe and clean drinking water for the next 25-30 years. He noted that achieving this goal requires addressing existing gaps and challenges in water supply systems, strengthening infrastructure, and ensuring the sustainability of investments made under the mission. The Mission Director further highlighted the structural reforms being pursued under JJM 2.0, guided by the Union Minister for Jal Shakti, to strengthen long-term service delivery and water security. He expressed confidence that Manipur would actively advance these reforms and reiterated the Government of India's commitment to providing continuous technical support, capacity building, and handholding assistance to the State for the effective implementation of the Mission. Under JJM 2.0, 33 States/UTs out of 34 JJM States/UTs have already signed the MoU with DDWS, Government of India.

PMKVY: Building One of the World's Largest Skilling Ecosystems

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), under the leadership of Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education, Government of India, marks twelve years of Skills, Scale and Transformation, highlighting the growth of one of the world's largest skilling ecosystems and its contribution to India's journey towards Viksit Bharat 2047.

Over the past twelve years, the Ministry has built a comprehensive skilling ecosystem that integrates vocational education, industry-led training, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship development, digital public infrastructure and international workforce mobility into a unified national framework. Through sustained reforms, institutional strengthening and deep collaboration with industry, academia and state governments, Skill India has evolved into one of the world's largest and most diverse skilling ecosystems.

Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education, Government of India, said, "The journey of the last twelve years reflects India's growing recognition that

skills are among the most powerful enablers of opportunity, productivity and economic transformation. The Ministry has worked to create an ecosystem where skills are viewed as an integral part of learning, employability and lifelong growth, alongside formal education. As technologies reshape industries and the nature of work continues to evolve, our focus is on preparing India's youth not only for existing opportunities, but also for jobs and enterprises that will emerge in the years ahead.

Through stronger industry partnerships, digital innovation, entrepreneurship support and global mobility pathways, we are building a workforce that is confident, competitive and ready to contribute to India's development journey."

The Ministry's impact is visible across every stage of the skilling lifecycle. India's vocational training infrastructure has expanded significantly, with the number of Industrial Training Institutes growing from 9,776 in 2014 to more than 13,888 today. Together with National Skill Training Institutes, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras and Jan Shiksha Sansthan, these institutions have expanded access to quality skill development opportunities across the country.

The Ministry has also estab-

lished three Indian Institutes of Skills (IIS) in Gandhinagar, Mumbai and Kanpur, creating state-of-the-art centres of excellence to deliver industry-aligned, future-ready training.

Apprenticeship has emerged as one of the strongest bridges between education and employment. More than 56.08 lakh apprentices have been engaged since 2016, supported by reforms that have improved participation from both industry and youth while strengthening on-the-job learning opportunities.

The Ministry has also driven large-scale short-term skilling interventions through flagship programmes such as Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, under which more than 1.64 crore candidates have been trained. Simultaneously, entrepreneurship development initiatives led through the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) and the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE) have trained over 25 lakh beneficiaries under Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs), creating pathways for enterprise creation, self-employment and livelihood generation across urban, rural and aspirational districts.

A defining feature of the Ministry's transformation journey has been the creation of a digital-first

skilling ecosystem.

The Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH) has emerged as an integrated digital public infrastructure for skills, bringing together skilling, jobs, apprenticeships and entrepreneurship opportunities on a single platform. Today, more than 1.5 crore candidates are registered on SIDH, with over 1,000 courses available in 23 languages. Programmes such as SOAR (Skilling for AI Readiness) have further accelerated AI awareness and preparedness among learners and educators with 50+ AI Courses and Qualifications across sectors, recording over 4.5 lakh enrolments since launch across emerging technology domains.

India's excellence in skills has also been reflected on the global stage through its performance at WorldSkills competitions. Team India has steadily strengthened its standing among the leading nations, improving its global ranking from 29th in 2015 to 13th in 2024.

India's participation in IndiaSkills and WorldSkills has evolved into a national movement for skill excellence, inspiring youth to pursue world-class standards and showcase the capabilities of Indian talent on international platforms.

Recognising India's growing role as a global talent partner, the Ministry has also expanded its fo-

cus on international workforce mobility.

Through government-to-government partnerships, skill-based mobility agreements and the establishment of Skill India International Centres, India is creating trusted pathways for skilled professionals to access opportunities in global labour markets.

The Ministry's reform agenda continues to evolve in response to the changing world of work. Through initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs (PM-SETU), future skills programmes in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and emerging technologies, and stronger integration of skilling with education under the National Education Policy 2020, the Ministry is building a workforce prepared for the opportunities and challenges of the future.

As MSDE completes twelve years, its focus remains firmly on strengthening quality, expanding access, deepening industry partnerships, promoting entrepreneurship, accelerating apprenticeship adoption and positioning India as a global hub for skilled talent.

The achievements of the past decade provide a strong foundation for the next phase of India's growth story, powered by skills, innovation and human potential.

▶▶ MAHARASHTRA

Aryan Age | 05

Maha govt to act against cab aggregators over forced tips, extra charges

Kalyan : Maharashtra Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik has directed the Transport Commissioner to take action against app-based taxi and ride-hailing companies following complaints that passengers are being pressured to pay tips and additional charges.

The move comes after Shrikant Eknath Shinde raised the issue and sought immediate government intervention.

Over the past few days, several passengers have complained that drivers using app-based taxi platforms were demanding extra tips or payments after accepting rides. In many cases, rides were allegedly cancelled or passengers were subjected to inconvenience and harassment when such demands were



not met.

Expressing concern over the growing number of complaints, MP Shrikant Shinde had highlighted the issue on social media and urged the state govern-

ment to take prompt action against such practices.

Responding swiftly, Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik said that forcing passengers to pay tips is unfair and unacceptable. He

announced that the Transport Department would investigate the functioning of the concerned companies and take strict action wherever violations are found. Sarnaik also thanked MP

Shrikant Shinde for bringing the matter to the government's attention.

The minister further stated that the department is working on significant measures to curb arbitrary practices by app-based taxi and ride-hailing operators. He revealed that a new aggregator policy for the sector will be announced soon to ensure greater transparency, accountability and protection for passengers.

Shinde, who has consistently raised issues concerning commuter welfare, said the objective is to ensure that consumers receive fair, transparent and safe transportation services. The state government's prompt response is expected to provide relief to lakhs of passengers across Maharashtra.

Ex-Mrs Kerala contestant Harsha Sunny arrested at Mumbai Airport with 11.824 kg of hydroponic weed

Mumbai: Former Mrs Kerala contestant Harsha Sunny was arrested by the Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport after customs authorities allegedly recovered 11.824 kilograms of hydroponic weed concealed in her luggage, officials said.

The seizure has drawn significant attention owing to Harsha Sunny's public profile and the substantial quantity of narcotics allegedly involved. Authorities estimate the value of the contraband at approximately ₹11.82 crore in the illegal drug market.

According to officials, the narcotic substance was found packed in 12 vacuum-sealed packets hidden inside a trolley bag carried by the accused. The discovery was made following intelligence-based scrutiny and subsequent examination by customs personnel.

The arrest was carried out by the Air Intelligence Unit after Harsha arrived in Mumbai on a flight from



Bangkok on June 11. Her travel details had reportedly been flagged through the Advance Passenger Information System (APIS), prompting closer monitoring by officials. Based on the available information, customs officers subjected her to a personal search upon arrival. However, nothing incriminating was recovered during the physical examination.

Subsequently, officials inspected her checked-in luggage and examined the trolley bag she had brought

with her from Thailand. During the search, they allegedly discovered 12 vacuum-sealed packets containing a green leafy substance suspected to be a prohibited narcotic. Authorities then conducted preliminary testing using an NDPS field testing kit. The examination reportedly confirmed that the seized material was hydroponic weed, a high-grade form of cannabis cultivated under controlled conditions and known for its higher potency. Following the recovery and confirmation of the substance, Harsha Sunny was immediately taken into custody under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. She was later produced before a city court, which remanded her to judicial custody pending further investigation into the case and the circumstances surrounding the alleged smuggling attempt.

No merger proposal received from Congress, says NCP(SP)claims otherwise

Mumbai: The political landscape in Maharashtra witnessed renewed speculation and sharp differences in public messaging on Friday over the possibility of a merger between the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) and the Indian National Congress, with senior leaders from both sides offering conflicting accounts.

The debate emerged amid reports circulating over the past few days suggesting that discussions were underway regarding a potential formal union between the two parties, both of which are key constituents of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance. However, NCP (SP) State President Shashikant Shinde firmly rejected the speculation and categorically denied that any proposal concerning a merger had been exchanged between the two organisations. Speaking to reporters, Shinde said there was no basis in the reports being circulated in the media and maintained that no communication on the matter had taken place either from the Congress leadership or within his own party. "There is no truth in the reports being circulated. No such proposal has been received from the Congress, nor has there been any discussion regarding it within our party. Had such a proposal existed, the senior leadership would have certainly informed us," Shinde said. His remarks were viewed as an attempt to put an end to the intense political buzz that had gathered momentum over the previous two days regarding the future of the two opposition parties in Maharashtra.



