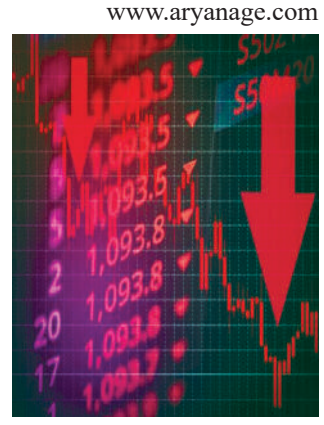
RNI- DELENG/2013/50604

www.aryanage.com

The Age of Truth

Aryan Age

Year 15, Issue 36 | Delhi, Wednesday 5 August 2026 | 8 PAGES | ₹ 2.00



PG 02 SP and Opposition's conduct in UP assembly is uncivil, unconstitutional, and shameful: CM Yogi

PG 03 BJP says Kejriwal using E20 campaign for political revival ahead of Punjab Polls

PG 6 Haryana CM Lauds Commonwealth Athletes and Announces State-Wide Cultural Initiatives

PG 7 Diamond League: Neeraj faces world-class field in Lausanne

PG 8 Stock markets end lower with Nifty below 24,700

Lok Sabha introduces Taxation Reform Bill seeking to mordernise India's tax framework

New Delhi: The Lok Sabha on Tuesday introduced the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, with the government describing it as a key step towards modernising India's tax framework and strengthening the country's digital financial ecosystem. The legislation was introduced amid noisy protests by Opposition members and cleared for introduction through a voice vote.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman moved the Bill for introduction, seeking the House's permission to bring in the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which proposes amendments to the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, the Income-tax Act, 2025, and the Finance Act, 2026.

The Bill seeks to replace the Income-tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026, which was promulgated on June 5, 2026, while introducing a broader set of legislative changes aimed at boosting foreign investment, simplifying the regulatory framework for digital payment systems and extending policy support to key manufacturing sectors.

According to the proposed legislation, the amendments are intended to update the legal architecture governing taxation and payment systems in response to the evolving needs of India's economy and its rapidly expanding digital ecosystem.

The government has maintained that the reforms are designed to improve the ease of doing business, enhance investor confidence and ensure that India's tax and financial laws remain aligned with technological advancements and changing commercial practices.

The proposed changes are also expected to streamline regulatory processes and create a more investment-friendly policy environment while supporting the country's long-term economic growth objectives.

Kejriwal stopped on way to PM's residence during protest against E20 Petrol, stages road sit-in

New Delhi: Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday was stopped by Delhi Police while leading a march to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's residence to submit more than 2.33 lakh public petitions demanding the withdrawal of E20-blended petrol.

Accompanied by around 100 people whom the party described as being affected by the fuel policy, Kejriwal staged a sit-in on the road after the delegation was denied permission to meet the Prime Minister.

The protest ended after police took custody of the petitions, which the party said numbered 2,33,238, and informed the delegation that the Prime Minister would not meet them.

Addressing a press conference later, Kejriwal accused the Centre of ignoring public concerns and alleged that the E20 policy was being implemented under pressure from US President Donald Trump. "PM Modi, what is the point of showing your strength against us? Show the same courage in front of Trump and stop imposing E20 on the country. Otherwise, the nation will once again be compelled to launch a major movement," he said.

In a post on X after the protest, Kejriwal said the delegation had attempted to meet the Prime Minister with over 2.33 lakh petitions opposing E20 but was stopped by police. He added that all the petitions had now been sent to the Prime Minister.

Kejriwal said the party had sought an appointment with the Prime Minister nearly a month ago to discuss concerns surrounding E20-blended petrol but had received no response. He described the refusal to meet the delegation as evidence of what he called a "dictatorial attitude."

Questioning the rationale behind the policy, the former Delhi chief minister claimed that the Centre had acknowledged in Parliament that E20 fuel reduced fuel efficiency and affected certain engine components, particularly rubber parts. He asked why such a fuel was being made mandatory despite these concerns.

"The BJP-led Central Government itself admitted in Parliament that fuel efficiency decreases and engine components are affected. If mileage is reducing and engines are being damaged, why is it being imposed?" he asked.

Kejriwal further alleged that the policy was intended to facilitate imports of ethanol from the United States rather than benefit Indian farmers. According to him, the government's claims that E20 would save foreign exchange and support domestic agriculture did not stand scrutiny.

"It is not Indian farmers who are benefiting but American farmers. We appeal to the Prime Minister to stop buying ethanol from the United States and learn to withstand Trump's pressure," he said.

Warning of an intensified agitation, Kejriwal said the party would soon announce its next course of action if the Centre did not reconsider the policy. "If E20 is not withdrawn, the country will once again be compelled to launch a major movement," he said, adding that citizens would have to "come out on the streets on a very large scale" if they wanted relief from the policy.

Air India Phuket-Delhi flight hits severe turbulence, 12 injured

New Delhi: Twelve people were injured after an Air India flight from Phuket to New Delhi encountered turbulence on Tuesday, the airline said.

Air India flight AI2379 experienced mild turbulence while flying from Phuket to Delhi, causing the aircraft to suddenly drop altitude, an airline spokesperson said.

The incident occurred before landing, when the aircraft was descending into Delhi, according to sources. The turbulence briefly affected the aircraft, injuring 10 passengers and two cabin crew members. The flight landed safely at New Delhi airport at 11:07 am, the spokesperson said. All

passengers and crew members were safely evacuated from the aircraft, and no serious injuries were reported. "There have been no serious injuries as of now. A small number of passengers and crew members with minor injuries requiring medical assessment have been taken to a medical facility at the airport for precautionary examination and care by Air India's airport team and medical personnel," Air India said in a statement.

Haryana leads north India in companies with women directors; Punjab, J&K, Himachal, and Chandigarh also report significant figures

Panchkula: Haryana recorded the highest number of companies with women directors among northern states and union territories over the past three financial years, according to data presented in the Lok Sabha by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

The data also indicate significant numbers in Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Chandigarh.

Replying to an unstarred question in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, the Government said that under Section 149 of the Companies Act, 2013, specified listed companies and certain public companies are required to appoint at least one woman director on their Board.

The Ministry also clarified that it has not undertaken any women-specific initiative or awareness programme to promote women entrepreneurs or companies having women directors, including in Maharashtra or Akola district.

State-wise data presented to Parliament show Haryana had 16,567 companies with women directors from 2023-24 to 2025-26, totalling 19,963 women directors. The number of such companies rose from 4,938 in 2023-24 to 4,943 in 2024-25, and then to 6,686 in 2025-26.

Punjab reported 5,005 companies with women directors over the three-year period, totalling 6,031 women directors. Annual figures were 1,618 in 2023-24, 1,488 in 2024-25, and 1,899 in 2025-26.

Jammu & Kashmir had 1,935 companies with women directors over three years, totalling 2,351 women directors. Annual figures were 643 in 2023-24, 561 in 2024-25, and 731 in 2025-26.

Himachal Pradesh recorded 1,327 companies with women directors and a total of 1,776 women directors during the period.

Annual figures were 415 in 2023-24, 392 in 2024-25, and 520 in 2025-26. Chandigarh registered 960 companies with women directors over three years, with a total of 1,165 women directors.

Annual figures were 349 in 2023-24, 257 in 2024-25, and 354 in 2025-26.

The Ministry informed Parliament that, nationwide, 3,25,096 companies had women directors over the past three financial years, with a total of 4,06,189 women directors. On measures to encourage entrepreneurship, the government stated that the Ministry of Corporate Affairs has prioritised improving the ease of doing business by simplifying incorporation and compliance procedures.

Measures include raising the threshold for small company classification, offering zero filing fees for eligible companies, and providing the integrated SPICe and AGILE-PRO-S online platform for multiple business registrations through a single-window system.

The Ministry noted these reforms have streamlined incorporation, reduced compliance burdens and transaction costs, and supported business establishment and operations nationwide, including in rural and semi-urban areas.

BJP accuses Congress of double standards over paper leak issue

New Delhi: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday accused the Congress of adopting "double standards" on the issue of paper leaks and demanded an explanation from Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi over their silence on remarks made by Karnataka Home Minister Priyank Kharge.

Addressing a press conference, BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra said that Mallikarjun Kharge often delivers lengthy speeches in the Rajya Sabha. "It is good that at least discussions have started, but when his son makes an insensitive and inhuman statement on the same issue in Karnataka, both Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge remain silent," he said.

Patra alleged that Priyank Kharge had made a "highly arrogant" remark regarding the students' protest over alleged irregularities in the Karnataka police constable recruitment process.

He claimed that Kharge had said, "Let the students sit on a hunger strike for 25 days first, then we will

resort to lathi-charge, and after that we will think about my resignation."

The BJP spokesperson said Rahul Gandhi's silence on the matter reflected the Congress party's "double standards." He also accused the Congress and some of its alliance partners of disrupting the Monsoon Session of Parliament.

"Crores of rupees are spent on running a parliamentary session. However, since the session began, Question Hour has not been allowed to function, and hardly any Bills are being discussed," Patra said.

Expressing criticism over the Opposition's conduct, Patra said, "I am surprised by their double standards. Attempts have been made to disrupt Zero Hour from the very beginning. The problem lies in the behaviour of the Congress and its allies. Their double standards are shocking."

Patra further alleged that Priyank Kharge had made an insensitive statement about the protesting students and said that Rahul Gandhi was still silent on the issue. He also claimed that thousands of students in Jharkhand were protesting over examination-related issues, but the Congress had neither spoken, in their support nor appeared to be raising the matter in Parliament.

He added that no placards related to the Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) examination issue had been seen in the hands of Congress leaders because, according to him, "this is selective outrage."

India slams PoJK polls as 'complete farce', cites crackdown, killings

New Delhi: India on Tuesday strongly slammed Pakistan over its recently conducted so-called elections in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, calling the electoral exercise a "complete farce" and adding that the real situation is one of public protests and wanton killings by Pakistani forces in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK).

New Delhi's reaction came as a brutal crackdown ensued against the civilian population in PoJK amid local elections in the region. The polls witnessed widespread disruptions, logistical failures, and continuing protests on Sunday, casting a shadow over the process and raising fresh questions about its credibility.

Addressing a media briefing here, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "This so-called local election in PoK is a complete farce. The real happening is that of public protests and wanton killings by Pakistani forces. Such hollow exercises cannot hide reality."

"Since June this year, at least 90 civilians have lost their lives in the continuing crackdown. The Pakistani Establishment has answered public discontent with bullets, blackouts, intimidation and

repression, and now seeks to manufacture legitimacy through a hollow electoral exercise," the MEA spokesperson further said.

Jaiswal urged the international community to hold Islamabad accountable.

"It must be held accountable, and the world should see through the flimsy veneer of Pakistan's hypocritical lecturing on human rights." Demonstrations unfolded across PoJK and within Kashmiri communities in various Pakistani cities, including large protest gatherings in Karachi, where demonstrators criticised the electoral process and demanded political reforms.

According to sources, police detained several protesters and student leaders during the demonstrations.

Global human rights and press freedom watchdogs, including Amnesty International and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ Asia), have issued urgent statements condemning escalating state violence, press restrictions, and media suppression surrounding ongoing protests in Rawalakot and across Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The monitoring groups have raised alarms over the reported enforced disappearances of journalists, restrictions on foreign outlets, and widespread internet shutdowns, demanding an immediate halt to the crackdown and transparent investigations into human rights violations.

Highlighting disturbing reports of force used against demonstrators in Rawalakot, Amnesty International pointed to a pattern of state-led violence and urged an immediate external inquiry.

Kharge demands PM's response on Ram Temple Trust allegations, Opposition targets Amit Shah's absence in Parliament

New Delhi: The Opposition on Tuesday intensified its attack on the Centre over allegations related to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, with Congress President and Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge demanding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi respond in Parliament to accusations concerning alleged irregularities in donations, land transactions and the management of the trust.

Raising the issue in the Rajya Sabha, Kharge said the allegations involving valuable offerings, cash donations, land purchases and the administration of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust were a matter of concern for crores of devotees across the country.

He asserted that the trust had been constituted by the Central government following an announcement made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Parliament and noted that more than 70 acres of land had been handed over to the trust by the Centre. Kharge also pointed out that the Prime Minister had personally participated in every major event associated with the Ram temple, from the bhoomi pujan to the consecration ceremony.

"These allegations concern the faith of crores of devotees. The trust was formed by the Central government, whose creation was announced by the Prime Minister himself in Parliament. The Centre handed over more than 70 acres of land to the trust, and the Prime Minister participated in every important occasion from the bhoomi pujan to the pran pratishtha. In such a situation, the Prime Minister cannot escape accountability over serious allegations, including theft of offerings. He should tell the House where agencies like the Enforcement Directorate, the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Income Tax Department are. Those who have looted in the name of Lord Ram should apologise to the entire country and stop misleading the nation," Kharge said.

The issue also triggered protests by Opposition Members of Parliament in the Parliament House complex, where MPs

questioned the absence of union Home Minister Amit Shah from Parliament and raised slogans over the alleged theft of offerings at the Ayodhya Ram Mandir.

Joining the demonstration, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party was losing public support.

"The people of this country are tired of the BJP. People understand everything, and this is only the beginning," Priyanka Gandhi Vadra told reporters in the Parliament complex while participating in the protest.

The protest came amid continued confrontations between the government and the Opposition during the ongoing Monsoon Session of Parliament, with several contentious issues disrupting proceedings.

Earlier in the day, Congress MP Manickam Tagore submitted an Adjournment Motion notice in the Lok Sabha seeking suspension of the House's scheduled business to discuss the police action during the student protest held at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on July 20, 2026.

Describing the matter as one of "definite urgent public importance", Tagore urged that union Home Minister Amit Shah make a detailed statement in Parliament explaining the circumstances under which force was allegedly used against the protesters.

"I seek leave to move an Adjournment Motion to discuss a matter of urgent public importance concerning the police action during the student protest held at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi, on 20 July 2026," Tagore said in the notice.

The Congress has consistently accused the government of using excessive force against students protesting over recruitment delays, examination irregularities and paper leak controversies, while also demanding accountability from the Home Ministry for the police action. Tuesday's protests and parliamentary interventions added to the growing list of issues over which the Opposition has sought discussions during the Monsoon Session, placing the government under sustained pressure both inside and outside Parliament.

SP and Opposition's conduct in UP assembly is uncivil, unconstitutional, and shameful: CM Yogi

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has strongly criticised Samajwadi Party legislators and other Opposition members in the Legislative Assembly on the second day of the Monsoon Session for their undemocratic and unconstitutional act.

Launching a sharp attack on what he described as the uncivil conduct of SP legislators, he stated, "The conduct of the Samajwadi Party and the Opposition is unconstitutional and shameful. By disrupting the proceedings of the House, the Opposition is playing with the interests of 25 crore people of the state, and every resident of Uttar Pradesh is witnessing it."

He said, "During the Monsoon Session, every member had an excellent opportunity to discuss issues concerning the sentiments and interests of 25 crore people in the House. However, those who have no faith in democratic values insult and undermine all institutions that strengthen parliamentary democracy. This conduct of the Samajwadi Party and the Opposition is not only unconstitutional but also shameful."

The Chief Minister added that the agenda of the House had already been finalised during the meeting of party leaders and the Business Advisory Committee.

However, members of the Opposition did not show interest in even a single legislative proposal or supplementary budget-related proposal listed on the agenda. Instead, they are trying to waste the valuable time of the House by raising unnecessary issues.

The Chief Minister stated, "Even before the House convened, during the meeting of party leaders, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister and I had assured everyone that every proposal brought before the House under the Rules would be discussed, and the government would respond to them. However, the Samajwadi Party and other Opposition parties have no faith in discussion, constitutional values, or the high traditions of the House. By continuously disrupting the proceedings of the House, they are playing with the interests of the state's 25 crore people."

