



**HIMACHAL PRADESH
FISCAL DEFICIT BREACHES
PRESCRIBED LIMITS**

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**UNIFORM
CIVIL CODE**

**U'KHAND WAQF
BOARD TO INTRODUCE
NEW 'NIKAHNAMA' IN
LINE WITH UCC**

PAGE 5

**INDIA READY
TO HELP WITH
RUSSIA-UKRAINE
CONFLICT: EAM**

PAGE 8



21 RABI AL-AWWAL 1448H

NAMAZ TIME

FAJAR	04:10 AM
ZOHAR	12:45 PM
ASAR	05:30 PM
MAGHRIB	07:22 PM
ISHA	09:15 PM

SUNRISE/SUNSET



13 HRS
10 MINS
RISE 05:42 AM
SET 06:52 PM

MOONRISE/MOONSET



13 HRS
52 MINS
RISE 05:31 AM
SET 07:23 PM

ARAB WORLD ►P9



**WEST BANK FOOD
INSECURITY SOARS,
WFP TO SLASH
BENEFICIARIES**

India sends more aid to flood-hit Nepal



NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday that India has dispatched two more aircraft with 21.5 tonnes of relief assistance for Nepal as the Himalayan nation was hit by devastating floods last week.

"India continues humanitarian assistance to Nepal. India dispatched two more aircrafts (C-130 Js) with 21.5 tonnes of re-

lief assistance for Nepal, including forensic kits and medical supplies. The additional assistance will further strengthen ongoing relief and rescue efforts and support communities affected by the floods," the MEA said on social media platform X.

According to MEA, the fresh tranche of relief material was handed over to the local government.

India and Belgium back all efforts for early resolution of conflicts: PM Modi

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday that India and Belgium believe in the rule of law, dialogue and diplomacy, asserting that both nations support efforts towards early resolutions of ongoing conflicts.

Addressing a joint press meet with Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever following their meeting at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi, PM Modi described people-to-people ties as the "greatest strength" of India-Belgium relationship. He said that India and Belgium are strengthening connection between the start-ups and have reached an agreement to build capacity in the maritime sector. PM Modi mentioned that both nations



Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets with Belgium PM Bart De Wever at Hyderabad House, in New Delhi.

will soon also conclude a Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement.

"Today, we also discussed regional and global developments in detail. Both India and Belgium believe in the rule of law, dialogue, and diplomacy. Whether it is Ukraine or West

Asia, we support all efforts for an early resolution of conflicts and peace. Eradicating terrorism in all its forms remains our shared commitment."

PM Modi emphasised that the partnership between India and Belgium has made remark-

able progress over the past decade and the scope of bilateral cooperation has expanded beyond traditional sectors to strategic areas like defence and clean energy.

He said that India and Belgium are collaborating on modern defence

equipment, such as the Zorawar tank and developing one of the world's largest green ammonia projects in Andhra Pradesh's Kakinada.

"The ties between India and Belgium are deeply rooted in history. The courage and sacrifice of thousands of Indian soldiers in Belgium during the First World War remain a vital part of our shared memory. Today, democratic values, a market economy, and strong people-to-people ties make us natural partners," PM Modi stated.

He termed defence and security cooperation as a "key pillar" of India-Belgium ties and announced that both nations have agreed to enhance military exchanges and training cooperation. (IANS/UNI)

ED raids 14 locations in toll plaza scam

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Directorate of Enforcement's (ED) Allahabad Sub-Zonal Office on Tuesday conducted search operations at 14 premises spread across Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, West Bengal, and Delhi-NCR under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

The action forms part of an ongoing investigation into the "Toll Plaza Scam" involving large-scale fraudulent toll collection.

The ED probe was initiated on the basis of an FIR registered by Uttar Pradesh Police concerning fraudulent practices at Atraila Toll Plaza in Mirzapur and several other toll plazas across the country. In January 2025, the state police had exposed a major fraud at Atraila Shiv Gulam Toll Plaza. (IANS)

Quad pushes results-oriented agenda

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Thursday hosted the Quad Sherpas in New Delhi, where they reviewed progress across key pillars, including maritime security, emerging technologies and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).

"Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri hosted the Quad Sherpas' Meeting today in New Delhi. The Sherpas welcomed the strong momentum in Quad interactions and practical activities, and reviewed progress across key pillars including maritime security, economic prosperity, critical and emerging technologies, and HADR. They also discussed potential new initiatives for announcement at the next Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting," the Ministry of External Affairs said on so-



cial media platform X.

Along with Misri; Hiroyuki Namazu, Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan; Eleanor Jane Lawson, Deputy Secretary of Strategic Planning and Coordination Group at Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT); and Sergio Gor, US Ambassador to India, participated in the meeting.

"The Quad is moving forward with clear purpose. At today's Sherpa meeting, I joined Australian DFAT Deputy

Secretary Elly Lawson, Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Hiroyuki Namazu, and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri to set an action plan for concrete deliverables, advancing US President Donald Trump and Secretary Marco Rubio's commitment to a strong, results-oriented Quad. Proud to take up the mantle of Quad Sherpa and to help turn that vision into action!" Ambassador Gor said on X after the meeting.

Lawson and Secretary Misri met earlier on Thursday and discussed matters of bilateral interest.

"Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met Eleanor Jane Lawson, Deputy Secretary of the Strategic Planning and Coordination Group of DFAT Australia, and discussed matters of bilateral interest and regional and global issues of mutual interest, ahead of the Quad Sherpas Meeting in New Delhi today," MEA said on X. (IANS/UNI)

JPC formed to examine FCRA Amendment Bill

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

A 31-member Joint Committee of Parliament (JPC) has been formed to examine the proposed Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, and the move is the next stage of legislative scrutiny of the contentious legislation, said officials.

According to a Lok Sabha bulletin issued on Thursday, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP from Bihar's Bettiah, Sanjay Jaiswal, has been appointed Chairperson of the joint parliamentary panel. The committee, constituted by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, comprises 21 members from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha.