Official position, senior NCP (SP) leader Ankush Kakade acknowledged that there was an ideological need for secular and progressive parties to work together in the present political environment.

Kakade said there was broad agreement among like-minded political forces on the necessity of protecting constitutional values and providing a democratic check on the ruling establishment.

At the same time, he clarified that ideological cooperation should not be interpreted as an indication that a formal merger process had begun between the two organisations. Speaking to reporters, Shinde said there was no basis in the reports being circulated in the media and maintained that no communication on the matter had taken place either from the Congress leadership or within his own party. "There is no truth in the reports being circulated. No such proposal has been received from the Congress, nor has there been any discussion regarding it within our party. Had such a proposal existed, the senior leadership would have certainly informed us," Shinde said. His remarks were viewed as an attempt to put an end to the intense political buzz that had gathered momentum over the previous two days regarding the future of the two opposition parties in Maharashtra.

Commuters suffer as train services hit on Mumbai's Harbour line

Mumbai: Local train services on Mumbai's Harbour Line were disrupted on Friday during the morning peak hours after a piece of cloth became entangled in an overhead electric (OHE) wire near Chembur, triggering a technical snag and affecting the movement of trains on one of the city's busiest suburban corridors.

According to railway officials, the incident led to interruptions in both up and down services on the Harbour Line, causing significant inconvenience to thousands of commuters travelling to workplaces, educational institutions and other destinations across

Mumbai. The disruption occurred at a time when the suburban railway network experiences one of its highest passenger volumes, resulting in overcrowding at stations and growing frustration among daily commuters. Officials said the cloth thrown onto the overhead equipment became lodged in the OHE wire, interfering with the power supply system that enables the operation of electric local trains. As a precautionary measure and to ensure passenger safety, railway authorities were compelled to regulate train movements until the obstruction could be removed and the affected

section inspected. The technical snag disrupted the normal schedule of several services operating on the Harbour Line, with multiple trains running behind schedule and creating a cascading effect on subsequent departures. Some train services were temporarily suspended while others were short-terminated or delayed, leading to extended waiting times for passengers at several stations along the route. Commuters reported crowded platforms and packed trains as people attempted to find alternative travel arrangements amid uncertainty regarding the restoration of normal services. The Har-

bour Line serves as a crucial transport link connecting various parts of Mumbai and Navi Mumbai, and even minor disruptions can have a substantial impact on the daily routine of lakhs of passengers. Railway technical staff and maintenance teams rushed to the affected spot near Chembur immediately after the problem was reported and initiated efforts to remove the cloth from the overhead wire. Officials said specialised personnel were engaged in carefully clearing the obstruction while ensuring that all safety protocols related to the high-voltage overhead system were strictly followed.

Sex determination racket: more doctors arrested in Shrirampur case

Ahilyanagar : Investigations conducted by the Loni Police in Maharashtra's Ahilyanagar district have uncovered what authorities describe as a large-scale illegal prenatal sex determination racket operating across multiple districts, including Pune, Nashik and Ahilyanagar.

The probe has so far led to the arrest of 21 individuals allegedly connected to the network, among them seven medical practitioners, highlighting the organised nature of the operation and raising concerns about the misuse of medical technology for unlawful purposes. According to investigators,

the racket is suspected to have functioned through an elaborate network involving doctors, intermediaries, diagnostic equipment operators. And other facilitators who allegedly helped conduct prohibited prenatal sex determination tests. Officials said the case came to light during investigations undertaken by the Loni Police, following specific intelligence inputs. As the inquiry progressed, police expanded the scope of their investigation beyond Ahilyanagar district, uncovering alleged links extending into Pune and Nashik districts.

Common Entrance Examination announced for Civil Services Preliminary Examination Training 2026-27

Mumbai: The Department of Higher Education, through the State Institute for Administrative Careers (SIAC), Mumbai, will conduct the Common Entrance Test (CET-2026-27) for admission to the Civil Services Preliminary Examination Training Programme for the academic year 2026-27. Announcing the initiative, Higher and Technical Education Minister Chandrakant Patil said the programme is aimed at preparing aspiring candidates for the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Civil Services Preliminary Examination through structured, full-time and free coaching provided by reputed state-run institutions.

The entrance examination will serve as the gateway for admission to these training programmes, which have been designed to sup-

port talented and deserving students aspiring to pursue careers in the country's premier civil services. Patil said the state government has consistently focused on strengthening opportunities for youth seeking to enter public service by providing quality guidance and academic support without imposing a financial burden on candidates. Under the Department of Higher Education, the training will be co-ordinated through the State Institute for Administrative Careers (SIAC), Mumbai, which has long been recognised as one of Maharashtra's leading institutions for civil services preparation.

In addition to SIAC, training facilities will also be available through the Indian Administrative Service Pre-Training Centres functioning in Nashik, Kolhapur, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar,

Amravati and Nagpur. Candidates selected through the CET will also have the opportunity to receive coaching at the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Competitive Examination Guidance Centre in Pune, which is operated by the (YASHADA). Another institution included under the initiative is the Savitribai Phule Academy in Pune, which is operated by the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation and has been contributing to the preparation of competitive examination aspirants. The minister stated that the objective of the programme is to identify promising candidates from different parts of Maharashtra and equip them with the knowledge, guidance and resources required to compete successfully in the highly challenging UPSC Civil Services Examination.

Retired banker donates Rs 25 lakh to Army welfare fund after wife's death

Nagpur : In a touching gesture of patriotism and selflessness, a retired banker from Nagpur has donated Rs 25.51 lakh to the Indian Army Central Welfare Fund after personal tragedy brought an end to a dream he had nurtured for years with his wife.

Shrikant Sahasrabudhe, now in his seventies, had spent a significant part of his working life carefully setting aside money with a singular aspiration — to travel the world with his wife after retirement and enjoy the phase of life they had long looked forward to together.

Like many couples who postpone personal ambitions while fulfilling professional and family responsibilities, the Sahasrabuddhes had planned to embark on an international tour once their working

years had concluded. Over the years, the retired banker diligently accumulated savings amounting to Rs 25.51 lakh to turn that shared dream into reality. The amount symbolised not merely financial planning but decades of hope, companionship and anticipation for a new chapter of life.

However, fate had different plans. Just six months before Sahasrabudhe's retirement from service, his wife passed away, leaving their cherished aspiration unrealised and depriving him of the opportunity to undertake the journey they had envisioned together.

The loss profoundly altered the purpose of the savings he had painstakingly built over the years. Rather than allowing the funds to remain tied to an unfulfilled dream, Sahasrabudhe re-

solved to dedicate them to a cause that would benefit others. Determined to ensure that the money served a meaningful purpose, he chose to contribute the entire amount to the Indian Army Central Welfare Fund, recognising the sacrifices made by the country's soldiers and their families. The donation was formally handed over during a brief event organised in Nagpur on Thursday, where Sahasrabudhe presented a cheque for Rs 25.51 lakh to Major General Navtej S. Sohal, General Officer Commanding, Uttar Maharashtra and Gujarat Sub Area. The occasion was marked by simplicity and dignity, reflecting the quiet generosity behind the contribution rather than any desire for public recognition.

Centre plans comprehensive PESO review amid manpower shortage concerns

Nagpur : The Centre is set to undertake a comprehensive review of the functioning and workforce strength of the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) amid growing concerns that persistent staff shortages are affecting the regulator's ability to efficiently discharge its responsibilities. The proposed exercise is expected to closely examine the organisational structure, staffing patterns and operational capabilities of PESO, which serves as the country's principal authority overseeing safety standards related to explosives, petroleum products, compressed gases and other hazardous substances. Officials familiar with the matter said the review has been initiated against the backdrop of increasing concerns regarding the regulator's ability to keep pace with expanding industrial activity involving potentially dangerous materials.

PESO plays a critical role in ensuring public and industrial safety through licensing, inspections, monitoring and enforcement. It regulates a wide range of

sectors, including explosives manufacturing, fuel storage and distribution, gas installations and the handling of hazardous materials. However, sources indicated that mounting vacancies and inadequate manpower have emerged as major challenges in recent years, placing additional pressure on the organisation's existing workforce. Officials noted that limited staffing has adversely affected field inspections, compliance monitoring and enforcement activities, even as industries dealing with hazardous substances continue to witness steady growth across the country.