In his address, the Chief Minister assured the House that the government is prepared to discuss every issue.

He informed, "The government wishes to hold meaningful discussions on every issue that the Chair invites for discussion under the Rules because our government is committed to public welfare."

However, Opposition parties have never believed in democratic values. Instead, they deliberately seek to undermine the dignity of the House and make a mockery of democracy. They are continuously vitiating the atmosphere of the House.

The people of Uttar Pradesh are witnessing this undemocratic conduct of the Samajwadi Party."

No new members for now, says Bengal BJP amid defection buzz

Kolkata: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which recently formed the government in West Bengal after its victory in the Assembly elections, has temporarily suspended its membership drive and ruled out the induction of leaders or workers from other political parties until further notice, party sources said on Tuesday.The decision comes amid growing political speculation over a possible influx of leaders from rival parties, particularly the Trinamool Congress (TMC), into the BJP following the change of government. However, the party's state leadership has made it clear that organisational discipline will take precedence over expansion at this stage.State BJP president Samik Bhattacharya had earlier announced that the enrolment of new members would remain suspended. The same message has also been conveyed by the party's national general secretary and West Bengal in-charge, Sunil Bansal. According to BJP sources, no new memberships will be issued at any organisational level in the state, including morchas, divisions, or district units, until fresh instructions are received from the central leadership.Even the renewal of existing memberships has been put on hold for the time being. Clarifying the party's stand, BJP state spokesperson Debajit Sarkar said the party follows a well-defined organisational process for granting membership, which is initiated only after approval from the central leadership."Since the formation of the BJP government in West Bengal on May 4, no fresh membership has been issued in the state. Therefore, anyone claiming to have become a BJP member during this period is not recognised by the party. At present, only those holding valid memberships issued earlier are considered members of the BJP," Sarkar said.He added that district-level committees constituted by the party are currently reviewing the records of existing members, membership renewals and the framework for future enrolment. The reports submitted by these committees will form the basis of the central leadership's decision on when and how the membership drive will resume. Sarkar also stressed that supporting the BJP does not automatically make an individual a party member."The BJP is not merely a political party but a large organisational platform working across different sections of society. Many people may support the party, but membership can only be obtained by completing the prescribed organisational process. That process remains suspended at present," he said.The announcement is being viewed in political circles as a clear message that the BJP is unwilling to encourage large-scale defections immediately after assuming office in the state.

Bihar bypoll verdict reflects public anger against BJP government: RJD

Patna: Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) working President and Leader of Opposition in the Bihar Assembly, Tejaswi Prasad Yadav, ton Tuesday said the Bankipur Assembly bypoll verdict reflected growing public resentment against the BJP government and Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary, alleging that the government led by Choudhary failed to deliver during its 100 to 150 days in office.

Addressing a press conference here, Yadav said the people had lost faith in Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary and the BJP government, claiming the bypoll outcome was a clear expression of public anger against the government's policies.Responding to questions over the RJD candidate forfeiting his security deposit, Yadav said his party fully accepted the people's mandate but maintained that the verdict also exposed widespread dissatisfaction with the BJP-led government.

He claimed that within about 150 days of assuming office, the BJP under Samrat Choudhary had suffered defeats in two major electoral contests, including an MLC election and the Bankipur Assembly bypoll.Launching a scathing attack on the Chief Minister, Yadav alleged that Choudhary had failed to undertake a single significant developmental initiative since taking charge.He accused the government of pursuing "negative politics" rather than governance and development."

The Chief Minister has only indulged in rhetoric. There has been no positive politics or visible governance," Yadav alleged.

The RJD leader further charged that the government was targeting the Opposition instead of addressing public concerns and asserted that its failure to perform had prompted voters to "punish" the BJP in the election.

CM Suvendu Adhikari meets NCPI MPs in Delhi, focuses on development; alliance questions persist

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari held an hour-long meeting with MPs of the Nationalist Congress Progressive India (NCPI) at Banga Bhawan in New Delhi on Tuesday afternoon.

Though questions over the party's equation with the BJP and the NDA continued to surface, the NCPI maintained that discussions centred on development projects for their respective constituencies.

Apart from Deb, all 20 NCPI MPs, who had defected from the Trinamool Congress, attended the meeting.

Sources in the party said that Deb was not present because of a pre-scheduled shooting appointment.

Addressing reporters after the meeting, NCPI MP Satabdi Roy said the discussions were confined to development-related issues.

"We spoke only about the development of our area. The Chief Minister asked us to submit proposals. We will meet him again at Nabanna and place our proposals," Roy said.

Dismissing the speculation that NCPI MPs would formally join the BJP, Roy said, "There was no discussion regarding this. We are in the NDA, so there should be no confusion," she said.

The meeting was also attended by three BJP Rajya Sabha MPs — Sukhendu Sekhar Roy, Sushmita Deb, and Prakashchik Baraik — who had resigned from the Trinamool Congress before joining the BJP.

Speaking to reporters, Sukhendu Sekhar Roy described the interaction as a courtesy meeting.

"This was only a courtesy call. We are in the BJP, so there is no confusion regarding my presence in the meeting," he said.The meeting came hours after the NDA parliamentary meeting at the Parliament Library Building, where NCPI parliamentary party leader Sudip Bandopadhyay asserted that "everyone in the NCPI is united."

However, despite the claim, three NCPI MPs — Abu Taher, Khalilur Rehman and Yusuf Pathan — skipped the NDA meeting, triggering speculation over differences within the party.

All three, however, later attended the meeting with the Chief Minister at Banga Bhawan.

Explaining their absence from the NDA parliamentary meeting earlier in the day, Abu Taher said the three MPs had maintained a different political position."We have said we are neither in the BJP nor in the NDA, and so we did not attend the NDA meeting. But we will always speak with the Chief Minister because it is about the development of our district and our area," Taher said.

Khalilur Rehman also underlined the group's political position, saying, "We will not support anything that goes against the interest of the Muslim community."

Despite the absence of the three MPs from the NDA meeting, the NCPI leadership sought to play down the issue.

Sudip Bandopadhyay said the MPs might have their own constraints and that the party respected their position.

"They might have some issues and we honour that. The Chief Minister is also aware of their limitations. They attended the meeting with him and spoke about the development of their areas. Their proposals were taken seriously," Bandopadhyay said.

"We need to understand that at the ground level there are still negotiations to be held. There is nothing wrong with that," he added.

Manipur CM urges NIT graduates to lead nation

Imphal: Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Tuesday reaffirmed the State Government's commitment to establishing a permanent campus for NIT Manipur.

He said the Government is actively working towards finding a suitable place while attending the 13th Convocation of the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Manipur at the City Convention Centre, here.

Addressing the graduating students, the Chief Minister congratulated them on successfully completing their academic journey and wished them success in their future endeavours.

He said that NIT Manipur has a vital role to play in the development of both the State and the Nation.

He also acknowledged the support of Rameshwar Singh, MLA of Kakching Assembly Constituency, to facilitate land for the permanent campus at the earliest.

Highlighting the importance of technical education in achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, Khemchand said that graduates from disciplines such as Civil Engineering, Computer Science and Engineering, Electronics and Communication Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering will play a significant role in nation-building.

He expressed confidence that institutions like NIT Manipur would contribute immensely towards realising the Prime Minister's vision of Viksit Bharat.

Describing NIT Manipur as one of the emerging premier technical institutions in the North Eastern Region, the Chief Minister urged the graduating students to strive for excellence, become future administrators, innovators and leaders, and dedicate their knowledge and skills towards the progress of Viksit Bharat and Viksit Manipur.

MMU raises concern over demolition threat to Jauhar University

Srinagar: Mutahida Majlis-e-Ulema (MMU), the largest amalgam of religious, educational and social organisations in Jammu & Kashmir, on Tuesday expressed serious concern over recent developments affecting Muslim students and educational institutions, particularly the threat of large-scale demolition at Mohammad Ali Jauhar University in Rampur Uttar Pradesh.

The MMU headed by Kashmir's chief cleric and Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said that reports of the proposed demolition of 38 out of 40 buildings of Mohammad Ali Jauhar University, where nearly 3,000 students are pursuing their education, were deeply disturbing.

"While the demolition order has reportedly received interim relief, the continuing uncertainty over the future of the institution remains a matter of grave concern," MMU said in a statement.

The MMU said that Kashmiri students studying at the university approached them regarding the matter, directly affecting them and their future, and the future of their families who send them to outside institutions for education .

The MMU said that whatever legal or regulatory violations may be alleged against an institution, there are established legal and administrative mechanisms to address them.

"The future of thousands of innocent students cannot be bulldozed along with university buildings. Students have no role in such disputes and must not be made to pay the price for them," the statement said

Odisha Police ink five-year pact with NFSU to bolster cyber policing

Bhubaneswar : The CID-Crime Branch of Odisha Police on Tuesday signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU), Bhubaneswar, to enhance capacity in cybercrime investigation and digital forensics.

The MoU was signed by Crime Branch DGP Vinaytosh Mishra and NFSU Bhubaneswar Campus Director Dr. Purabi Pokhariyal while Odisha Director General of Police (DGP) Yogesh Bahadur Khurania inaugurated the first training programme on "Cyber Crime Investigation and Digital Forensics."

Describing the partnership as a significant step in the modernisation of Odisha Police, Khurania said the collaboration would strengthen institutional capacity to tackle evolving cyber threats through advanced training, forensic expertise, joint research and technical cooperation.Highlighting the changing nature of crime, the DGP said digital evidence has become central to almost every criminal investigation, while cyber offences such as mule account frauds, online investment scams and "digital arrests" are increasing rapidly.

With the new criminal laws placing greater emphasis on forensic science, he stressed the need for every police officer to be proficient in the seizure, preservation and handling of electronic evidence.Odisha has already established 20 Cyber Crime and Economic Offences Police Stations and equipped police stations across the state with modern cyber investigation hardware and software worth nearly Rs 15 crore.The new partnership with NFSU, he added, would ensure that police personnel are adequately trained to use these resources effectively.

Besides the training, the collaboration will also cover crime scene management, higher education, forensic infrastructure development, joint research and technical consultancy.

Crime Branch DGP Vinaytosh Mishra, speaking on the occasion, said the initiative would facilitate specialised technical training for police personnel at all levels.

By January 2027, a total of 480 officers and personnel from all 34 police districts and the Crime Branch will be trained in 16 batches.

DP World PGTI tournament put Kashmir back on India's golf map: Omar

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said the DP World Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) tournament at the Royal Springs Golf Course (RSGC) marked an important milestone in putting Kashmir, particularly the Srinagar course, "back on India's golf map".

He said golf tourism was an important component of the government's overall tourism promotion strategy and expressed hope that the DP World PGTI would become an annual fixture.

The Chief Minister described the golf tournament as an important milestone.

"This year we have seen even without active promotion of golf tourism, we have seen the beginnings of what we actually want, which is people is flying into Srinagar for a long weekend of golf…. And this tournament is an important milestone in putting Kashmir and particularly RSGC back on India's golf map. We have more than 100 professional golfers who have come as part of the DP World PGTI.We have more than 10 overseas entries as well," Omar told reporters in Srinagar after inaugurating the J&K Open 2026 on Tuesday. Omar also unveiled the trophy.

The four-day DP World PGTI tournament features a strong field of leading Indian professionals, including Saptak Talwar, Veer Ahlawat, Om Prakash Chouhan, Manu Gandas, defending champion Shaurya Bhattacharya and Angad Cheema, among others.

The tournament also carries a prize purse of Rs 1 crore, double the Rs 50 lakh offered in the previous edition.The Chief Minister said the government's endeavour was to make the tournament an annual event rather than a one-off affair.

"There has been a long gap between the previous such effort and this tournament. So this is the beginning. From here we hope to scale up both the prize money as well as the participation and ensure that it is a regular feature of the calendar for at least the next five years," he said.

On promoting local golfers, Omar said the government wanted to provide greater exposure to young talent through tournaments and proposed setting up a golf academy.

"We want to start a golf academy here, so that we can groom young golfers at a very young age, so that they can represent India at a national level," he said.

He said local amateurs were already getting opportunities to play alongside foreign professionals through Pro-Am tournaments, while local competitions were also being organised.Asked whether the abrogation of Article 370 had contributed to the revival of golf tourism, Omar rejected the suggestion that such tournaments were a new phenomenon."We organised such tournaments before 2014 as well. And on a large scale," he said, recalling that before the onset of militancy in the 1980s, Jammu and Kashmir had hosted some of the country's biggest golf tournaments.On concerns that golf courses could become loss-making government assets, Omar said their value should not be measured solely in terms of direct profits.

"Golf course will not be a profit centre in itself. But in terms of promotion, there is no competition for it," he said.He argued that golfers visiting J&K contributed to the wider tourism economy by using taxis, staying in houseboats, eating at local establishments, visiting tourist attractions and purchasing handicrafts.

H-FAST seizes 25 tonnes of adulterated spices, arrests three in Hyderabad crackdown

Hyderabad: Hyderabad Police Commissioner V C Sajjanar on Tuesday announced that the Hyderabad Food Adulteration Surveillance Team (H-FAST), in coordination with the GHMC Food Safety Department, conducted a major crackdown on spice trading and processing units, leading to the seizure of over 25 tonnes of adulterated spices and the arrest of three persons.Addressing a press conference, Sajjanar said that 13 spice trading and processing establishments were inspected following public complaints. Three criminal cases were registered at Mailardevpally and Balapur police stations, and the accused were identified as Rahul Bhati, Vishal Panwar, and Dulichand Kachhawar. Officials found spices such as jeera, ajwain, mustard, cloves and shahjeera adulterated with industrial dyes, synthetic colours, talcum powder, rice bran oil and other hazardous chemicals to enhance their appearance and weight.

Briefs :

Delhi Assembly's Monsoon Session to begin on August 7; security measures stepped up

New Delhi: The sixth session of the Eighth Delhi Legislative Assembly will begin at 11 am on August 7 and continue on August 10 and 11, Speaker Vijender Gupta announced on Tuesday.The session has been called following an order by the Lieutenant Governor, with the notification issued on July 31. According to the Assembly Secretariat, each sitting will continue until the scheduled business is concluded and may be extended if necessary.The Speaker said all arrangements have been put in place to ensure the smooth conduct of the session. Members will submit all notices digitally through the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) portal, with support available from the Notice Branch and the NeVA Sewa Kendra. Notices under Rule 280, which enables members to raise matters of public importance in the House, must be submitted by 5 pm on the working day preceding the relevant sitting.Gupta said the session would provide legislators an opportunity to raise issues of public importance and participate in debates on matters concerning Delhi.The Assembly Secretariat also announced enhanced security arrangements ahead of the session. These include installation of hydraulic road blockers at all entry gates, reinforced access-control points and deployment of a Central Reserve Police Force Quick Response Team.

2 firefighters killed, 3 injured battling blaze at Greater Noida chip factory

New Delhi: A massive fire broke out at an electronic chip manufacturing unit in Greater Noida, killing two firefighters and injuring three others, police said on Tuesday. The incident occurred late Monday night at the ILGIM company in the Ecotech-3 industrial area, where at least six fire brigade vehicles were rushed after information about the blaze was received, a police spokesperson said.The firefighters were attempting to douse the blaze when a wall and an iron beam inside the factory suddenly collapsed, injuring five of them, the spokesperson said.All five injured firefighters were immediately taken to a hospital by ambulance, where Fireman Rohit Yadav and Head Constable Driver Tirathpal succumbed to their injuries, he said.The condition of the three other injured firefighters -- Head Constable Driver Rajpal Singh and Firemen Manish Kumar, Amit Kumar -- is stated to be out of danger and they are undergoing treatment, the spokesperson said.