The panel has been tasked with examining the provisions of the proposed FCRA



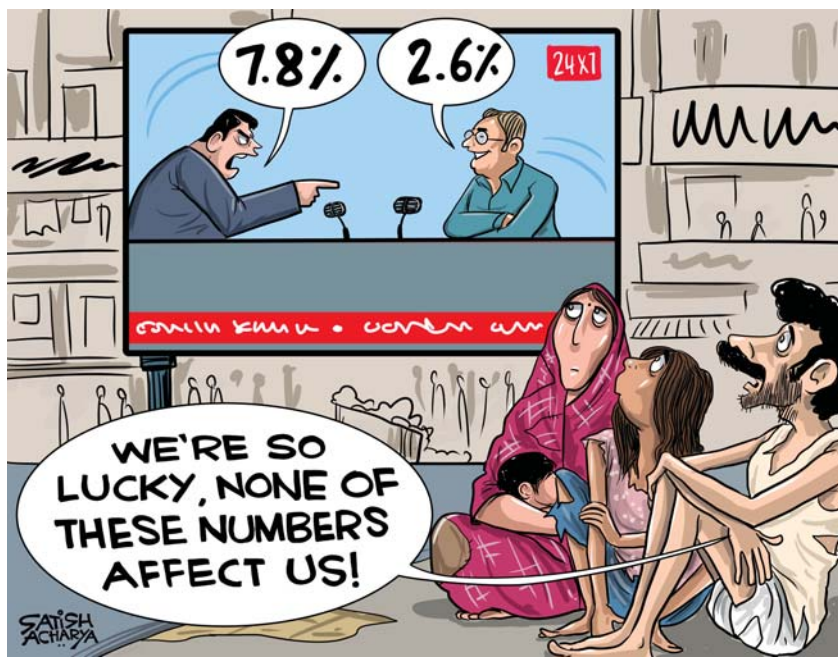
amendment and considering changes before the Bill proceeds further through Parliament.

The committee includes 14 BJP members and five Congress members. The representation also includes two members each from the Janata Dal-United, the Trinamool Congress, and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. The Samajwadi Party, the Indian Union Muslim League, the Shiv Sena, the Nationalist Congress Party-Sharadchandra Pawar, the Nationalist Congress Party, and the Telugu Desam

Party have one member each.

Among the BJP members from the Lok Sabha are Bhartruhari Mahtab, Tejasvi Surya, Kamlesh Jangde, Mukesh Kumar Chandrakant Dalal, Nishikant Dubey, Vishnu Dayal Ram, Ananta Nayak, and Arvind Dharmapuri. The Congress is represented by Anto Antony, Captain Viriarto Fernandes, Muhammed Hamdullah Sayeed, and Kali Charan Munda. The Bill was referred to a joint committee on August 12 amid strong opposition protests. (IANS)

CARTOON CAROUSEL



US warns EB-1 green cards may shut for India

WASHINGTON, SEP 3

The United States has warned that employment-based first-preference green cards for Indians could become unavailable within weeks because of heavy demand, adding fresh pressure to an already severe backlog that has left another major category closed to Indian applicants.

The State Department, in its September Visa Bulletin, said high demand and use of EB-1 immigrant



visa numbers by applicants chargeable to India could exhaust the country's allocation before the US fiscal year ends on September 30.

"High demand and number use by aliens chargeable to India in the EB-1 visa category may necessitate mak-

ing the category unavailable in the coming weeks if India's pro-rated limit in the EB-1 category is reached before the fiscal year ends," the State Department said.

EB-1 is the employment-based first-preference category, covering priority workers including people with extraordinary ability, outstanding professors and researchers and certain multinational executives and managers. (IANS/UNI)

Housing prices rise 59% in 4 Years

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Housing prices across India's top seven cities surged 59 per cent between 2021 and 2025, significantly outpacing the 34 per cent increase in residential construction costs during the same period, according to property consultancy Anarock.

The widening gap between the cost of building a home and its selling price has been driven by factors including rising land values, location premiums, developer

margins and changing demand-supply dynamics, Anarock said.

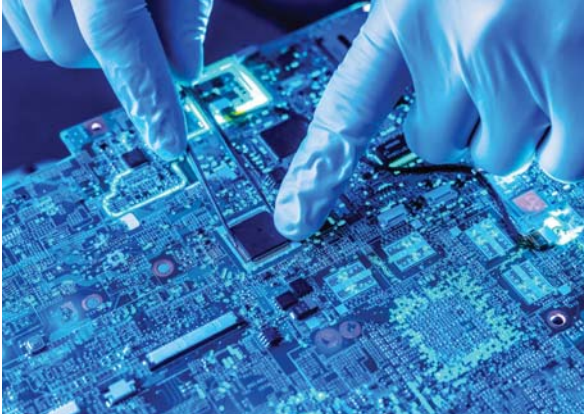
The 25-percentage-point divergence could intensify affordability pressures for homebuyers while creating margin challenges for developers. The average construction cost of a standard-plus residential project increased at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.9 pc, rising from Rs 2,681 per square foot in 2021 to Rs 3,604 per square foot in 2025. (IANS)

UP pitches for semiconductor, electronics investments in Taiwan outreach

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
LUCKNOW, SEP 3

A high-level Uttar Pradesh government delegation visiting Taiwan from September 1 to 4 has held strategic discussions with global technology companies MediaTek and ADATA Technology, pitching the state as a destination for semiconductor, electronics and advanced manufacturing investments.

Led by Alok Kumar, Principal Secretary, IT & Electronics, the delegation met MediaTek Chairman Ming-Kai Tsai to discuss the company's



India operations and explore opportunities for expansion and diversification in Uttar Pradesh.

The talks focused on the state's growing electronics ecosystem,

manufacturing infrastructure and potential role in strengthening the semiconductor supply chain.

The delegation also met the senior leadership of ADATA

Technology to explore avenues for supporting the company's expansion plans in India.