The review is expected to assess the extent of vacant posts within the organisation and evaluate whether the current workforce is adequate to address the increasing regulatory burden. Inspection capacities at both regional and field levels are also likely to come under scrutiny, with the exercise seeking to identify gaps that may be hindering effective supervision and timely intervention. Administrative efficiency within PESO will form another important component

of the review. Authorities are expected to study existing procedures and determine whether operational processes can be streamlined to improve responsiveness and service delivery. The Centre is also likely to examine ways to reinforce field-level operations, enabling officials to undertake more frequent inspections and strengthen oversight in sectors involving high-risk activities. Measures aimed at reducing delays linked to manpower shortages are expected to be considered as part of the exercise, particularly in relation to licensing approvals, compliance verification and safety audits. Recruitment requirements are likely to feature prominently during the review. Officials said the possibility of filling long-pending vacancies and augmenting the workforce through fresh appointments may be explored to enhance institutional capacity. In addition to recruitment, organisational restructuring and redeployment of resources could also be examined to ensure that PESO remains equipped to meet evolving regulatory demands.

Shiv Sena's campaign against illegal liquor leads to major crackdown in Pune district

Pune: In the wake of the recent deaths and illnesses linked to the consumption of methanol-laced illicit country liquor in the Phugewadi, Dapodi and Hadapsar-Kalepadi areas, the Maharashtra Excise Department has intensified its crackdown on illegal liquor operations across Pune district.

The enforcement drive comes amid mounting public anger over the tragedy, which claimed several lives and left many others hospitalised, devastating families and exposing the deadly consequences of the illicit liquor trade.

The incident triggered widespread outrage among local residents and prompted renewed demands for strict action against those involved in the manufacture, distribution and sale of spurious liquor.

Adding pressure on the administration, Shiv Sena, led by the Eknath Shinde faction, launched an aggressive campaign demanding stringent measures against liquor mafias allegedly operating in various parts of

Pune. Shiv Sena Pune city chief Promod Nana Bhangire had publicly warned authorities to dismantle the network of illegal liquor traders and ensure exemplary punishment for those responsible for endangering innocent lives.

As public concern grew, the party intensified its agitation by moving beyond formal representations and organising direct protests against the illicit liquor trade. Party leaders maintained that the issue required immediate and decisive intervention from law enforcement agencies.

As part of the campaign, Shiv Sena workers conducted rallies in several areas of Pune city targeting illegal country liquor dens and outlets allegedly involved in the sale of spurious liquor.

In Hadapsar and adjoining localities, party activists reportedly identified and exposed illegal liquor establishments, drawing attention to what they described as a serious threat to public health and community safe-



ty. The Shiv Sena Women's Wing also joined the movement, organising demonstrations against illegal liquor vendors operating in different parts of the city. Women activists accused bootleggers of destroying families and livelihoods through their activities.

The protests received support from local residents, many of whom expressed concern over the growing menace of illicit liquor and the risks posed to vulnerable communities by unregulated alcohol production.

that extensive raids had been conducted at multiple locations, resulting in the registration of numerous offences and the seizure of large quantities of illegal liquor and property collectively worth crores of rupees.

The communication also noted that the enforcement drive is being carried out in coordination with local police authorities, the Food and Drug Administration and other concerned agencies to strengthen preventive measures and avoid the recurrence of similar incidents.

Commenting on the developments, Bhangire said that the methanol poisoning tragedy had exposed the dangers posed by illegal liquor networks operating in Pune district and underscored the urgent need for sustained action.

He claimed that Shiv Sena's aggressive campaign, including direct action against illegal liquor dens and protests spearheaded by the Women's Wing, had compelled the administration to intensify its enforcement efforts. Officials further said

Grammy winner Ricky Kej meets Bhutan King, hails happiness-first vision

Mumbai : Three-time Grammy Award-winning composer and Padma Shri awardee Ricky Kej has hailed Bhutan's unique development model centred on happiness and wellbeing after meeting Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck during a recent visit to the Himalayan kingdom.

Describing the interaction as a "huge honour", Kej said Bhutan offers a powerful reminder that the ultimate goal of development should be human and environmental wellbeing rather than economic growth alone.

Kej was in Bhutan to participate in the Bhutan Compassionate Leadership Forum alongside Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kailash Satyarthi.

During the visit, he also met Sonam Dechan Wangchuck and several leaders from government, civil society and academia.

"We often discuss economic growth and development, but Bhutan reminds us that the ultimate purpose is human and environmental wellbe-



ing. Bhutan genuinely attempts to place wellbeing and happiness at the centre of its national vision," Kej said.

He welcomed the partnership between Bhutan and the Satyarthi

Movement for Global Compassion, saying initiatives that promote compassion and social harmony are increasingly important in a divided world. The musician said the visit brought together royalty, Nobel lau-

reates, Supreme Court judges, bureaucrats, industry leaders, civil society representatives and students, all united by a shared commitment to building a more compassionate future. Apart from participating in the forum, Kej explored Bhutan's rich cultural heritage. He visited the Royal Academy of Performing Arts, where he interacted with faculty members and students on traditional music, cultural preservation and opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration. Kej also met Bhutanese musician and researcher Kheng Sonam Dorji at the Music of Bhutan Research Centre and praised efforts to preserve the country's ancient musical traditions and indigenous instruments. Expressing gratitude to former Bhutan Labour Minister Dorji Wangdi for facilitating several cultural exchanges, Kej said the experience reaffirmed the importance of compassion, sustainability and cultural preservation in shaping a better future.

'Gram Chikitsalay' Season 2 trailer released, to premiere on June 23

Mumbai : The trailer of the second season of comedy-drama series 'Gram Chikitsalay' has been unveiled, with the show set to premiere on Prime Video on June 23.

Produced by The Viral Fever (TVF), the Hindi-language series will stream in India and across more than 240 countries and territories worldwide.

The new season continues the journey of Dr Prabhat, who is determined to transform the primary health centre in Bhatkandi village into a model healthcare facility. However, he soon discovers that the village's challenges extend far beyond medicine and infrastructure.

Directed by Lalitam Tiwari, the series has been written by Vaibhav Suman and Shreya Srivastava, while Deepak Kumar Mishra and Arunabh Kumar have devel-



oped the show.

The cast includes Amol Parashar, Akash Makhija, Anandshwar Dwivedi, Vinay Pathak, Akansha Ranjan Kapoor and Garima Vikrant Singh, all reprising their roles. Actor Dinesh Lal Yadav joins the ensemble in a key role.

According to the trailer, Dr Prabhat finds himself con-

fronting local politics, resource shortages, bureaucratic hurdles and deeply rooted social attitudes as he attempts to improve healthcare services in the village.

Parashar said the new season takes his character through several unexpected twists while highlighting the realities of rural healthcare with humour and emotion.

'Governor' trending on BookMyShow, audience excitement soars ahead of release

Mumbai : Actor Manoj Bajpayee's upcoming film "Governor" has already become the talk of the town even before its release, as it continues to trend on BookMyShow and generate significant buzz among moviegoers. The growing anticipation surrounding the film suggests that audiences are eager to embrace a story that combines historical significance with compelling storytelling.

Set against the backdrop of India's 1991 economic crisis, the film revisits one of the most challenging periods in the country's post-Independence history. Through a dramatic retelling of real events, "Governor" seeks to shed light on the extraordinary efforts undertaken to steer the nation away from economic collapse.

At the heart of the narrative is the story of an unsung hero who played a crucial role during the crisis. Rather than focusing solely on political developments, the film highlights the contributions of an individual whose decisions behind the scenes proved instrumental in shaping the country's economic future.

Manoj Bajpayee portrays the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), a character entrusted with making critical decisions at a time when India was grappling with severe financial instability. The role demands both emotional depth and intellectual intensity, qualities for which the acclaimed actor is widely known.

The film explores the immense pressure faced by policymakers during the period, as dwindling foreign exchange reserves and mounting economic concerns threatened

to push the country into deeper uncertainty. It attempts to capture the urgency and gravity of those historic moments.

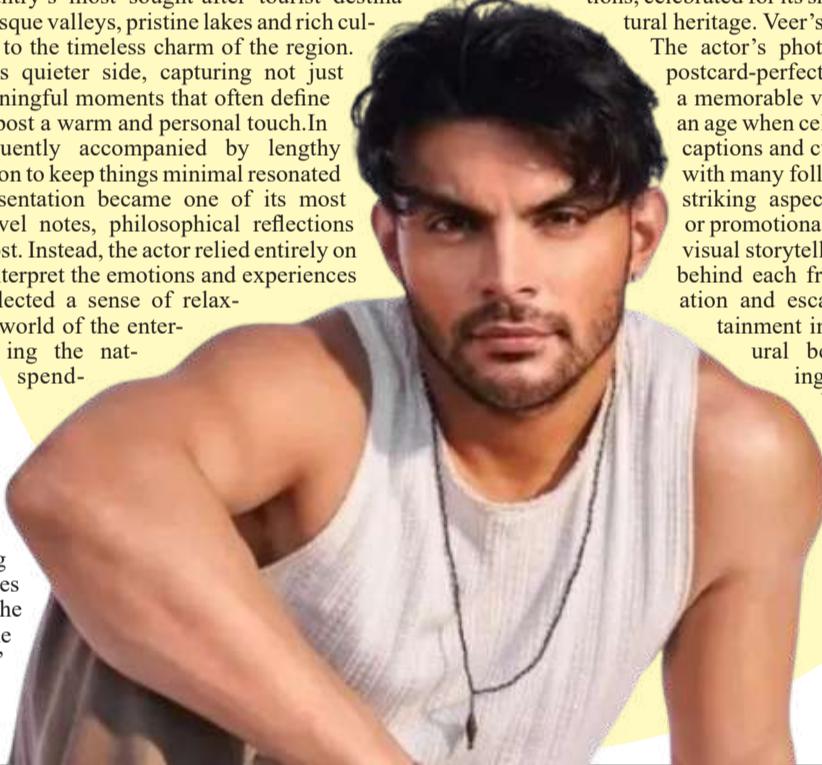
By focusing on the human dimension of a national crisis, "Governor" aims to make a complex economic subject accessible to a wider audience. The makers believe that the film will not only entertain viewers but also encourage them to understand an important chapter in India's economic journey.