Delhi Police bust interstate gunrunning racket, recover 18 firearms; 'kingpin' among 8 held

New Delhi :Eight suspects linked with an interstate arms smuggling syndicate, including the alleged kingpin, have been arrested and 18 illegal firearms, additional magazines and live cartridges have been seized following an extensive operation by Delhi Police's Special Cell, an official said on Tuesday. The accused were allegedly part of a network that procured sophisticated semi-automatic pistols and country-made firearms from Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and supplied them to criminals in Delhi-NCR and adjoining areas, police said."The syndicate used encrypted social media applications, virtual numbers and fake online identities to coordinate with suppliers, traffickers and buyers while concealing identities of its members," a senior police officer said.

BJP says Kejriwal using E20 campaign for political revival ahead of Punjab Polls

New Delhi: The political battle between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) intensified on Tuesday after the BJP launched a fresh attack on AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal over his campaign against ethanol-blended petrol, commonly known as E20 fuel.

The Delhi BJP alleged that Kejriwal's opposition to E20 petrol was not driven by concerns over consumers or vehicle owners but was instead part of a political strategy aimed at rebuilding his image ahead of the 2027 Punjab Assembly elections.

Delhi BJP President Harsh Malhotra claimed that Kejriwal's protest march towards the Prime Minister's residence was intended primarily to attract media attention and increase visibility on social media platforms rather than address any genuine public issue.

Malhotra said that the AAP leader was aware of the importance of ethanol blending in petrol but had chosen to turn the matter into a political campaign. According to him, the protest was an attempt to remain in the public spotlight rather than a serious effort to raise concerns related to fuel policy.

"Arvind Kejriwal's only objective on the ethanol-blended petrol issue is to play politics. He knows that ethanol-blended petrol is the need of the hour, yet he staged a march to the Prime Minister's residence merely to remain in headlines," Malhotra said in a statement.

The BJP leader also referred to Kejriwal's detention by the Delhi Police during the protest and his subsequent sit-in outside the AAP office. He alleged that the developments followed a predictable pattern and were part of a planned political exercise.

Malhotra claimed that Kejriwal presented his detention as an attempt by authorities to prevent him from raising the issue. He further alleged that the AAP chief later submitted several bundles of documents to the police while claiming that thousands of petitions had been collected against E20 petrol.

According to Malhotra, the entire episode was designed to create political visibility and generate public attention. He accused Kejriwal of relying on social media-driven campaigns to rebuild support for the AAP after facing political setbacks.The Delhi BJP president claimed that the campaign against ethanol-blended petrol was only the beginning of a larger effort by Kejriwal to revive the party's political prospects before the upcoming Punjab elections.

"The reality is that, keeping in mind AAP's certain defeat in the 2027 Punjab Assembly elections, Arvind Kejriwal is trying to revive his political future through social media-based politics, and the campaign against ethanol-blended petrol is simply the first step," Malhotra alleged.

Responding to Kejriwal's claims that E20 petrol could damage vehicles, Malhotra rejected the allegations and said that vehicle owners across the country understand the importance of ethanol blending. He maintained that people would not be influenced by what he described as misleading claims.The BJP leader said that ethanol-blended petrol represents the future of India's fuel strategy and contributes to reducing dependence on imported crude oil. He argued that the government's ethanol programme has wider economic and environmental objectives.

Malhotra also challenged Kejriwal to provide technical evidence supporting his claims about vehicle damage caused by E20 fuel. He said that despite repeated demands, the AAP leader had failed to present concrete proof from automobile experts.

He claimed that Kejriwal had not been able to produce even 100 vehicles along with certified reports from automobile engineers establishing that E20 petrol had caused damage. According to Malhotra, the absence of such evidence weakens the basis of the AAP's campaign.

The BJP leader urged Kejriwal to stop politicising the issue of ethanol-blended petrol and focus instead on constructive discussions. He warned that continued political campaigning without technical evidence could further affect the AAP leader's credibility.

The controversy over E20 petrol has emerged as a new flashpoint between the BJP and AAP, with both sides presenting contrasting views on the policy. While the BJP has defended ethanol blending as a step towards energy security and sustainability, the AAP has raised concerns regarding its impact on existing vehicles and consumers.

As political activity increases ahead of the 2027 Punjab Assembly elections, the dispute over E20 petrol is likely to remain part of the broader political narrative, with both parties attempting to use the issue to strengthen their positions among voters.

You've used all your Instant intelligence for now. Responses may have lower quality until 11:36 PM.

Delhi braces for more rain as IMD forecasts heavy showers, traffic disruptions

New Delhi: Delhi witnessed light to moderate rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms at isolated places on Tuesday, bringing down temperatures across the national capital, while the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast more rain, including heavy showers at isolated locations.

The active monsoon conditions are being driven by a monsoon trough passing through Delhi, along with multiple upper air cyclonic circulations over North Haryana, northeast Rajasthan and adjoining regions, according to the IMD.

The SafdarjungObservatoryy recorded a maximum temperature of 33.5 degrees Celsius, 2.1 notches below Monday's reading and 0.7 degs below normal. The minimum temperature settled at 27.4 deg C, while 9.4 mm of rainfall was recorded between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm after only a trace amount was measured during the preceding 24-hour period ending at 8.30 am.

Humidity remained high, ranging between 76 per cent and 100 per cent, with variable winds blowing at around 4 kmph in the evening after southeasterly winds of 15-20 kmph prevailed during the day.

Across Delhi-NCR, temperatures remained subdued due to widespread cloud cover and rainfall. Ayanagar was among the wettest locations, receiving 49.3 mm of rain during the day, while Gurgaon recorded 78.5 mm. Other stations, including Palam (8.1 mm), Lodhi Road (3.7 mm) and Rajghat (2 mm), also reported rainfall.

The IMD said maximum temperatures across Delhi were generally in the 31-33 deg C range during the past 24 hours, remaining below normal at most places. Minimum temperatures ranged between 25 and 27 deg C.The weather is expected to remain favourable for rainfall over the coming week. On Wednesday, Delhi is likely to witness a generally cloudy sky with very light to light rain at most places, moderate rain at a few locations from early morning to noon, followed by another spell of light rain towards night. Similar conditions are expected on Thursday.

From August 7 onwards, the intensity of rainfall is likely to ease slightly, although generally cloudy skies and intermittent light rain are expected to continue through August 10. Maximum temperatures are expected to remain between 32 and 35 deg C, while minimum temperatures are likely to hover between 22 and 26 deg C.

7 held as Delhi Police bust fake placement agency that duped job seekers with bogus recruitment fees

New Delhi: The Cyber Police Station of Delhi's Central district has uncovered an alleged fake placement racket that was targeting job seekers by promising employment opportunities and collecting fraudulent registration and processing fees. Police have arrested seven people, including the alleged mastermind behind the operation, for their suspected involvement in the scam.

The action was taken following a complaint filed by a resident of Karol Bagh, who alleged that he was cheated of Rs 4,800 after approaching an agency operating under the name "Next Step Advisors". The complainant claimed that he was promised a job opportunity but was later left without employment or a refund of the money paid.

According to police officials, the victim had searched for employment opportunities online and subsequently received a WhatsApp message from a person claiming to be an HR executive. The message reportedly invited him for an interview and assured him of assistance in securing a job through the placement agency.

The complainant was asked to appear for an interview on July 25 at an office located in Uttam Nagar. During the meeting, he was allegedly told to pay charges related to registration and account opening.

The accused reportedly assured him that the amount would be returned after he joined the promised job.

However, after making the payment, the complainant neither received any employment opportunity nor got his money back. Police said.

That the contact numbers provided by the agency representatives later became unreachable, raising suspicion of fraud.

Following the complaint, Delhi Police registered an FIR on August 1 under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including sections related to cheating and joint criminal liability. The Cyber Police Station subsequently launched an investigation into the alleged fraudulent operation.

During the investigation, police examined payment records, bank transactions and mobile numbers linked to the accused. The technical analysis of financial trails helped investigators identify the location from where the alleged placement agency was being operated.

Based on the information gathered, police conducted a raid at an office in Jeevan Park, Uttam Nagar. During the search, officials found that the agency was functioning without proper registration, according to the police.

Delhi CM ropes in MPs, MLAs, councillors to boost TB elimination drive

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday said tuberculosis can be eliminated only through active public participation and called on MPs, MLAs and councillors to lead awareness efforts in their constituencies, as the Delhi government stepped up its TB elimination campaign through a sensitisation workshop for elected representatives.

Addressing the workshop organised by the National Health Mission and the Delhi State Health Mission at the Delhi Secretariat, Gupta said TB elimination had become a "people's movement" under the Centre's TB-Free India campaign and stressed that timely diagnosis, treatment and community participation were key to achieving the target.

The Delhi government also urged elected representatives to help expand the campaign to every ward and Assembly constituency by promoting awareness, encouraging early testing, and motivating patients to complete treatment.

According to the Delhi government, the capital has consistently achieved more than 95 per cent of its annual TB patient notification target set by the Centre.

The government also claimed that more than 3,300 people have enrolled as "Nikshay Mitras" in Delhi, distributing over 1.2 lakh nutritional food baskets to TB patients under the Centre's patient support programme.

Gupta appealed to industries, resident welfare associations, corporate bodies, religious institutions and citizens to become Nikshay Mitras, saying the initiative provides nutritional support as well as social encouragement to TB patients. She also said tuberculosis is a curable disease and urged people not to associate it with stigma.

During the workshop, the Health Department presented the current status and future roadmap of the TB elimination campaign. The Chief Minister reviewed awareness stalls, including one on the Nikshay Mitra initiative, and directed officials to ensure the campaign reaches every local area to increase public participation.Health Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh said the workshop was aimed at equipping public representatives to become active partners in the TB elimination drive. Participants, including MPs, MLAs, councillors, and officials, also took a pledge to promote TB awareness, encourage timely diagnosis and treatment, and support the goal of a TB-free Delhi.

Election Commission extends electoral roll revision schedule in Delhi, final roll on October 27

New Delhi: The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Tuesday revised the schedule for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the National Capital Territory of Delhi, providing additional time for key stages of the voter list updating process. The revised exercise will be conducted with October 1, 2026, as the qualifying date.

The decision to modify the timeline was taken after the Election Commission reviewed its earlier directions issued on May 14 and July 15, 2026, along with a request submitted by the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) on August 3. The revised schedule aims to ensure that all stages of the electoral roll revision process are completed effectively and systematically.

In an official order issued to the CEO, Delhi, the Commission stated that it had decided to revise the previously announced timetable for the Special Intensive Revision exercise in the national capital. The order directed all concerned authorities to implement the updated schedule and ensure smooth completion of the process.

Under the revised timetable, the house-to-house verification process conducted by Booth Level Officers (BLOs) will continue until August 17, 2026. During this phase, BLOs will visit households to verify voter details, identify eligible electors and update information in the electoral database.

The rationalisation and rearrangement of polling stations will also be completed by August 17. This process involves reviewing existing polling locations and making necessary adjustments to improve voter convenience and ensure better management of polling arrangements.

Following the completion of verification activities, the draft electoral roll will now be published on August 24, 2026. The draft list will provide voters and political stakeholders an opportunity to examine the updated records and raise concerns regarding additions, deletions or corrections.

The Election Commission has scheduled the claims and objections period from August 24 to September 23. During this period, eligible citizens can submit requests for inclusion in the voter list, while objections related to incorrect or ineligible entries can also be filed.

The next stage of the process will involve the examination and disposal of claims and objections. According to the revised schedule, this phase will continue until October 22, 2026, allowing election officials adequate time to verify applications and resolve issues raised by citizens and stakeholders.

After completing all verification procedures and addressing claims and objections, the final electoral roll for Delhi will be published on October 27, 2026. The updated voter list will become the official electoral record for future elections conducted in the national capital.

The Election Commission has instructed all officials and officers involved in the revision exercise to be informed about the revised timeline. It has also directed authorities to ensure extensive public awareness campaigns through all available communication channels.

The Commission specifically asked officials to provide wide publicity to the modified schedule so that citizens remain aware of important dates and can participate effectively in the electoral roll updating process.

Political parties will also be informed about the revised timetable in writing, the ECI stated. This step is aimed at ensuring transparency and allowing political representatives to remain engaged throughout the revision exercise.

The Special Intensive Revision is a major electoral exercise undertaken by the Election Commission to improve the accuracy and reliability of voter lists.

It involves verification of existing voter records, addition of newly eligible voters, removal of duplicate or ineligible entries and correction of errors in electoral data.

Delhi University allows merit-based admissions at 2 women's colleges after CUET rounds fail to fill seats

New Delhi: (DU) has made a special exception to its Common University Entrance Test (CUET)-based admission system, allowing Aditi Mahavidyalaya and Bhagini Nivedita College to conduct merit-based admissions in person for the 2026-27 academic session. The move is aimed at filling seats that have remained vacant despite multiple rounds of admissions through the university's regular counselling process.The decision allows the two women's colleges to consider students for undergraduate admissions through merit-based selection, alongside CUET scores, subject to the availability of seats and the university's approval. DU Registrar Vikas Gupta confirmed that both colleges had been granted permission to admit students through CUET scores as well as merit-based selection.The colleges had approached the university after repeated admission rounds under the Common Seat Allocation System (CSAS) failed to generate adequate enrolments. They had proposed considering a combination of CUET performance and Class 12 marks to fill the remaining seats. In a notice, Aditi Mahavidyalaya invited applications for undergraduate programmes for the 2026-27 academic session, stating: "This is to inform all concerned that applications are invited for merit-based admission in the undergraduate programmes for the academic session 2026-27, subject to the availability of seats and approval of the University of Delhi." HistoryThe college principal said the institution also faces a shortage of recreational spaces. With vacancies continuing year after year, Aditi Mahavidyalaya sought permission from DU to strengthen enrolment through direct, in-person admissions. Bhagini Nivedita College has also been allowed to adopt a similar process. In a notice, Principal Ruby Mishra invited applications for admission through the physical mode, stating: "Applications are invited for merit-based admission in the physical mode..."The development highlights the challenges faced by some DU colleges in attracting students through the university-wide CUET and CSAS admission framework. While the system is designed to bring uniformity to undergraduate admissions, continued vacancies at colleges located away from the city's main academic hubs have prompted institutions to seek greater flexibility in filling their sanctioned seats.

Editorial

New Taxes,New Test

Changes in tax laws are not merely a matter of figures or the budget; they are directly linked to the pockets of every citizen and the future of every industry. In the new era of the digital economy, India has taken a major decision to modernize its tax system. However, the true verdict on whether a law is modern or not is not delivered in Parliament; it emerges from the experience of the ordinary taxpayer. Therefore, the biggest question facing these new tax reforms today is whether they will simplify the system or make it even more complex.

The 'Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026' introduced in the Lok Sabha to give a new direction to the country's digital financial ecosystem and modernize the tax structure must be regarded as a crucial step in India's economic journey. Passed amidst opposition uproar and via voice vote, this bill is not merely a legislative formality but a strategic effort to align with the needs of evolving technology and a rapidly growing digital economy. Through this bill, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has proposed comprehensive amendments to three significant statutes: the 'Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007', the 'Income Tax Act, 2025', and the 'Finance Act, 2026'. Notably, this move aims to convert the 'Income Tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026' issued on June 5, 2026 into a permanent law. While replacing the ordinance issued on June 5, the government has clarified that the bill's primary objectives are to boost foreign investment, simplify the regulatory framework for digital transaction systems, and provide strategic support to key manufacturing sectors in the country. Given the rapid transformation of the Indian economy in recent years, reforming tax laws and the financial framework had become an imperative. Considering India's global success in digital payments and the emerging opportunities for foreign investment, it was essential to liberate the economy from the web of archaic and complex regulations. Against this backdrop, the new amendment is welcome, as it aims to foster a business-friendly environment, simplify statutory procedures, and boost international investor confidence in India's economic stability. However, when such significant tax laws with far-reaching consequences are passed amidst parliamentary uproar and without adequate, in-depth deliberation, it raises questions about the quality and inclusivity of parliamentary proceedings in a democracy. The failure to engage in thorough deliberation on legislation capable of reshaping the nation's entire tax system solely due to political discord must be viewed as a significant flaw in the democratic process.