Perna Sharma, Additional CEO, Invest UP, and Manish Meena, Additional CEO, YEIDA, participated in the discussions.

Uttar Pradesh used its Taiwan visit and participation at SEMICON Taiwan to take its semiconductor and electronics investment pitch directly to global technology companies, opening discussions on expansion, manufacturing and supply-chain opportunities.

UP floods: 32 districts hit, 18 killed in rain-related incidents

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
LUCKNOW, SEP 3

More than 18 people have lost their lives in rain-related incidents across Uttar Pradesh in the past 24 hours, most of them due to house and wall collapses, as incessant rainfall continues to batter the state.

Rising water levels in several rivers have led to waterlogging in around 32 districts, with 22 of them severely affected, according to the Relief Commissioner's office.

The swollen Mandakani River in Chitrakoot, which has



been affecting several districts in Madhya Pradesh and hilly areas amid continuous rainfall, rose by another 2.5 metres on Thursday after its water level had fallen below the danger mark. The rise has affected around 36

villages.

Teams from the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) and the district administration have rescued around 150 people from flood-affected areas along the Mandakini. Food, relief supplies and

medical assistance have also been provided to those affected by the flooding.

Due to excessive rainfall, Prayagraj is also witnessing a sudden rise in the water levels of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers, while the Sharda river in Lakhimpur Kheri is flowing 32 centimetres above the danger mark.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath conducted an aerial survey of flood-affected areas in Farrukhabad on Thursday to assess the situation.

Pappu Yadav case: Court sets next hearing for Sept 20

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
PRAYAGRAJ, SEP 3

A local court has given Independent MP from Purnia Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav a final opportunity to appear in the case related to his protest against the theft of Ram Temple donations in the Parliament premises by disguising himself as a saint.

A hearing was held in the Prayagraj District Court in the criminal case against MP Pappu Yadav.

The next hearing in the case will now be held on September 20.

The statement of the second witness, Advocate Ajay Kumar Tiwari, was recorded on behalf of the plaintiff in ACJM Court Room No. 10 on Thursday.

The ACJM Court, Prayagraj, had summoned Pappu Yadav today. But neither Pappu Yadav nor any lawyer on his behalf appeared in court.

In the previous hearing, witness Sunil Kumar Verma recorded his statement on behalf of the plaintiff. BJP leader Sushil Kumar Mishra has filed a case against Pappu Yadav.

CM Yogi meets Bengal MLA, Abhijit Mukherjee in Lucknow

S.K. MUKHERJEE
GHAZIABAD, SEP 3

Durgapur MLA Laxman Chandra Ghorui of West Bengal and Abhijit Mukherjee, Metropolitan Media In-charge of Yuva Morcha and a member of the Railway Board Advisory Committee, paid a courtesy visit to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Lucknow.

The meeting focused on social and cultural issues concerning the Bengali community living in Uttar Pradesh. Discussions included



ways to strengthen dialogue between the community and the state government and promote Bengali language, culture and traditions.

The Bengali community has a presence in several parts of Uttar Pradesh, including Ghaziabad, Noida, Varanasi and Lucknow, and contributes to the

state's social, educational, cultural and economic activities.

Ghorui also invited Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to visit Durgapur during the upcoming Durga Puja celebrations, with the aim of strengthening cultural ties between West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.

BJP systematically harmed Western UP: Akhilesh Yadav

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
LUCKNOW, SEP 3

Samajwadi Party National President Akhilesh Yadav has alleged that the BJP, for political gain, has systematically harmed the economy of prosperous Western Uttar Pradesh by creating communal and caste divisions. "The BJP government has devastated agriculture and industry, ruining handicraft exports, and preventing recruitment to government jobs. Sports are not receiving encouragement. Education is



being denied. Alternative professions like art are being shot at. Labour unrest has been allowed to grow, leading to the collapse of factories," he charged.

Mr Yadav, in a statement here on Thursday, stated that farmers are

being oppressed under the BJP government.

Attempts are being made to seize farmers' land. Small businesses are being harmed by GST corruption.

Mr Yadav stated that the BJP government is ruining the education system.

There is a conspiracy to close schools and Jauhar University. There is a conspiracy to intimidate women and keep them at home. The handicrafts and crafts of Western Uttar Pradesh are being deliberately destroyed.

Congress seeks action over purification of Haldwani rally site

NAIM SAGAR
SAHARANPUR, SEP 3

Congress workers of the Backward Classes Department staged a protest at the Saharanpur district headquarters over the reported purification of a rally venue in Haldwani following Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's public meeting. Led by Uttar Pradesh Congress OBC Department Advisory Committee member Ashok Saini and district president Sandeep Singh Rana, the protesters marched from near the Income Tax Building to the Collectorate and sub-



mitted a memorandum addressed to the President to the City Magistrate.

Congress leaders condemned the reported incident and called for an impartial inquiry and strict action against those responsible. Ashok Saini described it as contrary to constitutional principles of

equality and non-discrimination, while former state vice-president Mehrban Alam demanded a fair investigation. District president Rana alleged that the incident reflected an attempt to divide people on religious and caste lines and sought action from the BJP leadership.

Ashish dies on the spot in car-bike collision on Pinna Bypass

KABIR
MUZAFFARNAGAR, SEP 3

A 32-year-old labour contractor, Ashish, son of Pramod, died on the spot after his motorcycle collided with a car on Pinna Bypass in the City Kotwali area on Thursday. Ashish, a resident of Parasoli village under Budhana police station, was reportedly travelling to Dadheru to pay wages to workers associated with a brick kiln.

The collision was severe, leaving Ashish fatally injured. Following the accident, police reached the spot, managed the situation and removed



the damaged vehicles to restore traffic movement.

Some passers-by reportedly informed police that alcohol bottles were visible inside the damaged car. Police seized the vehicle and began investigating the circumstances of the crash, including the driver's condition and the

presence of the bottles. Ashish's death left his family in distress. He was the father of four young children and was reportedly the family's earning member. Police are examining the circumstances of the collision and the role of the car driver as part of the ongoing investigation.