To further increase audience interest, the producers have introduced a special initiative inspired by the spirit of the 1990s, the decade in which the story unfolds. The campaign seeks to create nostalgia while making the film more accessible to cinema lovers.

As part of the promotional offer, tickets are being made available at prices starting from just ₹50. Audiences can avail themselves of the discount by using the code "Governor90" while booking tickets through eligible platforms.

Veer Pahariya shares picturesque moments from Kashmir getaway

Mumbai : Actor Veer Pahariya gave fans a glimpse into his recent getaway to Kashmir by sharing a series of photographs on social media that captured the beauty, tranquility and memorable experiences from the trip. Keeping things simple and understated, the young actor captioned the post with just one word — "Kashmir." Despite the brevity of the caption, the photographs themselves painted a vivid picture of the scenic landscapes and cherished moments from his journey. The images featured Veer soaking in the breathtaking beauty of the Kashmir Valley, surrounded by majestic mountains, open skies and lush natural surroundings. The photographs reflected the calm and serenity that have long made the region one of India's most admired travel destinations. Several pictures also highlighted the actor enjoying quality time with his friends during the trip. Rather than presenting carefully staged moments, the photographs appeared candid and spontaneous, offering followers an intimate glimpse into his travel experiences. What stood out in the post was its effortless authenticity. Instead of focusing on a single dramatic image or a glamorous travel narrative, Veer chose to share a collection of moments that together documented the spirit of the entire journey. The snapshots showcased everything from scenic views and peaceful landscapes to laughter-filled interactions with companions. The absence of elaborate storytelling allowed the visuals to speak for themselves. For years, Kashmir has remained among the actor's favourite destinations, celebrated for its snow-capped mountains, picturesque valleys, pristine lakes and rich cultural heritage. Veer's post once again drew attention to the actor's photographs highlighted Kashmir's postcard-perfect scenery but also the small, a memorable vacation. This approach gave an age when celebrity social media posts are captions and curated narratives, Veer's de- with many followers. The simplicity of the striking aspects. There were no detailed or promotional undertones attached to the visual storytelling, allowing audiences to behind each frame. The photographs re- ation and escape from the fast-paced tainment industry. Whether admir- ural beauty around him or ing time with friends, Veer appeared to em- brace the slower rhythm of life that Kashmir often offers visitors.



Hrithik Roshan to make a guest appearance in Rajnikanth's 'Jailer 2'

Mumbai : Hrithik Roshan is reportedly set to make a special cameo appearance in the upcoming film "Jailer 2", creating major excitement across Indian cinema as it brings him together on screen with superstar Rajnikanth after nearly four decades. According to reports, this collaboration marks a long-awaited reunion for the two actors, who last shared screen space in the 1986 film "Bhagwaan Dada", where Hrithik Roshan appeared as a child artist alongside Rajnikanth.

The cameo deal is said to have been finalised after multiple rounds of discussions, with Hrithik Roshan formally giving his consent to join the high-profile project.

As per production planning, the actor is expected to shoot his portions on June 22 and June 23 in Chennai, where large-scale sets are being prepared for his entry sequence.

The makers are reportedly designing a completely new and never-before-seen look for Hrithik Roshan, with multiple look tests planned ahead of the shoot to finalise his on-screen avatar.

Sources indicate that his cameo will not be a simple appearance but a high-octane sequence, mounted on a grand scale and designed to match the film's mass-action aesthetic.

In the storyline, his character is expected to play a crucial role at a turning point in the



narrative, assisting Rajnikanth's character and pushing the plot forward in a significant way.

The collaboration is particularly notable for fans as Hrithik Roshan had previously expressed admiration for Rajnikanth and often recalled his experience working in "Bhagwaan Dada".

"Jailer 2" is directed by Nelson Dilipkumar and produced under the banner of Sun Pictures, which is backing the ambitious sequel on a massive scale.

The film is expected to feature several surprise appearances from major Indian film stars, continuing the trend set by its predecessor of star-studded cameos.

Reports suggest that actors such as Mohanlal, Shiva Rajkumar, Vijay Sethupathi and Mithun Chakraborty may also appear in special roles, adding to the film's pan-India appeal.

Alongside Rajnikanth in a central role, the film also features SJ Suryah, Ramya Krishnan, Vidya Balan and Yogi Babu in key supporting characters.

The inclusion of Hrithik Roshan is being seen as one of the most significant highlights of the film's production, given his limited appearances in South Indian cinema so far.

Industry observers believe this cameo could further strengthen the growing collaboration between Bollywood and South Indian film industries, which have increasingly embraced pan-India storytelling. The film is currently targeting a September 2026 release, and anticipation continues to build as more details about its scale, cast and storyline emerge.

'Welcome to the Jungle' trailer out

Mumbai : The makers of the upcoming comedy entertainer "Welcome to the Jungle" have unveiled the film's much-awaited trailer, offering audiences a glimpse into a chaotic world packed with humour, action, nostalgia and one of the largest ensemble casts seen in recent Bollywood cinema. Clocking in at four minutes and 16 seconds, the trailer introduces viewers to an adventure that appears to blend the classic elements of the masala entertainer with modern comic sensibilities. From larger-than-life action sequences to rapid-fire jokes, the preview promises an out-and-out family entertainer. The trailer opens with a team embarking on a mission to locate a yesteryears' superstar, portrayed by Akshay Kumar. Once a celebrated figure, the character is shown grappling with a difficult phase in his career after experiencing a string of unsuccessful films. This premise sets the stage for a series of unpredictable events, drawing multiple characters into an unusual journey filled with confusion, misunderstandings and comic misadventures. However, the trailer carefully avoids revealing too much about the central plot. Instead of focusing heavily on the narrative, the preview prioritises entertainment value, introducing its numerous characters through energetic songs, lively background music and a steady stream of humorous situations designed to keep audiences en-



gaged. Akshay Kumar's trademark comic timing emerges as one of the trailer's strongest highlights. Having delivered several memorable performances in the comedy genre over the years, the actor appears to return to familiar territory with confidence and ease. The interactions among the ensemble cast also stand out, with the chemistry between the actors contributing significantly to the trailer's appeal. The film seems to rely heavily on collective energy rather than any single protagonist dominating the proceedings. Several scenes featuring Ravenna Tandon, Aftab Shivdasani, Kiku Sharda and other performers hint at the film's commitment to delivering laughter through quirky situations and exaggerated character dynamics. Their presence adds to the nostalgic charm associated with classic Bollywood comedies. Despite being marketed primarily as a comedy, the trailer incorporates large-scale action elements. Helicopters, explosions, chase sequences and danger-

ous jungle adventures feature prominently throughout the preview. Yet, almost every action-packed moment concludes with a humorous punchline, visual gag or unexpected twist. This balancing act between thrills and comedy appears to be a de-

fining characteristic of the film's overall tone. The trailer also evokes memories of old-school Bollywood entertainers where music, comedy, action and drama coexisted seamlessly within a single narrative. Its unapologetically extravagant style is likely to resonate with audiences seeking escapist entertainment. For fans, one of the biggest attractions of "Welcome to the Jungle" is undoubtedly its star-studded cast. Bringing together performers from different generations and comedic traditions, the film promises a unique cinematic experience built around ensemble storytelling. Directed by Ahmed Khan, the film boasts an impressive line-up featuring Akshay Kumar, Disha Patani, Jacqueline Fernandez, Arshad Warsi, Jackie Shroff, Paresh Rawal,

Ravenna Tandon and Lara Dutta in prominent roles. The ensemble further includes veteran actress Farida Jalal, comedy legends Johnny Lever and Rajpal Yadav, along with Shreyas Talpade, Tusshar Kapoor, Krushna Abhishek, Kiku Sharda, Daler Mehndi and Aftab Shivdasani, among several others playing pivotal characters. The sheer number of familiar faces assembled in one project has become one of the film's major talking points. Audiences who grew up watching many of these actors in iconic comedy roles may find the nostalgic factor particularly appealing. Mounted on a grand scale by producers Firoz A. Nadiadwala, Rakesh Dang and Vedant Vikas Bali, the film appears to spare no effort in delivering spectacle alongside humour. The production values showcased in the trailer suggest a visually ambitious entertainer. The "Welcome to the Jungle" trailer succeeds in grabbing attention through its fast-paced editing, comic chaos and star power. Without revealing its major twists, it offers just enough intrigue to generate curiosity about the story while assuring viewers that laughter remains at the heart of the cinematic experience.