A close examination of the bill's key provisions reveals a clear intent to streamline administrative and regulatory processes. The legislative changes offer much-needed relief to digital-transaction-based businesses and new startups by addressing the legal and administrative hurdles they previously faced. Provisions offering special strategic protection and incentives to the manufacturing sector will provide fresh momentum to initiatives like 'Make in India.' There is no doubt that establishing a more transparent and simplified regulatory framework for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) will help attract international capital to the Indian market. Ultimately, however, the success of these reforms will depend not merely on the laws as written, but on their actual implementation. It has often been observed in the past that laws introduced to simplify the tax system have ended up causing greater inconvenience at the implementation stage due to complex bureaucratic rules. Therefore, the administration must ensure that taxpayers and the business community do not face any undue hardship during the actual implementation of this new law.

While adopting this new path of economic reforms, it is equally crucial to assess the broader social and economic implications. In a country like India, characterized by a vast population and significant inequality, the benefits of tax reforms must not remain confined to large industrialists or a select few companies in the digital sector. While technology facilitates easier tax collection and administration, a key question remains: will the country's Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) find it easy to adapt to this new framework? As the digital economy expands, challenges such as cybersecurity, data privacy, and digital literacy are becoming increasingly acute. Although amendments to the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, claim to bring greater speed and clarity to digital transactions, it is imperative to establish robust legal and technical safeguards to address the system's technical glitches and security risks.While passing legislation amidst parliamentary chaos and opposition boycotts may be politically convenient for the ruling dispensation, it poses a grave threat to the sustainability of the nation's economic policies. Sensitive matters like tax reforms which directly impact the finances of every citizen should ideally be advanced through all-party consensus and in-depth study.

Rather than engaging in opposition for the sake of it, opposition parties were also expected to offer well-researched and constructive suggestions regarding amendments that strengthen the economy. The prevalence of a chaotic atmosphere in Parliament, rather than an objective scrutiny of economic policies, undermines the principles of democratic accountability. Even though the government claims its task is complete after passing the bill, the true test of these legislative amendments will lie in their actual implementation. The value of any law or reform is determined not merely by how modern or appealing it appears on paper, but by the extent to which it offers ease and convenience to the common taxpayer and the most marginalized sections of society. Striking a balance between transparency, accountability, and the fair rights of taxpayers while modernizing the digital financial ecosystem should be the primary duty of any progressive government. While modernizing laws is crucial, it is equally important to ensure that the administrative machinery implementing them becomes more sensitive, transparent, and citizen-centric.The tax system should be designed such that industrialists find it easy to invest, small entrepreneurs do not feel burdened by regulations, and the common taxpayer views the administration with trust rather than fear. Only if these new tax laws instead of serving merely as tools to boost government revenue genuinely foster 'Ease of Doing Business' for the nation's traders, industrialists, and ordinary citizens, can the true objective of these legislative amendments be considered fulfilled. Otherwise, this new legal framework despite its technological veneer risks getting trapped in the same old, oppressive bureaucratic structures, reducing the entire claim of modernization to nothing more than empty administrative paperwork.

On International Clouded Leopard Day, India Strengthens Conservation through Dedicated Conservation Action Plan for the Wild Cat

On the occasion of International Clouded Leopard Day, the Government of India reaffirmed its commitment to protecting one of Asia's most elusive and endangered wild cats by implementing the Clouded Leopard Conservation Action Plan (CAP). Developed under the Government of India–GEF–UNDP initiative, the Action Plan represents a comprehensive roadmap aimed at ensuring the long-term survival of the species through habitat conservation, scientific research, community participation and strengthened wildlife protection measures.

The Conservation Action Plan was formally released during the 91st meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wild Life (SCNBWL), held in Coimbatore during the second week of July 2026.

The initiative reflects India's growing emphasis on science-based wildlife conservation and integrated landscape management to safeguard vulnerable species across their natural habitats.

The Clouded Leopard is among Asia's most secretive and least-studied big cats, primarily inhabiting the dense forests of Northeast India.

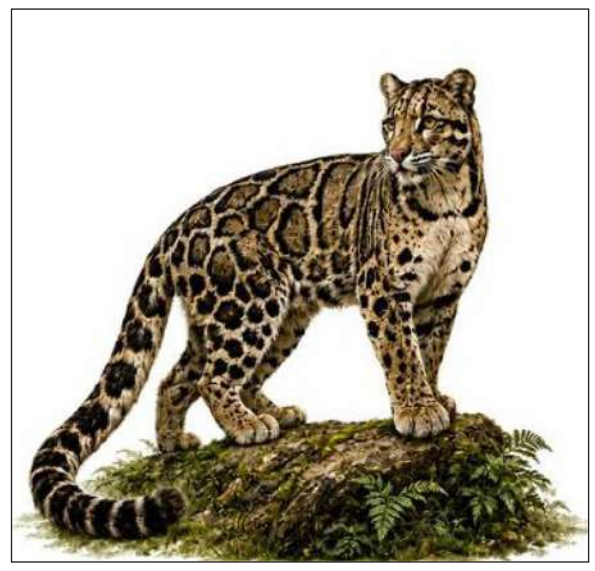
Its survival is closely linked to healthy forest ecosystems, making the protection of its habitat equally important for conserving the region's extraordinary biodiversity and ecological balance.

The newly launched Action Plan provides a strategic framework for conserving the species through habitat protection, restoration of degraded forests, scientific monitoring, strengthening ecological connectivity and increasing public participation in conservation efforts. It seeks to establish a coordinated approach involving government agencies, researchers, conservation organisations and local communities.

One of the central features of the Action Plan is its emphasis on landscape-level conservation rather than focusing only on isolated protected areas. This approach recognises that Clouded Leopards require large, connected forest landscapes to move, hunt and breed successfully, making habitat connectivity a critical conservation priority.

As part of this strategy, the Action Plan identifies 14 priority conservation landscapes across Northeast India. These landscapes have been selected based on their ecological significance and their importance for sustaining viable Clouded Leopard populations. Conservation efforts in these areas will include habitat restoration and protection of wildlife corridors linking fragmented forests.

Restoring forest connectivity forms another major pillar of the programme. By strengthening ecological corridors between protected areas and adjoining forests, the government aims to reduce habitat fragmentation, improve genetic exchange between animal populations and enhance the long-term resilience of Clouded Leopard habitats.



Institutional support for the species has also been strengthened through its inclusion under the Species Recovery Programme of the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH) Scheme. This move enables focused conservation planning, dedicated funding and improved coordination among wildlife authorities working to protect the species.

Scientific research and monitoring constitute another key aspect of the Conservation Action Plan. The programme introduces standardised monitoring protocols using modern tools such as camera traps, occupancy surveys, genetic analysis and environmental DNA (eDNA) techniques. These technologies will help scientists better understand the species' population size, distribution, movement patterns and habitat requirements.

The Action Plan also seeks to strengthen anti-poaching measures and combat wildlife crime. Enhanced surveillance, intelligence gathering and coordinated enforcement efforts are expected to reduce illegal hunting and trafficking, which continue to pose serious threats to many wildlife species across the region.

Recognising that front-line forest personnel play a crucial role in conservation, the programme places considerable emphasis on capacity building and skill development. Forest officials and field staff will receive specialised training, while digital tools such as the M-STrIPES (Monitoring System for Tigers – Intensive Protection and Ecological Status) smart application will be used to improve patrolling, monitoring and field-level data collection.

Another important component of the Action Plan is its focus on community-based conservation. The programme acknowledges that local communities living near forests are indispensable partners in wildlife protection. By promoting sustainable livelihood opportunities and encouraging community participation, the initiative seeks to reduce human-wildlife conflict while fostering long-term stewardship of natural resources.

Given that Clouded Leopards are distributed across multiple countries in South and Southeast Asia, the Conservation Action Plan also highlights the importance of transboundary cooperation. Collaboration with neighbouring range countries will facilitate coordinated conservation strategies, information sharing and joint efforts to protect habitats extending across international borders.

Climate resilience has been integrated into the Action Plan to address emerging environmental challenges. Conservation strategies will incorporate adaptive management practices that help ecosystems and wildlife respond to changing climatic conditions, ensuring that forest landscapes remain resilient in the face of future environmental pressures.

The conservation of the Clouded Leopard extends far beyond protecting a single species. As an apex forest predator and an indicator of healthy ecosystems, its survival is closely connected with the preservation of Northeast India's rich forests, biodiversity and ecological heritage. Through the Clouded Leopard Conservation Action Plan, India is adopting a holistic conservation model that combines habitat restoration, advanced scientific monitoring, technological innovation, community participation and international collaboration to secure the future of this remarkable wild cat and the forests it inhabits.

Dipka OC: Powering India's Growth through Scale, Efficiency and Sustainable Mining

Dipka OCP of South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) stands out as one of the most vivid reflections of the remarkable transformation of India's coal mining sector. From producing barely 1 million tonne of coal in 1992, Dipka OC has evolved into one of the largest coal-producing complexes in the country, recording an all-time high production of 37.5 million tonnes and despatch of 39.43 million tonnes during FY 2025-26. With the recent enhancement of Environmental Clearance to 40 MTPA and a well-defined roadmap towards 60 MTPA, Dipka OC today stands as a strategic national asset, combining scale, efficiency and sustainability in equal measure.

A Strong Start to FY 2026-27

Building upon last year's record performance, Dipka OC has begun the current financial year with equally impressive momentum.

Up to 25 July 2026, the mine has produced 12.66 million tonnes of coal, achieving 104% of the progressive production target. Even more encouraging is the 30.5% year-on-year growth in coal production compared to the corresponding period of the previous year, reflecting substantial improvement in mine productivity and equipment utilisation. Coal dispatch has been equally robust, touching 13.87 million tonnes, exceeding the progressive target by achieving 109%, thereby ensuring uninterrupted fuel supply to thermal power stations and industrial consumers.

The seamless synchronization between coal production and despatch demonstrates Dipka's operational maturity, where mining, transportation and logistics function as an integrated value chain rather than as isolated activities.

Creating Value Beyond Production

While production remains the principal indicator of mining performance, Dipka's success is equally reflected in its financial contribution.

During FY 2025-26, the mine generated an overall profit of ₹3,230.91 crore, making it one of the strongest profit centres within SECL. Profitability has improved not merely because of higher production but also due to better cost management and enhanced operational efficiency. With profit per tonne increasing to ₹827, the mine has demonstrated that large-scale production can be achieved without proportionate escalation in operating costs. These financial outcomes underline Dipka's growing contribution to Coal India Limited's overall profitability.

Strengthening the Foundation for Future Growth

Behind Dipka's impressive production performance lies a series of strategic initiatives that have strengthened the mine's long-term production capability. Among these, land acquisition and rehabilitation have emerged as the most significant enablers for sustained capacity expansion.

Following the successful possession of Malgaon village, the Area has made substantial progress towards rehabilitation and resettlement of Hardi Bazar, one of the largest and most complex R&R initiatives in the region. Rather than viewing rehabilitation merely as a statutory obligation, Dipka has adopted a development-oriented approach by initiating development of a well-planned rehabilitation township equipped with essential civic infrastructure, including roads, schools, healthcare facilities, community amenities and public utilities. This participative and transparent approach has facilitated progressive land availability for mining while strengthening stakeholder confidence and social acceptance of the project.

Infrastructure that Supports High Production

Large-scale mining demands equally robust evacuation infrastructure. Dipka possesses one of the most diversified coal evacuation systems in Coal India Limited, comprising MGR-connected silos, First Mile Connectivity (FMC) silos, railway loading facilities and road transport systems. This integrated network provides operational flexibility and enables uninterrupted dispatch to major consumers, including NTPC Sipat and several thermal power stations across western and central India. Efficient evacuation has ensured that increasing production is promptly translated into higher consumer supplies without creating stock accumulation at the pithead.

Technology Driving Productivity

Dipka's remarkable production journey has been powered by sustained investment in technology and modernization.

The mine has progressively upgraded its mining systems with 42-cubic metre electric rope shovels, high-capacity surface miners, long in-pit belt conveyor systems, advanced silo loading facilities, drone-based mine monitoring and digital mine management platforms. These technologies have significantly improved equipment productivity, optimized mine planning, reduced operational delays and strengthened monitoring of mining activities. As production volumes continue to grow, technology remains one of the strongest differentiators enabling Dipka to maintain high operational efficiency.

Responsible Mining for Sustainable Growth

Dipka has demonstrated that high production and environmental stewardship can progress together.

The Area has implemented an array of initiatives including Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Systems (CAAQMS), fog cannon-based dust suppression, wheel washing systems, plantation drives, deployment of electric vehicles and plastic waste recycling facilities. These measures have substantially strengthened environmental management while improving the overall sustainability of mining operations. Digital environmental monitoring through integrated online platforms has further enhanced regulatory compliance and operational transparency.At the same time, systematic rehabilitation and development of modern resettlement infrastructure have enabled timely land availability for future mining while maintaining constructive engagement with project-affected families. This balanced approach has significantly strengthened the long-term production outlook of the Area.

Looking Beyond 40 Million Tonnes

The recent enhancement of Environmental Clearance (EC) to 40 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) marks a significant milestone in the evolution of Coal India Limited's flagship Dipka Open Cast Mine. Rather than representing the culmination of its development, the expanded clearance lays the foundation for the mine's next phase of growth, positioning it to play an even greater role in meeting India's rising energy requirements.

Backed by a well-defined long-term development strategy, Dipka is now preparing for a substantial increase in production capacity. The mine has outlined an ambitious roadmap to expand its annual production capability to 60 MTPA, reflecting the government's broader objective of strengthening domestic coal production and enhancing national energy security.

The expansion programme is being supported by progressive land acquisition, which is creating the necessary space for future mining operations and associated infrastructure. Timely acquisition of land remains one of the most critical aspects of large-scale mining projects, enabling planned expansion while ensuring smooth operational continuity.Parallel to land acquisition, comprehensive rehabilitation and resettlement initiatives are being implemented for project-affected families. The mine management has continued to emphasise responsible development by balancing industrial growth with the welfare of local communities through rehabilitation measures and livelihood support.

Infrastructure development also forms a major component of the expansion strategy. Investments in mine infrastructure, transportation networks, coal handling systems and supporting facilities are expected to improve operational efficiency while enabling the mine to safely manage significantly higher production volumes in the coming years.

With these essential building blocks already in place, Dipka possesses the operational capability required to sustain long-term growth. The combination of resource availability, modern infrastructure, technological advancement and strategic planning provides a strong platform for achieving future production targets.Over the years, Dipka has emerged as one of the country's most successful mining operations through scientific mine planning and efficient resource management. Careful geological assessment, systematic extraction methods and effective production scheduling have helped maximise coal recovery while ensuring safe mining practices.Technological innovation has played a vital role in transforming the mine into a modern, high-performing operation. The adoption of advanced mining equipment, digital monitoring systems, mechanised operations and data-driven decision-making has significantly enhanced productivity while improving workplace safety and operational reliability.

Briefs :

Mandatory Digital Registration Introduced for Annual Manimahesh Pilgrimage

Dharamsala : The Bharmour local administration in Chamba district announced that online registrations for the annual Manimahesh Yatra will open on August 5 at 10 am, with initial slots reserved for travel on August 25, 26, and 27. The pilgrimage to the sacred lake at 4,080 meters altitude runs from Janmashtami on August 25 through Radhashtami on September 19, with authorities capping daily visitor numbers at 5,000 to manage crowd movement. Additional District Magistrate Vikas Sharma emphasized that no devotees will be granted access to the route without a valid digital pass, which must be printed and verified at designated checkpoints. Registration slots for subsequent dates will be released progressively through the official website, with authorities urging pilgrims to follow official guidelines and travel advisories throughout the event.