Residents seek action against paper mill



SHAKEEL SAIFI
MEERUT, SEP 3

Residents of Panchli Khurd and nearby areas submitted a memorandum seeking action against a paper mill on Baghat Road over alleged pollution.

They claimed smoke, contaminated water, waste burning and excessive machinery noise are affecting thou-

sands of people across around eight villages and nearby colonies. Residents also raised concerns over trucks causing traffic congestion and accident risks.

They urged authorities to investigate the allegations and take strict action, including closure of the mill if environmental violations are established.

Hashmi Law College Hosts Farewell



MEHTAB AMROHVI
AMROHA, SEP 3

A farewell ceremony for final-year LLB and BA LLB students was held at Hakeem Mehtab Uddin Hashmi College of Law, Amroha.

The programme featured poetry, ghazal and cultural performances by students, along with emotional reflections on their college memories. District Bar

Association President Kapil Kumar Chikara and Secretary Arshad Bharti advised students to pursue their careers with honesty, discipline, hard work and dedication.

College officials, faculty and staff also extended their best wishes, while students thanked teachers and recalled their academic journey.

Woman drug trafficker arrested with 500 grams of charas in Shamli

ISTEKHAR BHATI
SHAMLI, SEP 3

Kandhla police have arrested a woman allegedly involved in the illegal trafficking of narcotic substances and recovered 500 grams of charas from her possession under the ongoing Operation Savera campaign. The accused has been identified as Shabnam, wife of Shakir, a resident of Mohalla Sheikhzadgan in Kandhla.

According to Inspector Bachchu Singh, the action was carried out under the direction of Shamli Superintendent of Police N.P. Singh as



part of the police campaign against the illegal drug trade. Police said the arrest was made based on information received from an informer.

A case has been registered against the woman under relevant provisions of the NDPS Act, and she was sent to jail after legal proceedings on

Thursday. Police are also investigating the alleged forward and backward links of the drug network.

Police said the woman's husband and son had previously been jailed in narcotics-related cases, while other family members are also suspected of involvement.

Krishna Janmashtami celebrations held at DAV Public School

MOHD ISRAR
BAGHPAT, SEP 3

Shri Krishna Janmashtami was celebrated with enthusiasm at DAV Public School, Baghpat, on Wednesday. The programme began with the presentation of a peacock feather to Principal Pravesh Kumar, followed by the ceremonial lighting of the lamp. Students from the music group presented Krishna Vandana and devotional bhajans, creating a spiritual atmosphere.

Children from Nursery to Class 3 participated in a colourful cultural presentation,



dressed as Radha, Krishna, Sudama and Gopis. They portrayed scenes from Krishna's birth and childhood leelas, attracting appreciation from the audience. The young participants, dressed as Krishna with flutes and peacock feathers, added to the festive spirit.

Principal Pravesh

Kumar extended Janmashtami greetings and encouraged students to follow the teachings of Lord Krishna and the Bhagavad Gita.

He particularly emphasized the values of truth, sincerity and performing one's duties. Teachers and students attended the celebration.

HM Shah inaugurates 400-bed hospital tower in Saket

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU NEW DELHI, SEP 3
Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday inaugurated a new 400-bed hospital tower at Max Smart Super Speciality Hospital in Saket, expanding the facility's total capacity to around 1,200 beds.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta attended the inauguration as the guest of honour, while Delhi Health and Family Welfare, Transport and IT Minister Pan-kaj Kumar Singh and South Delhi MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri



were also present. The expansion is aimed at strengthening tertiary and quaternary healthcare services across more than 22 specialities and meeting the growing demand for specialised treatment in Delhi-NCR and other parts of the country.

The new tower features advanced technologies, including the Da Vinci Xi surgical robot and Mako Total Knee Replacement Robot, to support precision-based and minimally invasive procedures.

MP Raghav Chadha challenges 'shifted' tag in Punjab draft voter rolls

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU NEW DELHI, SEP 3
Rajya Sabha member Raghav Chadha on Thursday accused the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Punjab government of deliberately marking his voter identification record in Mohali as "permanently shifted" in the draft electoral rolls prepared under the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR), alleging that the action violated guidelines meant to safeguard the names of public representatives.

Chadha, who was



elected as an AAP Rajya Sabha member from Punjab in 2022, joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in April this year along with six other AAP MPs, invoking the anti-defection merger provision.

Taking to X, Chadha said, "The AAP government in Punjab has now taken its politics

only draft electoral rolls and not the final version, adding that corrections could still be made during the ongoing Claims and Objections process.

"Thankfully, these are only the Draft Electoral Rolls, not the Final Electoral Rolls. Names are corrected during the 'Claims and Objections' process, which is ongoing. The Final Electoral Rolls will be published in October 2026. I am already in the process of availing the remedies provided under SIR guidelines," he said.

DMRC Honoured for People-First HR Practices

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU NEW DELHI, SEP 3
The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has been conferred with the prestigious 'Overall Excellence in HR Practices for Greater Good' award at the HR for the Greater Good Conclave 2.0', organised by XLRI Jamshedpur, an official said on Thursday.

The conclave was held at the XLRI Jamshedpur campus from August 31 to September 2, the official said in a statement, adding that XLRI is one of India's oldest and most respected business schools, currently celebrating 75 years of excellence.

Anuj Dayal, DMRC Corporate Communications Principal Executive Director, said that during the conclave 23 organisations participated and presented their practices and perspectives on key themes, including AI Adoption in HR, Impact of Labour Reforms on Labour Practices, Environment and Sustainability: Green HRM, Total Rewards and Career Management, and Digital Transformation of Business and HR/IR Processes.

"Competing with more than 20 organisations from both the Private Sector and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), DMRC was recognised for its overall excellence in HR practices," he added.