Shivangi Joshi roped in for 'Lock Upp' season 2



Mumbai : Popular television actress Shivangi Joshi is reportedly set to join the contestant line-up of the much-anticipated second season of the reality show "Lock Upp", which is preparing for a comeback with a new platform, refreshed format and an expanded roster of celebrity participants.

Widely recognised for her portrayal of Naira Singhania in the long-running television drama "Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai", Shivangi has remained one of the most beloved faces on Indian television. Her reported inclusion has generated excitement among fans eager to see a different side of the actress in a reality show environment.

According to reports, Joshi is expected to be among the contestants entering the controversial reality series, although the makers are yet to make an official announcement confirming her participation. The film a l

contestant list is still being worked out.

The upcoming season marks a major transition for the franchise as "Lock Upp" shifts from its original streaming home, MX Player, to Netflix. The move is expected to introduce the reality show to a broader global audience while bringing several changes to its overall presentation.

Production work for the new season is likely to begin shortly, with preparations already underway behind the scenes. The revamped edition promises a fresh approach while retaining the drama and entertainment that made the inaugural season a talking point.

One of the biggest changes in the new season is the introduction of Riteish Deshmukh and Farah Khan as the show's 'jailers'. Their addition is expected to bring a distinct flavour to the format, combining Riteish's wit and Farah's trademark candidness.

Netflix recently unveiled the first promotional teaser for "Lock Upp" Season 2, creating anticipation among viewers. However, the promo stopped short of revealing the names of contestants who will eventually enter the high-profile reality competition.

If Shivangi Joshi's participation is confirmed, this would mark her second stint in the reality television space. The actress previously showcased her adventurous side in "Kha-

tron Ke Khiladi" Season 12.

Hosted by filmmaker Rohit Shetty, the stunt-based reality show tested contestants through physically demanding tasks and challenging situations. Shivangi's appearance on the programme earned appreciation from viewers who admired her determination and resilience.

Apart from her reality television outings, Shivangi has remained actively engaged with scripted projects. The actress recently completed filming a schedule for "Heartbeats" Season 2 in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

In the series, she essays the role of a medical intern, allowing audiences to witness her in a character-driven narrative quite different from the glamorous image often associated with celebrity reality shows. Her reported participation in "Lock Upp" would therefore offer fans an opportunity to see her unfiltered personality outside the framework of fictional characters. Reality television often reveals contestants' emotions, opinions and interpersonal dynamics in a way scripted projects cannot. The first season of "Lock Upp" premiered in February 2022 and quickly attracted attention for its unconventional format and headline-making controversies. Hosted by actress Kangana Ranaut, the show became one of the most discussed digital reality programmes of its time.

Indian Men's & Women's Hockey teams set for a fortnight of global action

New Delhi: Indian fans are set for an action-packed fortnight as both the Indian Men's Hockey Team and the Indian Women's Hockey Team take centre stage on the international circuit, offering supporters a rare opportunity to witness elite-level hockey almost every day from June 14 to June 28.

The Indian Men's and Women's Teams will be competing simultaneously across Europe and

New Zealand, creating an almost uninterrupted stretch of international hockey for fans to enjoy.

Whether it is the men taking on World No. 1 Netherlands, reigning world champions Germany, arch-rivals Pakistan and World No. 4 England in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2025-26, or the women chasing promotion back to the Pro League at the FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup New Zealand 2025-26 in Auckland, there will be no shortage of storylines, stakes and spectacle. The timing could not be more significant. With the FIH Hockey World Cup and Asian Games on the horizon, the upcoming fixtures offers a fascinating glimpse into the teams' structure ahead of two big events. For coaches, it is an opportunity to test combinations. For players, it is a chance to cement their place in the plans for the sport's biggest



stages. For fans, it is an opportunity to witness two Indian teams chasing success in different continents.

The men's team begins its European campaign against the Netherlands in Rotterdam before taking on Germany in back-to-back encounters. Both nations are widely considered among the favourites for this year's World Cup, and the challenge couldn't have come at a better time as the Indian Team prepares to end its long wait for a World Cup title.

Adding another layer of intrigue, the fixtures in the Netherlands will allow the Indian squad to familiarise itself with conditions in one of the host nations for the 2026 FIH Hockey World Cup, which will have Belgium as the second host.

Then comes one of the most anticipated chapters

in world hockey.

India and Pakistan will renew their historic rivalry — on June 23 and June 26 — in London, where India will also face hosts England. Few fixtures in international sport carry the emotion, history and anticipation of an India-Pakistan contest, and fans can expect both encounters to command global attention.

While the men battle Europe's elite in the FIH Pro League, the Indian Women's Hockey Team will have a major objective of its own.

Competing at the FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup in Auckland, the women will be chasing

the ultimate prize — a place in next season's FIH Hockey Pro League. Every match carries significance, and a strong performance could provide the perfect

springboard ahead of the upcoming World Cup.

The tournament also presents a valuable opportunity for the squad to continue its upward trajectory against quality international opposition and build momentum heading into a crucial period for the team.

With high stakes, global rivalries and World Cup build-up all converging at the same time, June promises to be one of the most exciting periods on the Indian hockey calendar.

Former Indian hockey legend Rupinder Pal Singh believes fans are in for a memorable fortnight.

"As players, these are the periods we look forward to because every match carries meaning. For fans, it's even more special because there will be Indian hockey on their screens almost every day. The men's

team will be tested against some of the very best teams in the world, while the women's team has an opportunity to take a major step forward through the Nations Cup. It's a fantastic showcase of where Indian hockey stands today and where it wants to go tomorrow," he said.

Former Indian Women's Team captain Rani echoed the sentiment and said, "It's rare to have both Indian teams competing simultaneously at such important tournaments. The women have a chance to fight for promotion to the Pro League, while the men will be challenging the strongest teams in world hockey. For supporters, it means nearly two weeks of continuous Indian hockey. We hope fans rally behind both teams because their support gives players immense confidence and motivation."

From battle for promotion in Auckland to World Cup auditions in Rotterdam and blockbuster rivalries in London, the stage is set.

India's FIH Men's Pro League games will be broadcast on Star Sports select 1, select 2, and Star Sports Khel and will be live streamed on JioHotstar, while the Indian Women's Hockey team's FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup matches will be live-streamed on Watch.Hockey for free.

PV Sindhu leads India's World Championships charge

Kuala Lumpur: Former world champion PV Sindhu will spearhead India's challenge at the BWF World Championships 2026 in New Delhi after the Badminton World Federation (BWF) finalised the qualification list for the prestigious tournament scheduled to be held from August 17 to 23.

The upcoming edition of the World Championships assumes added significance for Indian badminton as the country prepares to host one of the sport's biggest events. Competing on home soil, the Indian contingent will look to make the most of familiar conditions and strong crowd support. A total of 10 Indian players and pairs have secured qualification across the five disciplines, reflecting the country's growing depth and competitiveness in international badminton. The qualification list was prepared on the basis of the world rankings published on April 28. Sindhu, one of India's most decorated badminton players, earned her place in the women's singles draw as India's host representative under the BWF qualification rules. The two-time Olympic medalist remains one of the country's biggest medal hopes at the tournament. The 30-year-old created history by winning the women's singles gold medal at the 2019 World Championships, becoming the first Indian to achieve the feat. She had earlier claimed silver medals at the global event in 2017 and 2018, un-



derlining her consistency on the world stage. The BWF qualification list comprises 64 players each in the men's and women's singles categories, while 48 pairs have qualified in each of the three doubles disciplines. The format ensures representation from leading badminton nations while maintaining global diversity. India will have two direct entrants in every category at the World Championships, highlighting the nation's strengthening position in international badminton and its ability to consistently produce elite players across disciplines. In the men's singles competition, Lakshya Sen and Ayush Shetty secured qualification. Lakshya, who has been one of India's most prominent male shuttlers in recent years, will seek to convert his experience at major events into a strong performance, while Ayush Shetty's qualification marks another important milestone in his emerging career. Sindhu will be joined in the women's singles

event by promising youngster Unnati Hooda. Considered one of the brightest prospects in Indian badminton, Unnati will have an opportunity to test herself against some of the world's best players on one of the sport's biggest stages. India's strongest-ranked entry comes in men's doubles, where the celebrated pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty qualified fourth overall. The duo has established itself among the world's leading combinations and will be viewed as serious contenders for a podium finish. The country's second men's doubles berth was secured by Hariharan Amsakarunan and MR Arjun. Their qualification reflects India's improving strength in doubles events, an area that has witnessed considerable progress in recent years. In women's doubles, Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand will lead India's campaign after qualifying as the 30th-ranked pair among the entrants.