Law University Hosts Educational Session on HIV Prevention and Self-Assessment

Shimla : Youth Red Cross and the Himachal Pradesh State AIDS Control Society organized an awareness session for new students at the Himachal Pradesh National Law University (HPNLU) to encourage informed health choices and combat social stigma surrounding HIV. The event formed part of the institution's broader Youth Interaction Campaign aimed at student health education.

During the program, organizers introduced the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's 'Breakfree India' campaign and provided a live demonstration of the digital HIV Self-Risk Assessment Tool. Interactive presentations addressed transmission modes, preventive care, and testing resources, concluding with an open question-and-answer segment where students consulted health experts directly.In a significant initiative aimed at enhancing public health literacy and promoting responsible lifestyle choices among young adults.

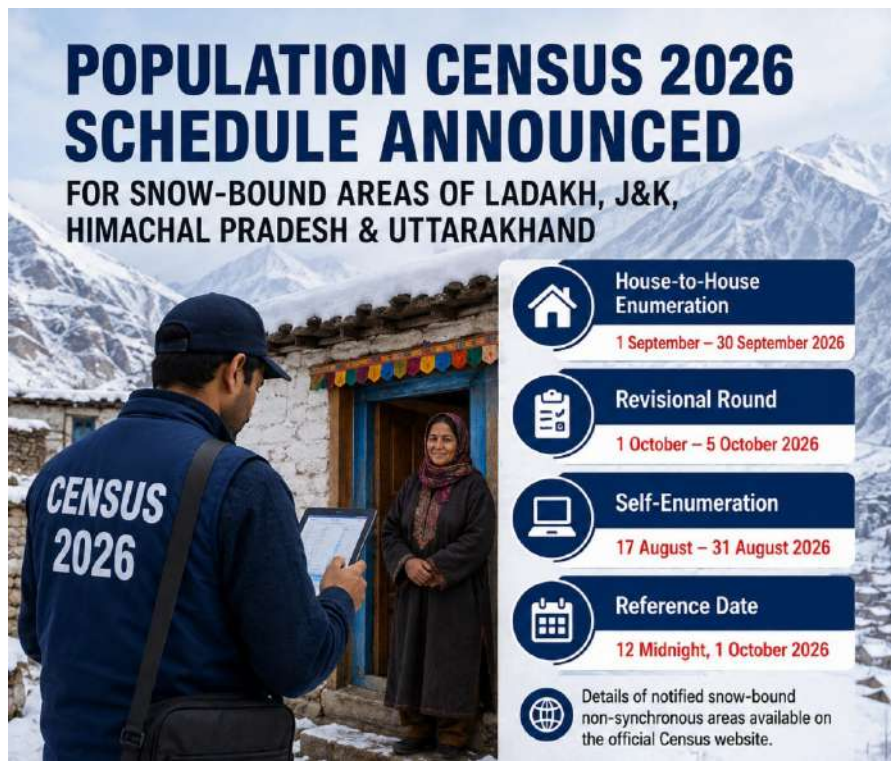
Government Schedules September Population Enumeration for Snow-Bound Northern Regions

Jammu : The Ministry of Home Affairs has issued a notification under the Census Act, 1948, establishing the timeline for population enumeration in snow-bound non-synchronous zones across Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

Field data collection in these high-altitude areas will take place from September 1 to September 30, 2026, followed by a revisional round scheduled between October 1 and October 5, 2026.

Ahead of house-to-house surveys, citizens in the designated zones will have access to a self-enumeration window from August 17 to August 31, 2026. Official guidelines specify the formal reference timeline for data collection in these regions as 00:00 hours on October 1, 2026. Further details regarding specific geographic boundaries covered under the notification can be accessed via the official government Census portal.

Centre notifies September Census in snow-bound areas of Ladakh, J-K, Himachal and Uttarakhand



New Delhi : The Central Government has announced the schedule for conducting the Population Census in the snow-bound, non-synchronous areas of Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. According to a notification issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), house-to-house population enumeration will take place from September 1 to September 30, 2026, while a revisional round will be conducted from October 1 to October 5.

The notification has been issued under Section 3 of the Census Act, 1948, along with Rules 6A and 6D of the Census Rules, 1990. It covers the Union Territory of Ladakh, the snow-bound non-synchronous areas of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, and similar regions in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. To make the process easier, the government has also introduced a self-enumeration facility from August 17 to August 31, allowing residents to submit their details before field officials begin door-to-door enumeration.

The Ministry of Home Affairs said the reference date for the Census in these areas will be 12 midnight on October 1, 2026. It also stated that details of the notified snow-bound non-synchronous areas in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are available on the official Census website.

Security Forces Evacuate 25 Trapped Nomads from Swollen Jalmusha River

Nahan : Sirmaur Police and Home Guard personnel successfully rescued 25 individuals from the nomadic Gujjar community after flash floods trapped them in the rising Jalmusha River near Katasan Temple, located roughly 25 kilometers from Nahan along the Nahan-Paonta-Chandigarh National Highway. The emergency arose following intense local rainfall that caused the river levels to surge around four families living near the bank.

Prompted by an alert from local resident Bhupendra Kumar, teams from the Sadar police station, fire brigade, and Home Guards launched an operation overseen by the Paonta tehsildar and administrative officers, while an NDRF team remained on standby.

Over three hours of heavy rain, rescuers formed a human chain using ropes to pull out every trapped individual, including a six-month-old infant and adults up to 45 years of age. SP Sirmaur NS Negi confirmed that all 25 individuals were safely relocated without any reported injuries.

In a swift and coordinated emergency response, personnel from the Sirmaur Police and the State Home Guards successfully rescued 25 members of the nomadic Gujjar community after sudden flash floods trapped them in the rising waters of the Jalmusha River. The high-risk rescue operation took place near the Katasan Temple area, situated approximately 25 kilometers from Nahan along the vital Nahan-Paonta-Chandigarh National Highway.

The dangerous situation unfolded rapidly following intense localized rainfall across the catchment areas of Sirmaur district.

The sudden downpour caused the volume and velocity of the Jalmusha River to swell dramatically within a short period, encircling a temporary settlement occupied by four nomadic families stationed near the riverbank.

As the floodwaters continued to rise, the families found themselves entirely cut off from dry land and unable to retreat to safety on their own.

The alarm was raised when a vigilant local resident, identified as Bhupendra Kumar, noticed the rapidly worsening conditions around the makeshift encampment and immediately alerted local administrative and emergency authorities. Upon receiving the urgent distress call, emergency response units from the Sadar police station, the regional fire brigade, and the Home Guards were dispatched immediately to the scene to initiate search and rescue efforts.

The rescue operation was conducted under the direct supervision of senior administrative officials, including the Paonta tehsildar and officers from the district police administration.

To ensure readiness for any unexpected escalation in water levels or complications, a team from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) was placed on standby nearby, fully equipped with specialized flood relief gear.

Planning Underway for Uttarakhand's Initial Women-Only Park in Dehradun

Dehradun : The Dehradun Municipal Corporation has begun evaluating locations to construct the state's first 'Pink Park,' a dedicated public space designed exclusively for women and children under 10 years of age. Conceived as an all-in-one recreational and wellness hub, the proposed facility will incorporate walking paths, landscaped lawns, an open-air gym, a gaming zone, public restrooms, and a dedicated reading library.

To ensure a secure environment, the municipal authority plans to staff all operational roles—including security guards and maintenance workers—entirely with female personnel. Following similar municipal projects implemented in cities like Delhi, Chennai, Mumbai, and Hyderabad, Dehradun's project remains in the site-selection phase, with final budgets and construction timelines pending official confirmation by municipal authorities.

The Dehradun Municipal Corporation has officially initiated the preliminary stages of planning for Uttarakhand's very first women-only public space, which is being referred to as a Pink Park.

This groundbreaking project aims to establish a dedicated recreational environment tailored specifically for women as well as children under ten years of age. Local authorities are currently actively evaluating potential land parcels across the city of Dehradun to identify the most suitable site for this unique urban initiative.

The core motivation behind establishing this specialized park is to provide a safe, inclusive, and comfortable outdoor environment where women can gather, exercise, and relax without any hesitation. Urban planners and municipal officials recognize that traditional public parks can sometimes feel overwhelming or inaccessible to certain demographics. By creating a space exclusively designated for women and young children, the city hopes to encourage greater female participation in outdoor public life and community activities.

Conceived as a comprehensive wellness and recreational hub, the proposed Pink Park is expected to feature a wide variety of modern amenities designed to cater to diverse interests and age groups. Among the primary features planned for the park are extensive paved walking paths that will allow visitors to engage in daily exercise, jogging, or peaceful strolls amidst carefully maintained greenery.

In addition to walking tracks, the park layout will prioritize vast landscaped lawns, offering serene open spaces for relaxation, yoga, and casual social gatherings. These green spaces are intended to serve as a peaceful retreat from the bustling urban environment of Dehradun, giving residents a chance to connect with nature in a clean and well-maintained setting.

Landslide Causes Collapse of Commercial Structures Near Surkanda Devi Shrine

Dehradun : Continuous heavy rainfall in Tehri Garhwal led to a major landslide along National Highway 707A at Kaddukhal, destroying portions of a hotel and a house near the entrance to the Surkanda Devi Temple. Video footage captured the moment the rain-soaked hillside collapsed, causing the structures to slide down the slope within seconds.

The District Disaster Management Department confirmed that no injuries or casualties occurred because vulnerable properties—including restaurants, roadside kiosks, and worker shelters—had been evacuated prior to the collapse. Preliminary findings by local authorities suggest that recent excavation activities carried out for private hotel construction may have contributed to the slope failure, prompting further administrative assessments amid ongoing regional monsoon warnings.

Continuous heavy rainfall across the Tehri Garhwal district of Uttarakhand recently triggered a major landslide along National Highway 707A, resulting in significant damage near the entrance to the famous Surkanda Devi Temple at Kaddukhal. The sudden movement of saturated earth led to the dramatic collapse of commercial and residential structures situated along the mountain slope. Local administrative bodies and emergency management personnel were immediately dispatched to the site to assess the situation and manage public safety.

The primary environmental factor leading to the slope failure was persistent downpour that had been lashing the region over several days. The continuous infiltration of rainwater deeply saturated the soil layers, drastically weakening the structural integrity of the hillside.

Himalayan Serow Spotted in Dalhousie Forests After Two Decades

Dharamsala : Field staff from the Dalhousie Forest Division have captured video footage of the rare Himalayan serow in the Dalhousie catchment area near the Kalatop-Khajjiar Wildlife Sanctuary, marking the first confirmed visual record of the mammal in the local landscape in 20 years. The Near Threatened ungulate, known for its solitary and elusive nature on steep, wooded slopes, was previously believed to have vanished from the nearby Kalatop sanctuary following an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in 2005-06.

Divisional Forest Officer Dr. Kuldip Singh Jamwal stated that the videographic documentation provides verifiable scientific proof of the animal's presence, contributing to baseline biodiversity data and guiding future habitat management strategies.

The discovery adds to a series of recent fauna documentation efforts in Chamba district, which have previously confirmed the local presence of sambar deer and Himalayan brown bears despite increasing human pressure on Western Himalayan ecosystems.

Field staff from the Dalhousie Forest Division have captured rare video footage of the elusive Himalayan serow in the Dalhousie catchment area, located near the Kalatop-Khajjiar Wildlife Sanctuary.

This significant sighting marks the first confirmed visual record of the rare mammal within the local landscape in two decades.

The unexpected sighting has brought immense excitement to forest officials, wildlife researchers, and conservationists dedicated to tracking fauna in the Western Himalayas.

The Himalayan serow, scientifically known as Capricornis thar, is a unique goat-antelope species recognized for its dark coat, large ears, and stout body structure.

Characterized as a Near Threatened ungulate on the IUCN Red List, the animal is notoriously shy, solitary, and hard to spot in the wild.

It typically inhabits steep, rugged terrain covered by dense forests, making direct encounters extremely rare even for experienced field personnel.

Orange Alerts Issued for Heavy Downpours Across Eight Himachal Districts

Shimla : The Meteorological Centre has issued orange weather alerts for eight districts in Himachal Pradesh, warning of heavy rain in isolated areas. The affected districts include Shimla, Kullu, Kangra, Solan, Mandi, Una, Hamirpur, Bilaspur, and Sirmour, while light to moderate precipitation is expected across remaining parts of the state throughout the day.

Daytime temperatures are forecasted to remain within normal parameters across the region. Minimum readings recorded across key locations showed Shimla at 17.4°C, Dharamshala at 22.3°C, Manali at 19.4°C, Mandi at 23.9°C, Solan at 21.4°C, Kalpa at 14.2°C, Bilaspur at 24°C, Hamirpur at 23.8°C, Una at 22.4°C, Bhuntar at 19.8°C, Chamba at 22.7°C, Keylong at 13°C, and Nahan at 22.3°C. Kukumseri in Lahaul and Spiti recorded the lowest minimum temperature in the state at 12.1°C.

The Meteorological Centre in Shimla has officially issued orange weather alerts for eight key districts across Himachal Pradesh, warning residents and local authorities of impending heavy rainfall in isolated areas. The severe weather warning covers a significant portion of the hill state, including Shimla, Kullu, Kangra, Solan, Mandi, Una, Hamirpur, Bilaspur, and Sirmour. Meanwhile, light to moderate precipitation is anticipated to persist across the remaining regions of the state throughout the day.

Police Case Registered Over Altered Photos of Himachal Chief Minister

Shimla : Hamirpur Sadar police station has registered a criminal case against two individuals, identified as Ravi Sharma and Himanta Chaudhary, following a complaint by District Congress President Suman Bharti regarding the distribution of altered images of Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu and offensive remarks directed at Mahatma Gandhi on social media platforms.Congress representatives strongly condemned the circulation of the modified photo, emphasizing that attempts to defame a constitutional officeholder undermine democratic values. Alongside criminal proceedings, the party announced plans to file a civil defamation suit against the accused. Hamirpur SP Balbir Singh Thakur confirmed that investigators are evaluating digital evidence and related facts to ensure appropriate legal action is taken upon concluding the inquiry.The Hamirpur Sadar police station has registered a criminal case against two individuals, identified as Ravi Sharma and Himanta Chaudhary, following a complaint by District Congress President Suman Bharti regarding the distribution of altered images of Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on social media platforms.

IFS Officer Vishwesh Negi Named India's Envoy to Iran

Shimla : Government authorities have designated 2002-batch Indian Foreign Service officer Vishwesh Negi as the nation's upcoming Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran. A former student of Bishop Cotton School (BCS) in Shimla, Negi completed his schooling in 1994 as a member of Lefroy House before building a career in international diplomacy and public service.

School leadership, led by Headmaster Mathew P. John, expressed pride in his appointment to a crucial diplomatic assignment, noting that his career exemplifies the values of integrity and leadership fostered by the institution for over 165 years. The school fraternity extended congratulations to the diplomat, highlighting that his journey serves as an inspiration to younger generations and reflects the ongoing global contributions of the institution's alumni.

The Government of India has officially appointed 2002-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer Vishwesh Negi as the nation's next Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran. This key diplomatic assignment places the seasoned diplomat at the helm of one of India's most strategically vital foreign missions. The announcement highlights his long-standing career in public service and international relations, marking a significant milestone in his diplomatic journey.

Vishwesh Negi's foundational education was rooted in Shimla, where he attended the prestigious Bishop Cotton School (BCS). Graduating in 1994 as a proud member of Lefroy House, his formative years at the historic institution laid the groundwork for his future academic and professional pursuits. His transition from a school student in the Himalayan hills to a senior diplomat represents a journey of dedication and service.