NEET-UG 2026: HC orders NTA to release results of candidates named as CBI witnesses

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU NEW DELHI, SEP 3
The Delhi High Court has directed the National Testing Agency (NTA) to declare within 24 hours the NEET-UG 2026 re-examination results of two candidates whose results were withheld over allegations linked to the question paper leak, observing that they had not been named as accused in the CBI chargesheet.

A single-judge Bench of Justice Jasmeet Singh said that the candidates could not be treated as persons against whom criminal



culpability had been established, as the chargesheet filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) was yet to be tested in accordance with law. "At this stage, therefore, the petitioners cannot be treated as persons against whom

2026 (Re-NEET) results and permission to participate in the ongoing counselling process.

The petitioners had initially appeared for NEET-UG 2026, conducted on May 3, but the examination was subsequently cancelled following allegations of a question paper leak. They thereafter appeared in the Re-NEET examination.

The CBI investigated the alleged leakage and, after completing its probe, filed a chargesheet in which the two petitioners were named as witnesses and not accused.

Jewar toll plaza to offer free passage to eligible local residents

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU NOIDA, SEP 3
Eligible residents of villages affected by or located around the Yamuna Expressway in the Jewar region will be allowed toll-free travel at the Jewar toll plaza from September 17, BJP MLA Dharendra Singh said on Thursday.

The facility, aimed at addressing a long-standing demand of local residents and farmers, will be available after a prescribed verification and registration process.

Eligible residents will be required to



submit proof of local residence, their Aadhaar card and vehicle registration certificate at the designated office of the toll plaza manager.

Singh said the decision followed several rounds of discussions with the Yamuna Ex-

pressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) and the expressway management. During the discussions, the commuting difficulties faced by local residents and the contribution of farmers were highlighted.



समस्त क्षेत्रवासियों को
श्री कृष्ण जन्माष्टमी
की
हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं।

फज़ील अहमद
राष्ट्रीय भवनवासी एवं भवनवा
जन अधिकार पार्टी (नो)

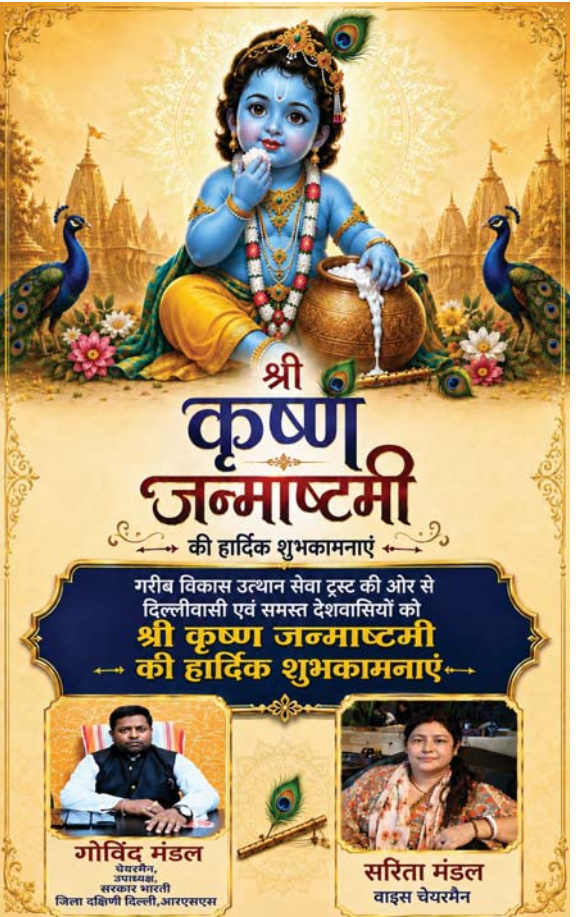
Property dealer shot dead outside gym in Narela

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU NEW DELHI, SEP 3
A property dealer was shot dead by three unidentified assailants outside a gym in north Delhi's Narela on Thursday morning, officials said. Police

have said that they suspect the killing may be linked to an extortion attempt.

According to officials, the deceased has been identified as Pramod Dahiya, a resident of Haryana's

Sonapat district. The incident took place at around 7 a.m. when the attackers allegedly arrived on a scooter, opened fire at Dahiya and fled the spot after the shooting, officials said.



श्री कृष्ण जन्माष्टमी
की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं

गरीब विकास उत्थान सेवा ट्रस्ट की ओर से
दिल्लीवासी एवं समस्त देशवासियों को
श्री कृष्ण जन्माष्टमी
की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं

गोविंद मंडल
चेयरमैन,
आर्य समाज,
संस्कृत भारती
जिला दक्षिणी दिल्ली, आर्य समाज

सरिता मंडल
वाइस चेयरमैन

SC directs SCBA election panel to decide complaints over executive member poll

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU NEW DELHI, SEP 3
The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the Election Committee of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) to consider and dispose of applications and complaints concerning alleged discrepancies and irregularities in the SCBA Elections 2026.

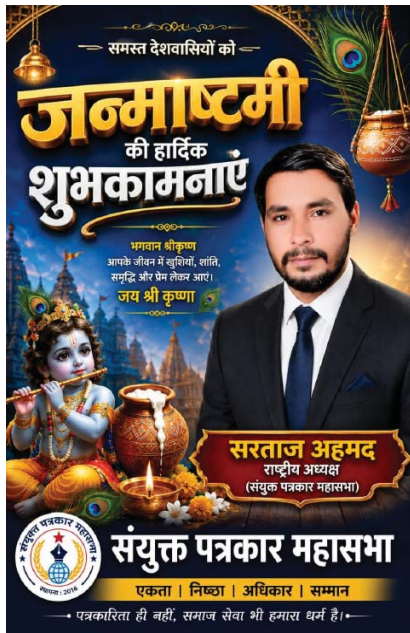


The direction came during mentioning of applications filed by six candidates who contested for the post of Executive Member. The applicants have sought appropriate directions, including a re-election limited to the Executive Member post and/or recounting of ballot papers, citing alleged discrepancies in the election process.