Canada ready for historic FIFA World Cup opener

Toronto: Canada is bracing for a historic football moment as the 2026 FIFA World Cup opened on Thursday. This year's tournament marks the first time that Canada will host matches for the FIFA World Cup, with the team set to play its opener on home soil against Bosnia and Herzegovina on Friday.

In an official statement released on Thursday, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney declared, "Canada is ready for the beautiful game."

Carney noted that Canada first played at the 1986 World Cup in Mexico, and that football has flourished across the country since then.

The prime minister highlighted that his government has made an investment of over 750 million Canadian dollars to support the sport, projecting that the tournament is expected to create nearly 25,000 jobs and inject approximately two billion Canadian dollars into the na-

tional economy, according to Xinhua.

At a pre-match press conference held in Toronto on Thursday, Canada head coach Jesse Marsch, accompanied by vice-captain Stephen Eustaquio, expressed the team's readiness and focus.

Addressing the pressure of the tournament opener and the atmosphere of playing at home, Marsch said, "The pressure is real, but it stems from our deep understanding of the responsibility we carry representing our nation."

"We want to show the world that Canadian players are not just 'good people' - generous and kind - but also intense and fierce competitors," Marsch added.

Eustaquio, a veteran midfielder with Portuguese heritage, provided a light-hearted yet patriotic response when asked to name the favourites for the title. "Canada. Of course, also Portugal. Canada first," he said.

Mexico, South Korea win World Cup openers

Mexico City: Mexico and South Korea began with victories on an absorbing opening day of the FIFA World Cup.

The tournament kicked off in front of 80,000 fans at Mexico City Stadium with a rousing opening ceremony that included live performances from Shakira, Burna Boy and J Balvin on Thursday.

But the main attraction for the heavily partisan crowd was the football, and the home side didn't disappoint as Julian Quinones and Raul Jimenez scored in each half to secure a 2-0 win over a South African side that finished with nine men.

Quinones capitalized on a turnover to give his side an early lead before Sphethelo Sithole received a red card for bringing down Brian



Gutierrez. Jimenez nodded in Mexico's second goal and South Africa suffered a further blow when Themba

Zwane was also sent off for a high challenge on Roberto Alvarado. Mexico also finished the match a man down

after defender Cesar Montes was dismissed for an ugly challenge on Khuliso Mudau.

"We were superior but the score did not reflect that," Mexico manager Javier Aguirre told reporters, admitting the occasion overwhelmed some of his players. "Things got a little complicated but we relaxed and we did start with a win. Can we make it better? Of course." "When we looked at the stadium, it was incredible. We got a little bit of stage fright." South Africa manager Hugo Broos was encouraged by his team's performance, despite acknowledging Mexico's superiority. "If we show the same mentality and play the same way as today, I'm sure we will have great results in the next two games," he said.

Argentina reclaim top spot in FIFA Men's World Ranking

Zurich (Switzerland): Argentina (1st, up 2), the reigning world champions, will begin their title defence as the world's top-ranked team, with the June FIFA/Coca-Cola Men's World Ranking published just hours before the biggest-ever FIFA World Cup gets under way. Following a series of pre-FIFA World Cup friendlies that marked the second period in which the FIFA/Coca-Cola Men's World Ranking was updated in real time during international matches, Argentina surged back to the summit after victories in both their warm-up fixtures, against Iceland and Honduras. They replace France (3rd, down 2), who slipped behind after losing to Cote d'Ivoire before beating Northern Ireland, and Spain, who were held to a draw by Iraq and then beat Peru. Further down the top ten, Morocco (7th, up 1) continue their rise, reaching their highest-ever position since

the FIFA/Coca-Cola Men's World Ranking was introduced in August 1993. Including so, they overtake the Netherlands (8th, down 1), whilst elsewhere in the top 20, Mexico and Uruguay move above Senegal (15th, down 1) and the USA, with Iran entering the top 20. Hungary (39th, up 3), Chile and China PR are the biggest climbers in the top 100, with Serbia (41st, down 4), Mali and Benin registering the biggest drops. Outside the top 100, Lebanon and Bhutan suffer the biggest drops. The FIFA/Coca-Cola Men's World Ranking will also serve as the tiebreaker, according to the Competition Regulations, to confirm the ranking within the group of two or more teams at the end of group stage and to determine which eight teams are the best third-placed teams to advance to the Round of 32 if multiple third-ranked teams are still tied after applying the criteria in steps 1 and 2.

NZ favoured against WI, Ireland ahead of Scotland

Southampton: Defending champions New Zealand Women will begin their ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 campaign against West Indies Women in a high-profile Group clash at The Rose Bowl, Southampton on Saturday, June 13, with the White Ferns entering as strong favourites.

New Zealand hold a clear psychological and statistical edge, having won all of their last five T20I meetings against West Indies Women. The reigning champions also bring a settled and in-form core led by all-round star Melie Kerr, who continues to dominate with both bat and ball, supported by experienced campaigners Sophie Devine and Suzie Bates.

West Indies Women, however, arrive with genuine match-winners capable of changing the game in a matter of overs. Captain Hayley Matthews remains their key pillar, contributing heavily with both bat and ball, while Deandra Dottin's power-hitting and Stafanie Taylor's experience add depth to their batting order. Their bowling attack, led by Chinelle Henry and Afy Fletcher, will look to exploit



English conditions with early movement and spin variation.

The Rose Bowl surface is expected to assist seamers early due to humidity and breeze, before becoming more batting-friendly. Historically, the venue has produced first-innings scores around 148, with teams batting first winning a majority of recent matches. A total in the 150-160 range is likely to be competitive.

Winning prediction: New Zealand Women hold the edge due to superior balance, consistency, and dominance in the head-to-head record, but West Indies' explosive batting lineup keeps

them in contention if they strike early.

Scotland Women vs Ireland Women (Emirates Old Trafford, Manchester)

Ireland Women enter their opener as slight favourites against Scotland Women, backed by stronger batting depth and recent dominance in head-to-head meetings. Gaby Lewis, Orla Prendergast, and Amy Hunter lead Ireland's batting unit, with Prendergast arriving in strong touch after a productive Tri-Series, adding stability and aggressive intent in the middle order.

Ireland's biggest advantage lies in their all-round balance. Prendergast and

Orla aside from batting also provide crucial wickets, while Arlene Kelly leads a disciplined pace attack capable of exploiting early swing at Old Trafford. Cara Murray's leg-spin offers control through the middle overs, which could be decisive if conditions slow down later in the innings.

Scotland Women will look to counter with their own experienced core, led by Kathryn Bryce and Sarah Bryce, who are expected to anchor the innings and accelerate in the middle overs. However, their success will largely depend on how well they handle Ireland's new-ball attack and whether their middle order can resist pressure in key phases of the game.

The Old Trafford surface is expected to be balanced, with early assistance for seamers under overcast skies before settling into a good batting track. Teams winning the toss are likely to bowl first, targeting early breakthroughs before chasing under improving conditions.

Overall, Ireland's superior depth and recent consistency give them a narrow but clear advantage.

France settles into Boston base ahead of World Cup campaign

Boston: France held its first training session in Boston at Bentley University, with Kylian Mbappe, Ousmane Dembele and Michael Olise all taking part.

After having arrived in Boston on Wednesday, France kicks off its 2026 FIFA World Cup campaign against Senegal in New Jersey on June 16, before facing Iraq in Philadelphia on June 22 and then taking

on Norway at Boston Stadium in Foxborough four days later. The

team is working to adapt to the time difference and its new surroundings.

"I think it varies from person to person; some people have more trouble adjusting quickly than others. I think it might take a day, two, or three to adjust," goalkeeper Brice Samba said when asked about jet lag. "Starting

yesterday, we started following the American schedule when it comes to meals, so little by little things will fall into place and we'll be adjusted to life here."

Defender Maxence Lacroix said he was impressed by the team's base in Boston. "It's unbelievable. We are really happy to be here. It's going to be a beautiful adventure for us. And yeah, like we say, we are ready to play,"

Lacroix said, according to Xinhua. "I think we have to take it game by game. We have a really good team, of course, but we also have good opponents. In this World Cup, you have the best players in the world and the best teams. So we have to stay focused on ourselves and what we have." Lacroix said appearing at the World Cup fulfilled a long-held ambition. "It's a big dream.

Ski mountaineering body welcomes proposed expansion at 2030 Winter Olympics

Geneva: The International Ski Mountaineering Federation (ISMF) has welcomed a proposal by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to expand ski mountaineering's presence at the 2030 Olympic Winter Games to be held in the French Alps, describing the move as a significant step forward in the sport's Olympic journey.

The proposal was approved by the IOC Executive Board on Wednesday and recommends the inclusion of five ski mountaineering events in the competition programme for the 2030 Winter Olympics. The recommendation will now be placed before the IOC Session for final approval later this month.