The leadership and broader community at Bishop Cotton School expressed immense pride following the public announcement of Negi's ambassadorship. Headmaster Mathew P. John commended the diplomat, noting that his career trajectory exemplifies the core values of integrity, service, and leadership that the institution has strived to instill in its students for over 165 years.

The school fraternity, including current students, faculty, and widespread alumni networks, extended their heartfelt congratulations to the newly appointed envoy. School representatives noted that Negi's career serves as a powerful source of inspiration for younger generations of students, demonstrating how strong foundational values can lead to impactful contributions on the global stage.

HARYANA

Briefs :

AI-Driven Educational Program Launched Across Kaithal Constituency Schools

Kaithal : Congress MLA Aditya Surjewala has launched an Artificial Intelligence-driven learning campaign targeting students from Classes VIII to XII in both government and private schools across the Kaithal Assembly constituency.

The initiative introduces AI-powered robots, free AI teaching coaches, and curriculum-aligned applications designed to enhance classroom learning and academic performance. First initiated at Jat Shining Star School, the campaign's latest phase was unveiled at Indira Gandhi Public School on Dhand road, where an AI robot was presented and free AI software was installed on student smartphones and school computers.

Surjewala highlighted that the initiative aims to equip both urban and rural students with future-ready skills, using classroom robots as personal learning assistants that adjust to individual learning speeds, answer questions, host interactive quizzes, and deliver real-time feedback.

CM Saini Criticizes Opposition Over Dalit Leadership and Student Recruitment Issues

Chandigarh : Speaking at Haryana Niwas, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini accused the Congress party of using backward classes and Scheduled Castes solely for political leverage. He pointed to the treatment of former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi as evidence that the opposition sidelines Dalit leaders after utilizing them during political crises, asserting that such actions disrespect marginalized communities. Addressing concerns regarding paper leaks, Saini stated that the central government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has enacted strict legislation to ensure transparent recruitment and hold offenders accountable. He contrasted current measures with the previous administration's record, alleging that past recruitment drives lacked oversight and exposed job seekers to systemic exploitation. Saini also questioned why the Punjab Assembly passed resolutions on exam leaks while failing to address issues surrounding its own state examinations.

Police Arrest Mother and Two Sons Following Armed Home Invasion in Yamunanagar

Yamunanagar : The CIA-I unit of the Yamunanagar district police has apprehended a woman and her two sons in connection with an armed robbery at a plywood businessman's home in Professor Colony. The suspects have been identified as Varsha Rani, a resident of Azad Nagar, and her sons Harsh and Manpreet. The trio was taken into custody following an investigation overseen by Superintendent of Police Kamaldeep Goyal and led by CIA-I Incharge Raj Kumar.The incident took place during the overnight hours of July 31 and August 1, when the intruders held the residential security guard at knifepoint before stealing Rs 3 lakh in cash and a silver coin from the house of merchant Bhuvnesh Bansal.

Acting on intelligence, officers detained Varsha Rani, who admitted to the crime and helped police recover Rs 50,000 alongside the stolen coin.

Haryana CM Lauds Commonwealth Athletes and Announces State-Wide Cultural Initiatives

Chandigarh : Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini praised the performance of Indian sports persons in the Glasgow Commonwealth Games, noting that the country secured the fourth spot with 39 medals. Out of India's 13 gold medals, Haryana athletes clinched seven, with female sportspersons bringing home five of them. Attributing this success to the sports policy established under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Chief Minister also announced that the state will conduct a Tiranga Yatra from August 9 to August 17 under the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, which is dedicated to Vande Mataram this year.

Educational institutions across Haryana will hold exhibitions, essay writing, painting, and speech contests focused on the national flag and local freedom fighters. Mahendragarh will host a Tiranga Concert on August 9, alongside a digital Selfie with Tiranga drive. Additionally, Haryana will mark 'Vibhajan Vibhishika Samriti Diwas' on August 14, featuring a Gurugram exhibition on August 13 and a candlelight silent march on August 14. Honoring Sant Guru Ravidas Ji's 650th birth anniversary, the Guru Ravidas Maharaj Samrasta Sankalp Abhiyan was launched on July 29 from Varanasi and will run until February 20, 2027. Sacred soil urns from Varanasi arrived in Gurugram at the Mata Sheetla Temple, and a Shri Guru Ravidas Maharaj Samrasta Yatra is scheduled to travel from Dera Sachkhand in Punjab to Varanasi between October 5 and November 5.

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has lauded the stellar performance of Indian sports persons at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games, celebrating the national contingent's achievement in securing the fourth spot overall on the medal tally with a total of 39 medals. The Chief Minister highlighted that the nation's athletes demonstrated exceptional skill and determination on the international stage, bringing immense pride to the entire country.

Out of India's total tally of 39 medals—which included 13 gold, 17 silver, and 9 bronze medals—athletes from Haryana delivered a dominant contribution by clinching 10 medals. Most notably, Haryanvi sportspersons secured seven of the nation's 13 gold medals, reaffirming the state's standing as the primary powerhouse of Indian sports.

Promotion Reservation for Scheduled Castes Paused in Haryana Senior Civil Services

Chandigarh : The Haryana Government has suspended reservation in promotions for Scheduled Caste (SC) employees in Group A and B posts while the Punjab and Haryana High Court considers the state's appeal. The Human Resources Department issued updated directions overriding its December 19, 2023 orders. This development comes after the High Court's April 1, 2025 ruling in Kamaljeet Singh and Others vs State of Haryana, which approved the 20% promotional quota for SC personnel but mandated the exclusion of the "creamy layer."Until a final judgment is delivered, promotional posts reserved for SC candidates will remain vacant. However, SC staff members who qualify for advancement through regular seniority-cum-merit will continue to receive promotions without hindrance, and their numbers will still count toward the 20% quota target. Departments have been instructed that existing promotions meeting or exceeding the 20% threshold will not block eligible officers from further consideration. The temporary pause applies exclusively to promotional positions and does not affect direct recruitment rosters for Group A and B roles across state departments, boards, corporations, and universities.

The Haryana Government has officially suspended the implementation of reservation in promotions for Scheduled Caste (SC) employees across Group A and Group B civil service positions while the Punjab and Haryana High Court considers the state's formal appeal on the matter. The decision marks a significant administrative shift in the state's human resources framework, placing a temporary freeze on affirmative action benefits in senior government cadres until a final judicial verdict is delivered.==To give effect to this policy shift, the Human Resources Department issued fresh administrative directions that supersede its previous instructions dated December 19, 2023. An official state spokesperson confirmed that the updated guidelines apply universally across all administrative wings, instructing departmental promotion committees and competent authorities to halt quota-based promotions until further clarity emerges from the court.

Widespread Contamination Uncovered in Haryana's Rural Water Supply

Hisar : Former state minister and Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) leader Sampat Singh criticized the Haryana government following central data indicating that 1,698 drinking water samples collected from rural areas failed safety tests during 2026-27. Out of 19,000 samples tested across the state, these non-potable findings expose the reality behind official claims of providing clean drinking water to every village. Singh emphasized that these statistics reflect a major risk to the well-being of lakhs of rural inhabitants rather than a minor procedural oversight.

Official reports from the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti revealed that water samples spanning 855 villages contained unsafe quantities of fluoride, iron, nitrate, sulphate, chloride, dissolved salts, minerals, alkalinity, and turbidity. The INLD leader pointed out that the central problem facing Haryana extends beyond infrastructure elements like tubewells and distribution networks, lying instead in the hazardous quality of the water being distributed. Reports of residents falling sick in districts such as Faridabad and Kaithal, combined with elevated fluoride levels in groundwater, serve as urgent warnings that source contamination cannot be addressed simply by expanding pipe infrastructure.

It remains deeply concerning that citizens in an agricultural state are forced to drink substandard water while authorities focus on publicizing mega water schemes, which cannot substitute for actual potable water. To resolve the situation, Singh called on the government to release the full list of all 1,698 affected sites, disclose the precise contaminants found, and immediately supply safe alternative water to those regions. Furthermore, he demanded that the Health Department probe occurrences of water-borne illnesses to hold negligent officials accountable, while instituting transparent scientific testing across every village. Where contamination is confirmed, authorities must install treatment plants, execute corrective remedies, conduct mandatory retesting, and refrain from treating unsafe water reports as harmless data points.

The recent central findings regarding drinking water safety across rural Haryana have sparked serious concern over public health and administrative accountability. Based on official data released by the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti for the 2026–27 period, 1,698 out of approximately 19,000 water samples collected across the state failed basic potability tests. Addressing these findings, former state minister and Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) leader Sampat Singh strongly criticized the state administration, stressing that the high rate of failed samples points to a critical public health risk affecting lakhs of rural residents rather than a simple procedural oversight.

The ministry's report highlights that non-potable water was detected across 855 villages, with testing revealing unsafe concentrations of fluoride, iron, nitrates, sulphates, chlorides, total dissolved solids (TDS), high alkalinity, and excessive turbidity.

Punjab and Haryana High Court Introduces Embedded Hyperlinks in Judicial Verdicts

Chandigarh : The division bench of Justice Anoop Chitkara and Justice Ramesh Chander Dimri at the Punjab and Haryana High Court has introduced active hyperlinks for every referenced precedent in a 32-page judgment regarding a death reference case. This modification enables legal professionals, litigants, and researchers to instantly access source decisions such as Rambhau, Vijay Kumar, and Natasha Singh by clicking on the citations directly within the text, eliminating the need to search through external databases or bound volumes.

This digital innovation turns static legal records into machine-readable, interconnected reference documents, streamlining case preparation for lawyers and providing greater transparency for self-represented litigants. By linking conclusions directly to primary sources, the system ensures verifiable citation tracking and mitigates risks associated with AI-generated legal hallucinations. The implementation positions the court at the forefront of modernizing legal research and computational law infrastructure.

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has ushered in a landmark technological advancement in judicial reporting by incorporating functional, embedded hyperlinks directly into its official written judgments. This progressive step marks a major departure from traditional legal publishing, turning standard static documents into interactive legal resources. By integrating direct links to cited precedents, the court is reimagining how judicial decisions are documented, reviewed, and utilized across the legal landscape.

This pioneering initiative was introduced by a division bench comprising Justice Anoop Chitkara and Justice Ramesh Chander Dimri. The bench unveiled the digital feature within a detailed 32-page judgment handed down in a complex death reference case. Rather than presenting static textual citations that require manual cross-referencing, the judgment seamlessly weaves digital pathways directly into the narrative of the court's legal reasoning.

At the core of this innovation is the inclusion of active hyperlinks for every single legal precedent cited throughout the ruling. Legal professionals, researchers, and interested parties reading the judgment in digital format can now click directly on a case citation to open the full text of the referenced authority. This instantaneous connectivity bridges the gap between a judge's final opinion and the body of case law that supports it.

In the 32-page verdict, notable precedents such as Rambhau, Vijay Kumar, and Natasha Singh are embedded with interactive URLs. Previously, verifying how a judge interpreted a specific line of reasoning in Rambhau or applied the principles established in Natasha Singh meant pausing reading to look up the volume and page numbers elsewhere.

High Court Resolves Decades-Old JBT Recruitment Dispute Through One-Time Settlement

Chandigarh : A Division Bench of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, comprising Justice Harsimran Singh Sethi and Justice Amarinder Singh Grewal, has resolved a long-standing recruitment dispute originating from the 1999 PRT selections under the Om Parkash Chautala administration. The decision modifies a January 8, 2014 Single Judge ruling that had previously set aside the appointments of over 2,800 JBT teachers due to irregularities in the selection process.

Under the agreed terms submitted by the Director of Elementary Education, the state government will retain all currently serving teachers—many of whom have completed over two decades of service or reached retirement—noting that reconstructing original interview scores across districts is no longer feasible. Additionally, approximately 160 writ petitioners who qualify within the merit selection zone based on academic credentials will receive fresh prospective appointments without back pay or retrospective seniority. All participating parties accepted this resolution as an extraordinary, non-precedential equitable measure to conclude the litigation.

The Division Bench of the Punjab and Haryana High Court has delivered a landmark judgment bringing finality to a decades-old recruitment dispute involving Junior Basic Trained (JBT) teachers in Haryana. The court's verdict resolves a protracted legal battle that has lingered through state administrative changes and judicial appeals for over a quarter of a century. By fashioning a comprehensive one-time settlement, the court successfully balanced the principles of legal equity with the practical realities of long-standing public service.

The origin of this historical dispute traces back to 1999, during the selection drive for Primary Teachers (PRT) conducted under the administration of former Haryana Chief Minister Om Parkash Chautala. That recruitment process became one of the most intensely contested selection drives in the state's administrative history, marred by widespread allegations of systemic irregularities, political favor, and arbitrary marking during the interview process across various districts.

In the years following the 1999 selection list, aggrieved candidates who were passed over filed scores of petitions in the High Court, alleging that original merit lists had been tampered with and deserving applicants unlawfully excluded. The ensuing litigation tangled the careers of thousands of primary school teachers in deep uncertainty, as the validity of the entire recruitment drive remained subjudice while candidates performed their daily teaching duties in government schools.

Foreign-Based Gangster Gaurav Gadoli Deported to India from UAE

Gurugram : The Haryana Special Task Force (STF) apprehended Gaurav Gadoli, an active operative of the Kaushal-Bambiha Gang and brother-in-law of jailed gangster Kaushal Chaudhary, following his deportation from the United Arab Emirates. Having fled the country in late 2023, the suspect was allegedly coordinating extortion rings and organized crime operations across Delhi-NCR, Haryana, Punjab, and Rajasthan from bases in Dubai and Georgia.

The suspect departed India from Lucknow Airport on November 30, 2023, using a fraudulent passport issued under the alias Sahil Yadav. Named in six criminal cases involving extortion, attempted murder, weapons violations, and gang activity, Gadoli had been declared a proclaimed offender in October 2022, prompting a lookout circular. His deportation marks the 13th successful return of a fugitive secured by the Haryana STF in 2026, made possible through joint coordination between the Haryana Police, NCB, CBI, and the Ministry of External Affairs.

High Court Demands Answers Over River Blockage and Green Zone Infringement in Panchkula

Chandigarh : The Punjab and Haryana High Court has granted the Haryana state counsel time until August 10 to gather instructions regarding a public interest litigation concerning environmental and civic violations in Panchkula district. The Bench, comprising Acting Chief Justice Ashwani Kumar Mishra and Justice Rohit Kapoor, heard the petition filed by Gurtej Singh against the state administration and other involved parties.

The petitioner contends that a natural seasonal watercourse (Barsati Nadi) in Mahadevpur Saketri village, situated in Panchkula's tehsil and district, has been illegally obstructed. Furthermore, the petition alleges that a pharmaceutical manufacturing unit was constructed inside a designated green zone and that public access to an ancient local temple has been restricted. The state counsel requested additional time to seek appropriate instructions, leading the court to schedule the next hearing for August 10.

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has taken strong judicial notice of a public interest litigation highlighting serious environmental and civic violations in the Panchkula district of Haryana. The High Court has formally demanded detailed answers from the state government regarding allegations of unauthorized construction, environmental degradation, and restriction of public access in the region. The legal proceedings highlight growing concerns over ecological compliance and town planning oversight within the fast-developing urban outskirts of Panchkula.

The matter came up for hearing before a division bench comprising Acting Chief Justice Ashwani Kumar Mishra and Justice Rohit Kapoor. The bench examined the preliminary submissions raised in the public interest litigation, which calls for urgent judicial intervention to address alleged illegalities permitted or overlooked by public authorities. The judges directed the state counsel to seek comprehensive instructions from all concerned administrative and regulatory departments to clarify the factual situation on the ground.