The issue was raised after advocate Vikas Malhotra, a candidate for Executive Member, brought to the Election Committee's notice an alleged error in the printing of ballot papers. It was claimed

that in some ballots, the photograph of the candidate bearing Ballot No. 17 was printed against No. 18, while in others, the photograph of Ballot No. 18 appeared against No. 17.

The applicants have contended that such discrepancies could potentially confuse voters and prejudice the candidates concerned, raising questions about the fairness and integrity of the electoral process. They have said their objective is not to undermine the SCBA or its election process but to ensure that the mandate of its members is accurately reflected.



समस्त देशवासियों को
जन्माष्टमी
की हार्दिक
शुभकामनाएं

भगवान श्रीकृष्ण
अपको जीवन में सुख, सान्ति,
समृद्धि और प्रेम लेकर आए।
जय श्री कृष्ण

सरफ़ाज़ अहमद
राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्ष
(संयुक्त पत्रकार महासभा)

संयुक्त पत्रकार महासभा
एकता | निष्ठा | अधिकार | सम्मान
— पत्रकारिता ही नहीं, समाज सेवा भी हमारा धर्म है।—



राष्ट्रीय किन्नर संघ की
राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्ष
नाजिम बाजी
ने समस्त देशवासियों को
जन्माष्टमी
की हार्दिक
शुभकामनाएं

भगवान श्रीकृष्ण
अपको जीवन में सुख, सान्ति,
समृद्धि और प्रेम लेकर आए।
जय श्री कृष्ण

नाजिम बाजी
(राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्ष, राष्ट्रीय किन्नर संघ)



समस्त क्षेत्र एवं प्रदेशवासियों को
जन्माष्टमी
की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं
एवं बधाई

कीरत पाल सिंह
जिला महामंत्री प्रदेशिय
जूनियर, हाईस्कूल शिक्षक संघ, हरिद्वार



समस्त क्षेत्र एवं प्रदेशवासियों को
श्री कृष्ण जन्माष्टमी
की हार्दिक
शुभकामनाएं
एवं बधाई

भूप सिंह
जिला मंत्री भाजपा, हरिद्वार



समस्त क्षेत्र एवं प्रदेशवासियों को
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उदय सिंह पुंडीर
प्रदेश अध्यक्ष-उत्तर भारतीय क्षत्रिय महासभा
जिलाध्यक्ष-ईंटक हरिद्वार



समस्त क्षेत्र एवं प्रदेशवासियों को
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अरविंद प्रधान
पीसीसी उत्तराखंड

No FIR even after 24 days: Kharge writes to Nadda

Seeks action over 'shuddhikaran' row

TFP | PRASHANT SHARMA
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Congress National President Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday urged Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha and Union Minister J.P. Nadda to ensure that swift action is taken over the "Shuddhikaran" (purification) ritual, carried out at the Ram Leela Maidan in Haldwani following a public meeting addressed by him.

In a letter addressed to Nadda, Kharge recalled the assurance given by Nadda and urged him to direct the Uttarakhand government to take appropriate action against the organisations and individuals involved in the incident. Kharge expressed concern over the fact that no FIR had been registered against those responsible for the alleged ritual even several days after the incident.

"I am astonished that even 24 days after the incident, not even an FIR has been registered against the organisations and individuals responsible for carrying out this despicable act in Haldwani. The most objectionable aspect of this episode was that at the very spot in Ramlila Maidan where I had addressed the rally, a 'purification' ritual was performed



-- an act contrary to the spirit of the Constitution of India and to human values," Kharge said in the letter.

The Congress chief also reiterated the position expressed by Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi that the practice of 'Shuddhikaran' is directly associated with untouchability.

"There are numerous such examples; during the Mahad Satyagraha, when Babasaheb Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar drank water from the tank, individuals driven by caste arrogance performed a purification ritual involving the pouring of 108 pots of cow urine and cow dung amidst the chanting of mantras. Merely chanting mantras or performing a 'havan' does not sanctify a casteist purification ritual," Kharge said.

He further argued that the matter should not be viewed merely as an issue involving him personally or his position as the Con-

gress president, but as a larger question concerning people who continue to face caste-based discrimination.

"This issue goes beyond me personally or my position as the President of the Indian National Congress; it is connected on a broader level to the sentiments of crores of people who continue to face this cruel reality every day. It is necessary to teach a lesson to such wrongdoers," Kharge wrote.

The Congress chief subsequently urged Nadda to ask Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami to ensure the registration of an FIR against those allegedly involved in conducting the purification ritual at the Ram Leela Maidan after his public meeting in Haldwani.

The controversy erupted after a group of people conducted a "purification" ritual at the Ramlila Ground in Haldwani following Kharge's rally on August 8.

HP fiscal deficit breaches prescribed limits

86% revenue spent on salaries and subsidies

SHIMLA, SEP 3

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) on Thursday painted a worrying picture of Himachal Pradesh's financial health, flagging the rapidly rising debt burden, breach of fiscal deficit limits and shrinking availability of funds for developmental and capital expenditure.

The CAG report for the financial year 2024-25, tabled in the state Assembly by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, said the state's fiscal deficit had crossed the prescribed limits under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management



(FRBM) framework.

The state's revenue deficit stood at Rs 6,804.61 crore, equivalent to 2.94 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), while the fiscal deficit touched Rs 12,611.05

crore, or 5.44 per cent of the GSDP.

According to the report, the state government failed to keep these deficits within the targets prescribed under the FRBM Act. The state's outstand-

ing liabilities were also significantly higher than the targets recommended by the 15th Finance Commission and the state's own budget estimates.

The audit report highlighted that as much as 86 per cent of the state's total revenue receipts were being consumed by committed expenditure and subsidies, leaving only a small portion available for infrastructure development and capital investment.

Salaries, pensions and gratuity alone accounted for around 70 per cent of the revenue expenditure, it said.