If ratified, the French Alps 2030 Olympic programme will feature men's individual, women's individual, men's

sprint, women's sprint and mixed relay events in ski mountaineering. The expanded schedule would increase both the visibility and competitive scope of the discipline on the Olympic stage.

The proposal is set to be considered at the 146th IOC Session, which is scheduled to take place on June 24 and 25. A positive vote by IOC members would formally confirm the enhanced role of ski mountaineering at the Games.

The announcement represents another milestone for a sport that is only beginning its Olympic chapter. Ski mountaineering is set to make its Olympic debut at the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Games, marking the first time athletes in the discipline will compete for Olympic medals.

At Milano Cortina 2026, a total of

36 athletes are expected to compete in three medal events: men's sprint, women's sprint and mixed relay. These events were selected to introduce the sport to Olympic audiences through fast-paced and spectator-friendly formats.

In its statement issued on Thursday, the ISMF said the proposal for French Alps 2030 reflects the natural evolution of the sport's Olympic programme. The federation noted that the addition of the individual events would provide a more complete representation of ski mountaineering. According to the ISMF, the proposed individual events would showcase many of the traditional qualities that define the discipline, including endurance, technical expertise and the ability to navigate demanding alpine terrain.

BSE Sensex		Nifty 50		Nifty 500		Nifty Next 50		Nifty 100		Nifty Bank		Nifty Midcap 100	
Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change
75,527.95	2.30%	23,622.90	1.99%	22,599.80	2.19%	69,998.20	2.37%	24,602.25	2.06%	56,814.80	2.97%	60,768.10	2.43%
Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open
73,832.55	74,709.27	23,161.60	23,412.55	22,114.45	22,376.45	68,378.75	69,318.20	24,104.70	24,378.90	55,176.75	55,934.10	59,325.40	60,115.85
High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
75,608.02	74,453.39	23,645.35	23,313.90	22,618.70	22,295.15	70,080.95	68,947.40	24,625.50	24,271.70	56,867.10	55,726.55	60,829.15	59,833.80

Top Gainers

Company	Current	% Gain
Shriram Finance	954.95	7.75
Bajaj Finance	918.30	5.49
Larsen	4,049.30	4.85
Interglobe Avi	4,709.70	4.60
Titan Company	4,184.00	3.95

Top Losers

Company	Current	% Loss
Nestle	1,375.70	-3.29
ONGC	246.20	-2.53
Tech Mahindra	1,429.20	-2.45
SBI Life Insura	1,706.00	-0.76
TATA Cons. Prod	1,100.70	-0.71

Commodities

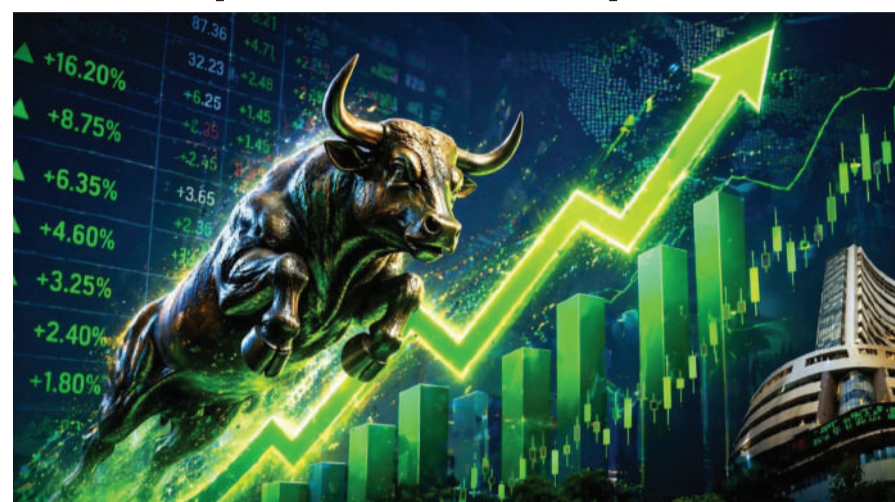
Commodity	Price	Change (%)
Gold Aug 05	150,550.00	1,618.00 1.09
Silver Jul 03	243,481.00	3,828.00 1.60
Crudeoil Jun 18	8,094.00	-250.00 -3.00
Naturalgas Jun 25	292.40	-2.00 -0.68

Retail inflation rose to 3.93 percent in May

New Delhi: India's retail inflation rose to 3.93 per cent in May, up from 3.48 per cent in April, according to government data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), indicating a moderate uptick in overall price pressures. The data shows that food inflation during May stood at 4.78 per cent on a year-on-year (Y-o-Y) basis, reflecting continued pressure on household budgets, particularly in essential consumption categories. Rural and urban inflation rates also remained elevated, with rural inflation recorded at 4.85 per cent, while urban inflation stood slightly lower at 4.66 per cent. This indicates that price increases were broadly spread across both segments, with a marginally higher impact in rural areas. The Ministry noted that housing inflation for May stood at 2.12 per cent (provisional), highlighting a relatively stable trend in housing-related costs compared to volatile food prices. The corresponding housing inflation rates were 2.73 per cent in rural areas and 1.91 per cent in urban regions. According to official data, several essential and commonly consumed items helped moderate inflationary pressure. The top items recording comparatively low inflation included potato, peas, motor car, jeep, cumin, motor cycle and scooter. These categories either saw stable prices or relatively slower increases compared to other commodity groups, contributing to a partial balancing effect on the overall inflation basket. On the other hand, certain food and commodity items witnessed higher inflation during the month, reflecting uneven price movements across different consumption segments. Among the items that experienced higher inflation were silver jewellery, tomato, gold, diamond and platinum jewellery, ginger, raisin and monacca, indicating strong price pressure in both food perishables and high-value commodities. Tomato and ginger, in particular, are known for seasonal price volatility, often influenced by supply chain disruptions, weather conditions and agricultural output cycles.

Sensex surges 1,700 points, Nifty ends above 23k amid hopes of US-Iran peace deal

Mumbai: Indian benchmark indices witnessed a strong rally on Friday, driven by aggressive short covering and improving global sentiment. Optimism over a potential US-Iran peace deal, a decline in crude oil prices below USD 88 per barrel, a sharp recovery in the rupee and supportive global cues fuelled buying interest throughout the session. At the close, the Sensex surged 1,695.4 points, or 2.3 per cent, to 75,527.95, while the Nifty gained 461.3 points, or 1.99 per cent, to settle at 23,622.9, reclaiming and closing comfortably above the 23,600 mark.



Buying was broad-based across sectors, with all major indices ending in positive territory. The rally was led by Nifty Realty, Financial Services, PSU Banks, Private Banks, and Consumer Durables, which advanced between 2 per cent and 4 per cent, according to Bajaj Broking's market commentary. The Nifty IT Index was the only relative laggard, underperforming the broader market despite ending the session in positive territory. The broader market continued to outperform the benchmark indices, reflecting strong investor risk appetite. The Nifty Midcap 100 gained 2.43 per cent, while the Nifty Smallcap 100 advanced 2.80 per cent, indicating widespread participation across sectors.

The Nifty rallied 2 per cent on Friday and closed at the week's high. The index formed a strong bullish candle with a higher high and a higher low, signalling a continuation of the uptrend. It also closed above its 20-day EMA. The index ended above the two-week trading range of 23,000-23,550, highlighting the strength of the ongoing upmove.

According to Bajaj Broking, sustained trade above Friday's low of 23,313 will keep the bias positive and open the door for further upside towards 23,800 and 24,000 in the coming sessions.

India signs MoU with Assam, Nagaland to boost Hydrocarbon exploration in Northeast

New Delhi: The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the governments of Assam and Nagaland to accelerate domestic exploration and production (E&P) of hydrocarbons in the Northeast region. Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri said the Northeast holds significant potential for oil and gas exploration, with Assam alone

accounting for nearly 22 per cent of India's crude oil reserves and around 15 per cent of the country's natural gas reserves. He highlighted that Nagaland also has considerable hydrocarbon potential in the Naga-Schuppen Belt of the Assam-Arakan Basin, an area with both naturally flowing hydrocarbon resources and large untapped reserves. The MoU establishes a framework of cooperation between the Centre and the

two state governments, aimed at providing greater certainty to investors, ensuring regulatory coordination, enabling operational continuity, and supporting long-term investment decisions in the upstream oil and gas sector. The agreement focuses on restarting mineral oil exploration activities in the disputed area belt (DAB) along the Assam-Nagaland border, where operations had remained stalled for more than three decades

due to jurisdictional issues. The government said the resumption of exploration activities is expected to generate employment, encourage local entrepreneurship, strengthen infrastructure, create opportunities for contractors and service providers. And contribute to the economic development of communities across the Northeast. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah said the

MoU could significantly boost production capacity in the region, with current extraction levels of around 1,000-1,500 barrels per day potentially increasing more than tenfold. The framework will also focus on ensuring the safety and security of personnel and assets, improving coordination among stakeholders, encouraging investment in the upstream petroleum sector, and supporting India's broader energy security objectives.