The public interest litigation was formally instituted by petitioner Gurtej Singh, who brought the legal action against the state administration, municipal authorities, and other involved corporate and private entities. In his petition, Singh outlined a series of systemic violations occurring within the territorial limits of Panchkula district, arguing that inaction by government agencies has compromised local ecological stability and infringed upon fundamental community rights.

At the center of the petition is a grave allegation regarding the illegal obstruction of a natural seasonal watercourse, locally known as a Barsati Nadi, in Mahadevpur Saketri village. Situated in Panchkula's tehsil and district, this natural channel historically served as a critical drainage corridor for rainwater runoff originating from the surrounding hilly terrain during the monsoon season.

Diamond League: Neeraj faces world-class field in Lausanne

New Delhi: Almost three weeks after winning a silver medal at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, two-time Olympic medallist Neeraj Chopra will return to action at the Lausanne Diamond League (Athletissima) on August 21, where he is set to face another world-class javelin field.

The Lausanne meet will be Chopra's third competition since returning from the lower-back injury that sidelined him in September last year. The 28-year-old began his comeback with a fourth-place finish at the Doha Diamond League in June, throwing 85.69m, before improving to a season-best 85.83m to clinch the silver medal at the Commonwealth Games.

"Although we always want the National anthem to play, I did my season's best and the comeback is going okay. There are other competitions as well. I am happy," Chopra had said after his silver in Glasgow.

In Switzerland, the Indian star will once again renew his rivalry with reigning Olympic champion

Arshad Nadeem of Pakistan and Commonwealth Games champion Rumesh Pathirage of Sri Lanka. Also in the star-studded field are Grenada's two-time world champion Anderson Peters and Trinidad and Tobago's Olympic champion Keshorn Walcott, making it one of the strongest javelin line-ups of the season.

The field also features Czech Republic's Olympic silver medallist Jakub Vadlejch, Germany's Julian Weber, world No. 2 Curtis Thompson of the United States and Switzerland's rising talent Simon Wieland.

"The five javelin superstars, who have won the last four editions of the Olympic Games and World Championships, will be present at Athletissima on August 21 for a competition of extraordinary quality," the organisers said.

Five of those throwers, including Chopra, Nadeem, Pathirage, Peters and Walcott, also competed in the Commonwealth Games final in Glasgow. Pathirage claimed the gold with a championship-winning throw of 89.75m despite difficult windy conditions, while Chopra finished second with his season-best effort of 85.83m. Peters was fourth with 83.88m, whereas Nadeem endured a disappointing outing, finishing ninth with 77.41m.

The Lausanne leg also carries added significance in the race for a place in the Diamond League Final. Chopra, the 2022 Diamond League champion, is currently seventh in the standings with five points and will be aiming to climb the table. Pathirage and Peters have already secured qualification for the final after accumulating 23 points each this season.

With Olympic and world champions once again sharing the runway, Lausanne will provide another stern test for Chopra as he continues his comeback and builds momentum for the remainder of the season.

Alexandra Eala stuns Pegula for first WTA Tour title

Washington: Alexandra Eala won her first WTA Tour singles title, beating topseed Jessica Pegula 4-6, 6-4, 6-0 in the final of the Mubadala DC Open in Washington, D.C.

The 21-year-old became the first tennis player from the Philippines to win a WTA Tour singles title on Monday.

Ranked No. 28 at the start of the week, she's projected to break into the world's top 20 for the first time ahead of the U.S. Open.

The final began on August 2 but was suspended by heavy rain and lightning, with Pegula leading 6-4, 1-2. Play resumed at midday on Monday, and Eala took control from there, closing out the match in one hour and 45 minutes, according to olympics.com.

Eala was clinical behind her first serve, winning 84.4 per cent of those points (38 of 45) to Pegula's 56.5 per cent. She converted four of her

nine break-point chances and won 79 of the 140 points played, despite hitting no aces and three double faults.

"To all my supporters, thank you guys. Especially the Filipino community. Here in DC and back home, whatever you are in the world. I really feel all the love," Eala said after the match."Before the final yesterday, I got so many sweet messages from my family and my friends.I thought to myself, 'I feel so much love'. Standing here in the middle of all this love, my first chance at a title, knowing it won't be my last.

Babar closes in on ton as Pakistan coach feels satisfied

Port of Spain: Pakistan assistant coach Asad Shafiq was thrilled with the way hisside responded to his urgings on the second day of the second Test against Pakistan in Trinidad.

Right-hander Abdullah Shafique scored his sixth Test century and skipper Babar Azam (86 not out) closed in on his first Test hundred in almost four years as Pakistan dominated the second day at Port of Spain as they look to level the two-match series in the Caribbean.

Shafique and Babar put on an unbeaten stand of 168 late in the day at Queen's Park Oval to help Pakistan reach 266/2 at stumps, trailing the West Indies by just 78 runs on the first innings in the ICC World Test Championship contest.

It was just what Pakistan needed after a disappointing first Test from their top six, with Shafiq admitting he was thrilled with the response from the duo as they scored at ease against the West Indies, according to ICC.

"It's been a very satisfying day for me as batting coach," Shafiq said.

"The way Abdullah and Babar batted, and the partnership they built, was truly

remarkable.

"That's exactly what we had been missing in the last two or three Test matches.

"They took responsibility, and seeing that gives me immense satisfaction."

Shafique wasn't originally named in Pakistan's squad for the series in the Caribbean, with the

26-year-old only earning a reprieve when Abdullah Fazal was ruled out of the tour due toa back injury prior to the first Test.

The Pakistan No.3 has already hit 10 fours and two sixes during his unbeaten innings of 107 against the West Indies and Shafiq has been impressed with his ability to choose when toattack the opposition bowlers and when to defend.

"Abdullah has only recently joined the team, but he has been scoring heavily in domestic cricket," Shafiq noted.

"He saw this opportunity and seized it with both hands.

"The hallmark of his innings was the way he punished the loose deliveries while showing respect to the good ones. That balance really stood out."

And with Babar just 14 runs away from his first Test century since December 2022, Shafiq believes his side is well placed to keep the pressure on the West Indies and move intoa dominant position in the match.

"Given the position we're in, if we bat well tomorrow, we can put ourselves in a commanding position," Shafiq said."From there, we'll be able to dictate the course of the game."

Graeme Smith relishes 50-over World Cup return to African soil

Cape Town : Former South Africa captain and ICC Hall of Famer Graeme Smith has described the return of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup to Africa after more than two decades as a landmark moment for the sport. The tournament, scheduled for 2027, will be jointly hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia, bringing cricket's biggest 50-over event back to the continent for the first time since 2003.

South Africa last staged the Men's Cricket World Cup in 2003 alongside Zimbabwe and Kenya. The 2027 edition will see the country once again play host, this time in partnership with Zimbabwe and Namibia, highlighting the growing strength of cricket across southern Africa.

Speaking at a star-studded ceremony in Johannesburg during the announcement of the 12 venues that will host the tournament, Smith said Africa had waited a long time for another opportunity to stage a global men's cricket event. He described the occasion as a well-deserved recognition of the region's contribution to international cricket.

According to Smith, the passion for cricket across the three host nations, combined with the quality of players and the enthusiasm of supporters, makes Africa an ideal destination for a tournament of this magnitude. He said the continent's vibrant cricket culture deserves to be showcased on the global stage.

The former skipper also stressed that the Cricket World Cup continues to occupy a unique and prestigious place in world cricket despite the rapid evolution of the sport through multiple formats and franchise leagues. He believes lifting the ODI World Cup remains the ultimate ambition for international teams.The 2027 tournament will be the 14th edition of the Men's Cricket World Cup and will feature 14 teams, marking the first time since the 2015 tournament that the competition will be contested by more than 10 nations. The expanded format is expected to make the event more competitive and inclusive.Drawing comparisons with the recently concluded 2026 FIFA World Cup, Smith noted how the participation of 48 nations created an atmosphere of global celebration, bringing together diverse cultures and passionate supporters from around the world.He expressed hope that cricket would witness a similar festival-like atmosphere during the 2027 World Cup, with fans from participating nations travelling to South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia to support their teams and experience the unique hospitality of the host countries.

Smith said global sporting events held every four years carry unmatched significance because of their rarity and prestige. According to him, the Cricket World Cup has built a rich tradition over several decades, making it the most coveted trophy in One-Day International cricket.He added that while various ICC tournaments are highly competitive, the ODI World Cup continues to stand apart because of its history, stature and emotional significance. Every international cricketer, he said, dreams of winning the World Cup, making it the pinnacle of the sport. The expansion from 10 to 14 teams has also received Smith's strong support. He believes the decision reflects the steady growth of cricket worldwide and provides emerging nations with a valuable opportunity to compete against the game's leading teams on its biggest stage.According to Smith, the quality of cricket among developing nations has improved considerably over recent years, while fan engagement has grown significantly across new markets.

Sindhu seeded ninth, Satwik-Chirag fifth

New Delhi: Japan Open champion PV Sindhu will be seeded ninth for the upcoming BWF World Championships, while the 2022 Asian Games gold medallist combination of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will begin the tournament as the fifth seeds in men's doubles.

The World Championships will be held at the Indira Gandhi Stadium in New Delhi from August 17 to 23, with India fielding two entries in each of the five events. The country has at least one seeded player or pair in four of the five categories.

Apart from Sindhu and Satwik-Chirag, former World Championships bronze medallist Lakshya Sen has been seeded 14th in the men's singles, while the mixed doubles pair of Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto are the 15th seeds.

Qualification for the World Championships was based on the BWF world rankings published on April 28, while the seedings have been determined using the latest rankings released on July 28.

Reigning men's singles world champion Shi Yuqi of China has been named the top seed, while South Korea's An Se Young leads the women's singles seedings.

Mandaviya urges CWG medallists to build India's sporting future

New Delhi: union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday felicitated India's medal winners from the 2026 Commonwealth Games, congratulating the boxing, judo and para-athletics contingents for their historic performances in Glasgow.

The event celebrated three of India's most successful teams at the Games. While the boxers topped the medal standings with 10 medals, including seven gold and three silver, the judokas produced their best-ever Commonwealth Games campaign with four medals, including two historic golds. The para-athletics team was also honoured after delivering a memorable performance in Glasgow.

The medallists received cash rewards of Rs 30 lakh for gold, Rs 20 lakh for silver and Rs 10 lakh for bronze in recognition of their achievements.

Interacting with the athletes, Mandaviya encouraged them to think beyond their competitive careers and contribute to the growth of Indian sport by mentoring the next generation.

Referring to the recently expanded Khelo India programme, backed by a Rs 36,000-crore investment, he urged the athletes to consider starting sports academies after retirement.

"Let us not just win a Commonwealth Games medal with the aim to bag a government job. I urge all of you to run sports academies once you retire from your active career," Dr Mandaviya said, adding that the athletes' mission should be "India firs"While you were playing for the gold in Glasgow, we launched the expanded Khelo India scheme by investing a total of Rs. 36000 Crore, that will take care of greater continued investment in the growth of Indian sports in the coming years," he added.With the Asian Games just weeks away, the union Minister asked the athletes to carry the confidence from Glasgow into the continental event."I want all of you to use this morale boost to win more gold medals at the 2026 Asian Games. Those who have won silver and bronze must strive for gold, while those who have won gold must sustain this level of excellence," he said.

Cabo Verde keeper Vozinha signs with Colo-Colo

Santiago: Colo-Colo has completed the signing of Cabo Verde international goalkeeper Vozinha for the rest of Chile's 2026 domestic season, the club said.

The 40-year-old passed a medical before concluding paperwork at Colo-Colo's Santiago headquarters.

"Together with our president, Anibal Mosa, Vozinha signed his contract and officially became a new Colo-Colo player. Welcome to the Colo-Colo family," the club said in a social media post on Monday.

Vozinha arrived as a free agent after parting ways with Portuguese second-division side Chaves in June.

Colo-Colo did not provide details of the deal but local media reported it would initially run until December, with the option to extend for another year.

Vozinha was one of the standout players of the World Cup in June and July, helping Cabo Verde reach the knockout stage at its first appearance at the tournament. The African team's run endedin the round of 32, when it pushed Argentina to extra time before falling 3-2, according to Xinhua.

Vozinha kept a clean sheet in his team's opening draw with eventual champion Spain before repeating the feat in the final group stage match against Saudi Arabia. His move to Colo-Colowas announced last week but was delayed by visa problems and personal issues.

Sri Lanka & Pakistan stars climb latest ICC women's ODI and T20I player rankingd

Dubai: Sri Lanka captain Chamari Athapaththu has been rewarded for her outstanding performances against Pakistan with a career-best rating in the latest International Cricket Council Women's T20I Player Rankings. The experienced all-rounder played a pivotal role in Sri Lanka's series victory over Pakistan in Dambulla, leading her side from the front with two impactful innings.

Athapaththu scored a quickfire 39 off 22 deliveries in the opening T20 International before following it up with an explosive 40 from just 15 balls in the second match. Her aggressive batting provided Sri Lanka with strong starts in both games and helped the hosts secure an unassailable lead in the three-match series.

Her consistent performances earned her a one-place rise in the ICC Women's T20I Batting Rankings, taking her to a career-best 729 rating points. The latest achievement further cements her status as one of the world's premier batters in the shortest format of the game.

Another major contributor to Sri Lanka's success was Imesha Dulani, who recorded the biggest rankings improvement among the home side's batters. Her remarkable unbeaten 101 off just 64 balls in the series opener guided Sri Lanka to a comfortable six-wicket victory.

The maiden century not only proved decisive in the match but also propelled Dulani 33 places up the ICC Women's T20I Batting Rankings to 23rd position, marking one of the week's most significant gains in the rankings.Pakistan's players also made notable progress despite losing the series. Opening batter Muneeba Ali climbed four places to 30th in the T20I batting rankings after registering fluent scores of 42 off 24 balls and 45 off 30 deliveries in the first two matches.Those performances also earned Muneeba a career-best rating of 538 points, reflecting her growing consistency at the top of Pakistan's batting order and her ability to provide aggressive starts in the shortest format.

The week's biggest leap in the batting rankings belonged to Shawaal Zulfiqar, who produced an extraordinary rise of 869 places. Her impressive knocks of 63 and 48 against Sri Lanka lifted her to a career-best 52nd position, making her one of the standout performers in the latest rankings update.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka also enjoyed success in the ICC Women's Championship One-Day International series, defeating Pakistan 2-1 in Hambantota. The series victory was accompanied by significant improvements in the ICC Women's ODI Batting Rankings for several Sri Lankan players.

Harshitha Samarawickrama continued her excellent form with a composed 71 off 92 balls in the deciding ODI.

World Cup qualification the main focus for new Ireland coach Gary Wilson

Bready (Ireland): Recently-appointed Ireland coach Gary Wilson is focused on helping his side qualify for next year's ICC Men's Cricket World Cup.

Wilson only took over the coaching reins in June from outgoing coach Heinrich Malan and the former Ireland international has wasted no time in making his priorities clear for the ever-improving Irish side.

Ireland have only ever qualified for the men's 50-over World Cup on three occasions - Wilson played in their two most recent visits in 2011 and 2015 - and the new head coach is determined

to ensure his charges earn the right to appear at the 14-team tournament in 2027 that will beco-hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

"We're laser-focused on 50-over cricket right now for that reason," Wilson told BBC Sport.

"I've been lucky enough to be part

of two and they are amazing experiences."

Ireland's quest to feature at the 2027 World Cup will go up a notch when they host Afghanistan

for a five-match ODI series commencing on Wednesday in what will be the side's first 50-over matches in more than 12 months.

From there they will then play at the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier event, where the top four sides from the 10-team tournament will progress to the main event in 2027, according to ICC.

While that tournament might be still some time away, Wilson wants his players to create their own history and chase lofty goals during his time in charge.

"Irish cricket is really in its infancy in many ways and there's been a lot of firsts within the last20 years," he said.