The CAG also raised concerns over the increasing expenditure on power subsidies and debt relief measures, saying that such commitments were putting additional pressure on the state's finances.

With only about 14 per cent of revenue resources left for developmental activities and capital expenditure, the state faces constraints in creating infrastructure and making long-term investments, the report noted.

The CAG said that Himachal Pradesh's economy registered a growth of 9.20 per cent during 2024-25. (IANS/UNI)

Maharashtra CM Fadnavis rules out move to national politics

MUMBAI, SEP 3

Amid ongoing speculation regarding his potential shift to national politics in New Delhi, Maharashtra Chief Minister, Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday firmly put an end to the rumours, clarifying that he will continue to serve in the state until at least 2029. Speaking at the infra conclave organised by a Marathi TV channel, CM Fadnavis addressed the recurring reports about his move to the national Capital, noting that his future remains in the hands of his party leadership.

"My party and my leaders will decide my role. The day they decide, I will certainly go to Delhi. But as of today,

Says he will remain in Maharashtra until 2029



Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis

it is my view that I am not going to Delhi until 2029," he stated.

Dismissing the frequent media chatter, he added with a touch of humour: "Some of my well-wishers believe that going to Delhi would

be a promotion for me, while others think that if I leave, a burden will be lifted off their heads. Whether people like it or not, my leaders will keep me in Maharashtra until 2029. Every two to three months, whenever

someone lacks news or wants to create hype, they send me to Delhi. I actually enjoy it."

The CM's clarification comes after Shiv Sena (UBT) leader and Rajya Sabha MP, Sanjay Raut, on Thursday made a dramatic claim, stating that despite Devendra Fadnavis ruling out a shift to national politics, Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants him in New Delhi to entrust him with a major responsibility. Speaking to the media, Raut claimed that discussions regarding Fadnavis' elevation are actively underway within the inner circles of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

"Prime Minister Modi wants to bring Devendra Fadnavis to Delhi and assign him a significant responsibility. This much I know for a fact," he said. Elaborating further on the internal deliberations of the RSS, Raut claimed that the Sangh wants a key leader who is not currently part of the Union Cabinet to be appointed as the Deputy Prime Minister.

"Many states dream of reaching a \$1 trillion economy, but Maharashtra is closest to achieving it because we have already reached \$660 billion," Fadnavis said, adding that, "If we maintain a sustained growth rate, we will undoubtedly become a \$1 trillion economy by 2030." (IANS/UNI)

Congress ends alliance with Raijor Dal

GUWAHATI, SEP 3

The Assam Congress on Thursday formally ended its political alliance with the Akhil Gogoi-led Raijor Dal, accusing the regional party of repeatedly violating the norms and principles governing the opposition alliance. The decision takes immediate effect and was taken on the direction of Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president and Deputy Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi.

An organisational circular announcing the decision was issued by APCC General Sec-

retary (Organisation) Ramanna Baruah.

The Congress said the alliance had been formed ahead of the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections to bring together regional and Left parties, including the Raijor Dal, with the objective of presenting a united opposition against what it described as communal forces. However, the party alleged that Raijor Dal leaders repeatedly targeted the Congress during the alliance period through what it termed malicious propaganda and personal attacks. (IANS)

'Conspiracy with objective of denying J&K statehood': Farooq Abdullah

SRINAGAR, SEP 3

Former Chief Minister and ruling National Conference (NC) president, Dr Farooq Abdullah, on Thursday accused the Lt. Governor-led administration of 'orchestrating' threats to Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) to continue depriving Jammu and Kashmir of statehood. Talking to reporters in Anantnag, Dr Abdullah squarely blamed the administration for what he called 'orchestrating threats to Kashmiri Pandits to deprive J&K of statehood'.

Countering a question by reporters about statehood with his own question, Dr Abdullah said, "Who is issuing the threats? Kashmiri



National Conference president, Dr Farooq Abdullah

Pandits hardly reside here now. All the top officers posted here are Hindus from outside. The DG, DIGs, SSPs are all Hindus, right?"

"The deputy commissioners are also Hindus. Why aren't they receiving threats? The question is: if Hindus

are being threatened, why aren't they (senior officers) facing threats?" Dr Abdullah maintained that threats 'are a conspiracy to deny statehood to J&K'.

"This is a conspiracy with the sole objective of denying statehood to

J&K. An atmosphere of fear is being created. The Central government leaders travel all over the world saying 'peace has returned here', 'we have wiped out militancy'. So, where is this threat coming from?" he asked.

Dr Abdullah said Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, who controls security in J&K, must answer these questions while he blamed the administration for orchestrating the "threats".

"Why is he not answering? Ask him where these threats are coming from. I am accusing the administration of issuing these threats. They are re-

sponsible..." he said. To a question on the National Conference protest in Srinagar earlier in the day, Abdullah said, "J&K is going through a difficult phase.

The Centre is not fulfilling the promises it made to us. It said that delimitation would take place, followed by elections and then statehood would be restored. But that didn't happen. Our MPs met Home Minister Amit Shah, who promised them that Business Rules would be approved within days. That was in January. It is September now. What happened to that promise?" he asked. (IANS/UNI)

BJP urges ECI to defer SIR in Tripura

AGARTALA, SEP 3

The ruling BJP in Tripura has urged the Election Commission of India (ECI) to defer the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in view of the September 28 Village Committee elections in the state's tribal areas.

A BJP delegation, led by Rajya Sabha member Rajib Bhattacharjee, submitted a letter addressed to the ECI to state election officials, requesting the deferment of the SIR exercise.

Tripura currently has 28.97 lakh electors, of whom 14.52 lakh are male and 14.45 lakh are female. (IANS)

ELCs will empower youth to uphold truth, strengthen democracy: CEC

PANAJI, SEP 3

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar on Thursday said Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) would empower young citizens to uphold truth and contribute to strengthening India's democratic framework.

Addressing the Election Commission of India's (ECI) fourth regional conference on "Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELC 2.0) and ECINet" in Goa, the CEC said students are the future of the country and that ELCs would play a vital role in deepening democratic awareness and participation among the youth.