Govt exempts Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) from central excise duties

New Delhi: The Government on Thursday exempted Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) variants containing higher proportions of ethanol from the applicable central excise duties, according to an official order issued by the Ministry of Finance. The move extends an existing tax treatment to newer ethanol blends and is aimed at simplifying the excise framework governing blended fuels. The exemption will apply to Ethanol Blended Petrol variants such as E22, E25, E27 and E30, which contain 22 per cent, 25 per cent, 27 per cent and 30 per cent ethanol, respectively. These blends are part of the country's broader push towards cleaner fuels and reduced dependence on imported crude oil. The official order clarified that the exemption is subject to specific conditions. It will be available only when the appropriate central excise duties have already been paid on the petrol component used in the blend and the applicable Goods and Services Tax (GST) has been paid on the ethanol mixed with the fuel. This means that the tax

relief is not a blanket waiver but rather a mechanism to avoid duplication in taxation. The exemption recognises that taxes have already been discharged separately on the constituent components before the blending process takes place. According to the government, the objective behind the decision is to remove the "deeming fiction" that existed under the central excise law. The term refers to a legal interpretation that could potentially treat the blended product as attracting excise duty despite duties having already been paid on the individual inputs. By eliminating this anomaly, the government intends to bring greater clarity and consistency to the taxation framework governing ethanol-blended fuels. The move is expected to ease compliance requirements for oil marketing companies and other stakeholders involved in fuel blending operations. The exemption has been provided on the same lines as the treatment already available for lower ethanol blends such as E5, E10 and E20. These blends, containing 5 per cent, 10 per cent and 20 per cent ethanol respectively,

had earlier been granted similar relief under the central excise regime. Officials indicated that the latest notification simply extends the existing principle to newer categories of ethanol-blended petrol introduced as part of the country's evolving biofuel roadmap. It does not represent a fresh reduction in fuel taxes. Importantly, the government clarified that there is no change in the central excise duty rate applicable on petrol meant for domestic consumption. Consumers should therefore not interpret the notification as a cut in petrol taxes or an immediate trigger for lower retail fuel prices. Instead, the measure is largely administrative and seeks to streamline the tax structure associated with higher ethanol blends. It ensures that the blending process itself does not become a source of unintended tax complications. India has been steadily increasing the use of ethanol in petrol as part of its efforts to promote renewable energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide an alternative market for agricultural feedstocks used in ethanol production.

Tata Motors to increase prices of passenger vehicle from July 1

New Delhi: The prices of Tata cars are set to be expensive as the Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd is set to increase prices of its passenger vehicle portfolio, including both internal combustion engine (ICE) and electric vehicles (EVs) by up to 1.5 per cent from July 1. This will mark its second hike in three months after the company raised prices of its ICE vehicle range

from April 1, amid escalating cost pressures due to the ongoing West Asia conflict-led disruptions. The automaker had previously hiked prices of its internal combustion engine (ICE) passenger vehicles from April 1, 2026. "This price revision is being undertaken to partially offset the impact of rising input costs and sustained inflationary pressures," the

company said in a regulatory filing. Further Tata Motors said while it continues to absorb a significant portion of these increases. A part of the impact is being passed on to customers through this adjustment. "The extent of the price increase will vary across models and variants, ensuring that the overall value proposition of each is maintained," it

added. Recently, Maruti Suzuki India has also hiked prices of its vehicles across models by up to Rs 30,000 from June 1, citing inflationary pressures and an adverse cost environment. Hyundai Motor India Ltd also increased prices of its vehicles by up to Rs 12,800 from June 1, depending on the model and variants.

Vipul Organics Limited Partners with Global Specialty Materials Leader OMYA for Exclusive European Distribution of Pigments

Mumbai: Vipul Organics Limited, a leading specialty chemicals company operating in the pigments and dyes segment, has announced a strategic and exclusive distribution partnership with Switzerland-based Omya Group, marking a significant milestone in the Indian company's global expansion journey. The collaboration is expected to strengthen Vipul Organics' footprint across Europe and open new avenues for growth in the specialty chemicals market. Omya Group is a privately held, multi-billion-dollar enterprise with a strong international presence and a reputation built over more than a century. The company is globally recognised as a leader in the production of industrial minerals and the distribution of specialty chemicals, serving customers across a wide range of industries and geographies. Under the terms of the agreement, Omya will serve as the sole distributor of Vipul Organics' SunTone® and SunCoat® product ranges throughout the European

market. The exclusive arrangement is aimed at expanding the reach of Vipul Organics' high-performance pigment solutions by leveraging Omya's established distribution network and deep market expertise. The distribution rights granted to Omya extend across several European territories, including the United Kingdom, Norway, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Albania and Moldova. However, the agreement excludes Switzerland and Poland, where separate arrangements may continue to exist. Vipul Organics' SunTone® range comprises advanced pigment dispersions and pigment powders that cater to a broad spectrum of industrial applications. These products have earned recognition for their consistency, quality and performance in demanding manufacturing environments. The SunTone® portfolio finds extensive use in industries such as paints, inks, plastics, textiles and rubber. In addition, the range has applications in automotive

coatings and industrial paints, sectors where durability, colour stability and technical precision are of paramount importance. Similarly, the SunCoat® range has established itself as a versatile offering in the paints and coatings industry. Designed to deliver reliable colour performance, the products cater to both decorative and industrial requirements. Applications of the SunCoat® range extend to interior and exterior coatings, decorative paints and paper coatings. The products are also used in specialised sectors such as seed coatings, helping provide visual differentiation and functional benefits. Beyond conventional coatings, SunCoat® products are utilised in detergents for the coloration of both liquid and solid soaps. They also find use in shoe polish formulations as well as artistic and educational colour products, reflecting the versatility of the product line. According to the company, the partnership brings together the complementary strengths of both organisations.

Bajaj Auto Foundation commits Rs 400 Crore through Rupa Rahul Bajaj Scholarship

Pune: Bajaj Auto Foundation, the CSR arm of Bajaj Auto Limited, on Thursday announced a landmark commitment of Rs 400 crore over the next decade to empower women engineers through the Rupa Rahul Bajaj Scholarship for Women in Engineering (RRBSWE). The Rupa Rahul Bajaj Scholarship, India's largest scholarship programme for women in core engineering has been conceived for meritorious young women pursuing core engineering disciplines including Mechanical Engineering, Electronics, Industrial Instrumentation, Mechatronics, Robotics, and allied fields. Under the programme, scholars will receive financial support of up to Rs 8 lakh across the course of their engineering education at 40 leading engineering institutions including IITs, NITs, IIITs, and reputed state and private universities. Beyond financial assistance, the scholarship is designed to nurture the next generation of women leaders in engineering through



structured mentorship, leadership development, industry immersion, and access to professional networks. The event was held at Bajaj Auto Headquarters in Pune, where the Foundation formally unveiled the scholarship identity and facilitated the inaugural cohort of 506 meritorious young scholars. The event was graced by chief guest Ms. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Executive Chairperson and Founder of Biocon Limited, alongside Mr. Rajiv Bajaj, Managing Director, Bajaj Auto Ltd. The scholarship program seeks to address the persistent under-representation of women in core en-

gineering and manufacturing sectors at a time when advanced manufacturing, deep technology, and industrial innovation are becoming increasingly critical to India's economic growth and global competitiveness. Reflecting the larger commitment towards building India's future workforce through skilling, education, and opportunity creation, the event also marked the unveiling of Bajaj Auto Foundation's overarching proposition - "Where there's a skill, there's a way." Speaking on the occasion, Rajiv Bajaj said, "Women possess inherent skills of patience, empathy and diligence which are

very strong attributes to excel in core engineering jobs. We identified this long back and made women engineers a significant part of our workforce. In fact, from virtually no women in our operations till around a decade back, today they account for nearly 20% of our workforce. This has brought a meaningful difference to our way of working and contributed to Bajaj Auto's global scale, thereby making us the World's Favourite Indian. This program would extend our learning with the larger manufacturing industry." Elaborating, he noted: "The Rupa Rahul Bajaj Scholarship for Women in Engineering holds a special

place in my heart, as it carries the name of my beloved mother, Rupa Rahul Bajaj. Her dedication to education and her belief that women can drive change in their communities inspire this program. The Rupa Rahul Bajaj Scholarship is an investment in talent, ambition, and the belief that opportunity can unlock extraordinary potential. We are deeply committed to ensuring that women play a far greater role in shaping the future of engineering and manufacturing" he added. Sharing her thoughts on the impact of the announcement, Ms. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw said that the future of science, engineering, and manufacturing must be built on inclusion and equal opportunity. "Encouraging more women to pursue core engineering disciplines is not just a social imperative, but an economic one. Initiatives like the Rupa Rahul Bajaj Scholarship can help create a stronger and more diverse innovation ecosystem for India," she observed.