"We've had Ed Joyce as the first player to play for England, we've had the first World Cup in 2007, we've had the first Test win, why can't we go on and do something huge at a World Cup? If you'd said 30 or 40 years ago where the Irish rugby team would be now, you'd have got laughed at.

"Whether it's in our lifetime or not, one day we will do something amazing. A challenge I've put to this group is to create their own firsts.

MARKET

BSE Sensex		Nifty 50		Nifty 500		Nifty Next 50		Nifty 100		Nifty Bank		Nifty Midcap 100	
Close	Percent chenge	Close	Percent chenge	Close	Percent chenge	Close	Percent chenge	Close	Percent chenge	Close	Percent chenge	Close	Percent chenge
78,428.95	-0.27%	24,614.90	-0.64%	23,690.15	-0.47%	74,210.55	-0.53%	25,719.15	0.62%	57,907.20	-0.58%	63.491.60	-0.29%
Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open
78,639.03	79,132.97	24,774.30	24,703.90	23,802.85	23,771.45	74,608.70	74,551.50	25,880.45	25,816.80	58,247.95	58,068.95	63,679.30	63,739.90
High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
79,143.15	78,211.87	24,703.90	24,427.95	23,771.45	23,573.60	74,667.20	74,037.15	25,816.80	25,553.40	58,068.95	57,352.65	63,679.30	63,278.95

Top Gainers

Company	Current	% Gain
Apollo Hospital	9,050.00	2.61
Hindalco	1,020.00	2.52
Trent	3,107.70	1.89
Jio Financial	265.00	0.76
ITC	289.00	0.70

Top Losers

Company	Current	%Loss
Grasim	3,138.00	-3.74
HDFC Life	535.95	-3.10
Bajaj Auto	11,600.00	-2.16
Reliance	1,290.90	-2.13
Max Healthcare	1,077.00	-2.13

Commodities

Commodity	Price	Change (%)
Gold Aug 05	141,998.00	903.00 0.64
Silver Sep 04	219,480.00	2,734.00 1.26
Crudeoil Aug 19	7,639.00	-6.00 -0.08
Naturalgas Aug 26	262.00	-2.40 -0.91

Stock markets end lower with Nifty below 24,700

Mumbai : Indian stock markets on Tuesday ended lower, snapping a four-session winning streak. The markets responded as investors booked profits amid weekly derivatives expiry.

At the time of close, Sensex was down 210.08 points or 0.27 per cent at 78,428.95, and the Nifty was down 159.40 points or 0.64 per cent at 24,614.90. Nifty midcap index shed 0.3 per cent, while smallcap index was up 0.2 per cent.

Indian rupee ended marginally lower at 95.38 per dollar on Tuesday compared with the previous close of 95.34.

Among the sectors, most of the indices remained largely negative. Nifty Realty emerged as the top loser, declining 2.4pc. It was followed by Nifty Oil & Gas (-1.1pc), Nifty FMCG (-0.9pc), Nifty Private Bank (-0.7pc), Nifty IT (-0.8pc), Nifty Bank (-0.6pc), Nifty Consumer Durables (-0.7pc), Nifty Infra (-0.9%), Nifty Auto (-0.4pc).

Further, on the gaining side were Nifty Media, advancing 2pc, Nifty Metal, which gained 0.9pc.Around 150 stocks touched 52-week high. These included Ather Energy, Deepak Fertilisers, Gabriel India, Siemens, Sai Life Sciences, Gland Pharma, Welspun Corp, RBL Bank, Balrampur Chini Mills, Nestle India, Bajaj Auto, Pidilite Industries, United Spirits, Dr Lal PathLab, Sona BLW, TVS Motor, Titan Company, Craftsman, Federal Bank, among others.

On Nifty, the gainers included Hindalco, Trent, Apollo Hospitals, Jio Financial and Eternal, while on the losing end were Grasim Industries, HDFC Life, Max Healthcare, Bajaj Auto, and Reliance Industries.

Market participants are closely tracking geopolitical developments in the Strait of Hormuz and the outcome of the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) ongoing monetary policy meeting, as both factors are expected to play a crucial role in determining the near-term direction of domestic financial markets, according to Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments Limited.

Nair said investors continue to keep a close watch on the evolving situation in the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most strategically important oil shipping routes. Any improvement in geopolitical stability in the region could significantly reduce concerns over disruptions in global crude oil supplies and help restore confidence across international markets.According to him, greater clarity regarding developments in the region would likely ease upward pressure on crude oil prices.

Hyundai strengthens EV ownership confidence with assured buyback prog for CRETA Electric

Chennai: Passenger car makers Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL) today announced introduction of its Assured Buyback Program for the CRETA Electric, offering customers 60% assured buyback value till 3-years/up to 45,000 kms.

The initiative addresses one of the key considerations influencing EV purchase decisions i.e. future resale value and further reinforces Hyundai's commitment to making electric mobility more accessible, convenient and confidence inspiring, a company statement said.

Commenting on the announcement, HMIL MD and CEO Tarun Garg said "The next phase of electric vehicle adoption in India will be driven equally by advancements in vehicle technology and by greater customer confidence. Hyundai CRETA Electric has been engineered to deliver an exceptional ownership experience backed by Hyundai's global EV expertise and the trust of the iconic CRETA brand. Our Assured Buyback Program, offering 60% assured buyback value, reflects our confidence in the product's outstanding quality, reliability and long-term value."

"Together with our Battery-as-a-Service initiative, expanding charging infrastructure and future EV roadmap, we are building one of India's most comprehensive EV ecosystems, enabling customers to embrace electric mobility without compromising on convenience, confidence or peace of mind", he said.

Quick TV to invest Rs 100 crore in AI-powered microdrama production

Bengaluru: ShareChat-owned Quick TV on Tuesday announced India's first dedicated AI-powered microdrama slate, unveiling six original AI-assisted series and committing to invest up to Rs 100 crore over the next year to expand AI-driven content production and strengthen its artificial intelligence capabilities.The announcement builds on the launch of *Main Amar Hoon*, which the company described as one of India's first AI-assisted microdrama series. The production used a hybrid pipeline combining live-action filmmaking, motion capture, advanced visual effects and generative AI to create cinematic fantasy settings while preserving actors' performances. Quick TV said the approach is designed to augment, rather than replace, human creativity.Mohalla Tech, the parent company of ShareChat and Moj, said the planned investment will be directed towards scaling AI-generated entertainment, expanding production capacity and building AI talent as demand for premium short-form content continues to grow.The company said its AI-generated microdramas have recorded Episode-20 completion rates of around 50 per cent, indicating strong viewer engagement with the format.Leading the August slate is *Pashu Samrat*, an epic fantasy about a farmer who discovers divine powers. Other titles include *Badshah Benaqab*, a royal action drama; *Port Ka King*, a rags-to-riches story of a Goan fisherman; *Odiyan*, inspired by Indian folklore; *Jadugar Rajkumar*, a fantasy adventure centred on a prince with magical powers; and *Hamari Lucky Jia*, a family drama about a young girl with healing abilities. Quick TV said the six originals span fantasy, action and family genres but share a common AI-assisted production workflow that combines traditional filmmaking with advanced digital tools to deliver mobile-first entertainment.

Sitharaman tables Tax Amendment Bill to ease rules for offshore investment funds

New Delhi: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday introduced the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 in the Lok Sabha, proposing sweeping changes to India's tax framework aimed at attracting overseas capital, simplifying rules for offshore investment funds and strengthening the country's position as a global fund management destination.

The proposed legislation seeks to replace the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026, promulgated on June 5, which had granted tax exemptions on interest income and capital gains earned by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) from investments in government securities.

A key feature of the Bill is the significant relaxation of eligibility conditions for Eligible Investment Funds (EIFs) managed from India. The government has proposed removing several existing requirements that offshore funds currently need to satisfy to claim tax exemption on their global income.

If enacted, eligible offshore funds will no longer have to meet conditions such as maintaining a minimum of 25 investors, limiting a single investor's participation to 10 per cent, restricting investments in a single entity to 25 per cent of the corpus, avoiding investments in associate entities, or maintaining a minimum monthly average corpus of Rs 100 crore.

The government believes these changes will make India a more attractive location for global fund managers by reducing regulatory complexity and creating a more competitive investment ecosystem.

The Bill also proposes tax incentives for foreign companies engaged in electronics manufacturing supply chains. Under the proposal, foreign entities storing and selling electronic components through customs-bonded warehouses for supply to Indian manufacturers will receive tax exemptions, a move aimed at supporting domestic manufacturing and improving supply chain efficiency.

In another measure to promote India's gem and jewellery sector, the Bill seeks to exempt income earned by eligible foreign companies from the sale of rough diamonds through notified special trading zones in India. The benefit will remain available until March 31, 2041, providing long-term policy certainty for global diamond traders.

The Statement of Objects and Reasons accompanying the Bill says additional taxation measures are required to comprehensively achieve the objectives that were initially addressed through the June ordinance. It adds that evolving global economic conditions warrant a timely legislative response to facilitate foreign capital inflows and improve India's investment climate.

India's data breach cost hits record Rs 25.5 crore: IBM

Bengaluru: India's average cost of a data breach rose to a record Rs 25.5 crore in 2026, a 15.9 per cent increase from Rs 22 crore last year, as cyberattacks became more sophisticated with growing use of artificial intelligence (AI), according to IBM's 2026 Cost of a Data Breach Report released on Tuesday.

The report said the average number of compromised records per breach also increased to 39,500 in 2026 from 38,200 in 2025, highlighting the growing scale of cyber incidents.

It found that 26 per cent of malicious breaches in India were AI-generated, reflecting the increasing use of AI

by cybercriminals to launch faster and more scalable attacks.

However, AI adoption in cybersecurity remains limited. Only 32 per cent of Indian organisations reported extensive use of AI and security automation, while 36 per cent had limited deployment and 32 per cent reported no use at all.

According to the report, organisations without AI and security automation suffered the highest average breach cost of Rs 31.6 crore, compared with Rs 21.3 crore for organisations with extensive deployment. Breaches also took significantly longer to identify in organisations without AI-enabled security, averaging 236 days compared with 175 days for those with extensive automation.

Shadow AI, referring to unauthorised use of AI tools within organisations, added an average Rs 1.79 crore to the cost of a breach, making it one of the leading cost-increasing factors along with regulatory non-compliance and cloud migration.

FSSAI orders Dabur to halt sale of products carrying '100 Percent' claims

New Delhi: Dabur India has been directed by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to immediately stop selling a range of food products carrying "100 per cent" claims, with the regulator stating that such descriptions are ambiguous, cannot be independently verified, and may mislead consumers.

The order covers multiple products, including honey, apple cider vinegar, virgin coconut oil, sesame oil, cow ghee, coconut water, and coconut milk that were marketed using claims such as "100 per cent Natural", "100 per cent Pure", "100 per cent Purity Guaranteed", "100 per cent Organic" and "100 per cent Tender Coconut Water".

According to FSSAI, these claims violate the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards (Advertising & Claims) Regulations, 2018, which govern how food products can be advertised and labelled.

The regulator clarified that its action is related to product labelling and advertising practices and should not be interpreted as an indication that the products are unsafe or adulterated.

FSSAI noted that it had already issued an industry-wide advisory in May 2025 asking food business operators to avoid using "100 per cent" claims on labels, packaging, and promotional material.

The regulator had said the phrase is not defined under existing food safety regulations and may create an inaccurate impression of absolute purity or superior quality.

Apart from the marketing claims, FSSAI also raised concerns over the use of the Jaivik Bharat logo on Dabur Himalayan Organic Apple Cider Vinegar and Dabur Organic Honey, stating that the products were displaying the certification mark without a valid FSSAI organic endorsement.

The Jaivik Bharat logo is intended to identify certified organic food products that comply with India's prescribed organic certification standards.

FRAI warns against growing illicit trade, market distortion in India's online retail ecosystem

Chennai: Leading retailers, trader associations and policymakers on Tuesday flagged the alarming rise of illicit trade and the increasing prevalence of unfair market practices in India's online retail ecosystem. At a seminar organised by the Federation of Retailers Association of India (FRAI) Tamil Nadu State Chapter on "Confronting Illicit Trade in Modern Markets" retailers, trader associations and policymakers together deliberated on two rapidly growing threats impacting India's retail ecosystem — the alarming rise of illicit trade and the increasing prevalence of unfair market practices.The participants expressed serious concern over the growing circulation of counterfeit products, illegal distribution channels and non-compliant goods across markets, while also highlighting how predatory pricing, deep discounting and unchecked expansion of certain quick commerce and e-commerce models are creating severe imbalances for small retailers and traditional businesses.The seminar highlighted that both illicit trade and unfair market practices are adversely affecting genuine businesses, government revenues, consumer trust and the livelihoods of lakhs of small traders across the state. In his address, FRAI TN Chapter President C.Chelladurai said "Illicit trade is no longer merely a commercial issue; it has become a serious threat to consumer safety, fair competition and the livelihoods of millions of honest retailers. Counterfeit and illegally sourced products not only expose consumers to substandard and unsafe goods but also undermine the credibility of legitimate businesses that operate within the law. We remain committed to working closely with the government, law enforcement agencies and industry stakeholders to strengthen enforcement, raise consumer awareness and build a transparent retail ecosystem where genuine businesses can thrive."Retailers further highlighted that while quick commerce and e-commerce platforms are rapidly transforming the retail landscape and making products instantly accessible to consumers, the same ecosystem is also creating serious concerns around the rapid spread of illicit trade and counterfeit

products.Participants also stated that flash sales, unrealistic discounting, aggressive pricing strategies and the constant push for ultra-fast delivery have created an environment where consumers are often unable to differentiate between genuine and counterfeit products.They also pointed out that today almost everything — from food products, groceries and personal care items to skincare products, electronics and even premium mobile phones worth thousands of rupees — is being delivered within minutes through quick commerce and e-commerce platforms. However, this extreme accessibility and race for cheaper prices are also opening dangerous entry points for banned, illegal and counterfeit products to penetrate the market at an unprecedented scale.According to the retailers, illicit traders and unethical sellers are increasingly exploiting these rapidly expanding digital platforms to push counterfeit and non-compliant products into the market, taking advantage of weak monitoring mechanisms and the growing consumer obsession with deep discounts and instant availability. Retailers warned that consumers are gradually becoming more price-sensitive than quality-conscious, creating fertile ground for illicit trade to flourish unchecked across digital commerce channels. While the rapid rise of such platforms is adversely impacting consumers through the circulation of low-quality and potentially unsafe products, it is equally devastating for genuine offline retailers who spend years building trust, ensuring product authenticity and serving their local communities with accountability.Retailers emphasised that unfair market practices, uneven competition and aggressive pricing structures are making it increasingly difficult for traditional traders to survive despite working tirelessly for 14 to 18 hours every day to sustain their businesses, educate their children and support their families. Participants stressed that this is no longer merely a business issue, but a serious social and livelihood concern affecting millions of honest small retailers across the country.During the seminar, participants highlighted that the rapid expansion of platform-driven retail models and the growing circulation of counterfeit and non-compliant products are creating serious challenges for traditional businesses. Retailers said while small traders operate with limited margins and high accountability, several large platforms continue to dominate markets through aggressive discounting and rapid expansion strategies, while cautioning that illicit trade and counterfeit goods are harming genuine businesses.

Owned, Printed, Published and Edited by **Dewang Goyal**, published at 209,2nd Floor, Gagan Deep Building, Rajendra Place, Near Metro Station, Delhi and printed at The Printing Hub, 6/18, Shakti Complex, Samaypur, Main GT Road, North West Delhi, Delhi-110042, E mail-aryanage@gmail.com, Website - www.aryanage.com. Editor- **Dewang Goyal** RNI- DELENG/2013/50604, Mob.8454927803