Interacting with

students and teachers from schools, colleges and universities across Goa, Kumar described ELCs as important platforms for helping young people understand electoral processes and democratic values.

He emphasised that elections in India are conducted strictly in accordance with the Constitution, relevant laws and directions issued by the Election Commission, and are carried out transparently under the current scrutiny of recognised political parties, candidates and their authorised representatives at every stage.

Highlighting ECINet, Kumar said the



platform would serve as a key instrument of transparency for electors, offering a unified digital interface for election-related services and information across the country.

ELC 2.0, launched with the tagline

"Learn Democracy. Lead Democracy.", seeks to transform Electoral Literacy Clubs into structured, visible and digitally enabled platforms across schools, colleges and universities. The initiative aims to

encourage young and first-time voters to understand better and actively participate in the democratic process.

Leveraging the ECINet digital platform, which integrates election-related services

from electoral rolls to polling, ELC 2.0 will support year-round electoral literacy activities through a dedicated portal and help build a nationwide network of Electoral Literacy Clubs.

The initiative as-

sumes significance given India's vast educational ecosystem, which includes around 15 lakh schools with nearly 25 crore students and more than one crore teachers. The higher education sector comprises nearly 1,500 universities and around 70,000 institutions, with an estimated enrolment of 4.33 crore students.

Through this extensive institutional network, ELC 2.0 aims to promote factual and experiential electoral education, enhance awareness of the country's electoral system and encourage young citizens to become ambassadors of informed democratic participation. The clubs will

also disseminate information related to voter registration, polling, counting, the ECINet App and other key ECI initiatives.

The CEC was on a two-day visit to Goa to interact with Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and ELC members from across the state. On Wednesday, he addressed more than 1,000 BLOs and lauded their contribution to the smooth conduct of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Goa.

The programme also featured an interactive question-and-answer session during which students engaged directly with the CEC on various aspects of India's electoral process. (IANS/UNI)

Defence Minister unveils ‘RAKSHA’ defence diplomacy document

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday released the ‘Raksha’ document on defence diplomacy that provides an actionable vision for the next decade and ensures India remains an anchor of peace, stability, and rule-based order in an evolving global landscape.

The document focuses on Strategic Partnerships, Capacity Building, Indigenous Defence Manufacturing and Exports and Maritime Security, an official statement said.



The ‘Raksha’ document outlines India’s strategic roadmap and vision for global defence partnerships over the next 10 years, the statement said.

As defence diplomacy is a core pillar of India’s foreign policy, the document provides a clear, actionable vision for the next decade, ensur-

ing that India remains an anchor of peace, stability, and rule-based order in an evolving global landscape, the statement said.

The document marks a shift in India’s strategic engagement, aligning national security objectives with proactive global cooperation, fostering long-

term stability and mutual growth.

Key pillars highlighted in the strategic blueprint include strategic partnerships that provide for deepening bilateral and multilateral security cooperation.

It also stresses capacity building by enhancing joint military exercises, training programmes, and sharing best practices with friendly nations, apart from promoting Make in India defence platforms to establish the nation as a reliable global defence manufacturing hub and exporter, the statement added. (IANS)

36,000 ethnic violence-hit IDPs resettled in Manipur: Chief Minister

IMPHAL, SEP 3

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Thursday informed the state Assembly that around 36,000 of the 60,000 people displaced by the ethnic violence that erupted on May 3, 2023, have already been resettled.

Replying to a short-duration discussion moved by Congress MLA Lokeshwar Singh, the Chief Minister told the House that 24,000 ethnic violence affected Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are still living in various relief camps across the state. He also attributed the collective support and efforts of the MLAs to the progress made in the resettlement of IDPs. Despite the resettlement of 36,000 IDPs already, the government is still providing financial assistance to around 59,000 of the total 60,000 IDPs, Khemchand Singh said.

The Chief Minister explained that even those who have returned home continue to face difficulties due to the lack of livelihood and earning opportunities. Therefore, the government continues to extend monthly financial support to them, he added.

The Chief Minister informed that the need and desire to return



home among IDPs from both the hills and valley region is the same. Referring to his visits to the relief camps and conflict-affected areas, Khemchand Singh said that he had interacted with people from different communities and found that their common desire was to live in peace and return to their respective homes.

Taking serious concern over the IDPs issue, the Chief Minister said that last month, he had called representatives of six to seven joint associations of IDPs for discussions on the issue to explore ways to provide assistance and facilitate their resettlement.

The Chief Minister further emphasised that financial assistance alone cannot address the impact of a conflict that has continued for three years. The prolonged ethnic crisis has also caused mental trauma among the affected people, he noted and said that in this regard, the Health

Department is taking steps to help lessen the trauma being faced by them.

The CM informed that he is also discussing the matter with the Planning Department to explore further steps and initiatives for the rehabilitation and livelihood support of the affected people. Khemchand Singh cited measures such as the Labour Department’s labour card as one possible avenue for extending support and creating opportunities. The Chief Minister stressed that the government welcomes suggestions from all quarters and that the issue should be viewed without any political considerations.

On the restoration of connectivity and economic activities, he said that following the successful resumption of the Imphal-Dimapur (Nagaland)-Guwahati inter-state bus service, the government is also working towards reopening the Moreh trade route with Myanmar. (IANS)

MHA to meet Ladakh leaders

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3

The Union Home Ministry will hold a sub-committee meeting with Ladakh representatives in New Delhi on September 9 as part of ongoing discussions on strengthening democratic processes in the Union Territory. Ladakh Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra said the meeting comes amid talks between the Centre, Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) on constitutional safeguards, greater political representation and enhanced local decision-making. (IANS/UNI)

U'khand Waqf Board to introduce new 'Nikahnama' in line with UCC

DEHRADUN, SEP 3

Following the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in Uttarakhand, the state Waqf Board is preparing a new and detailed Nikahnama for the Muslim community, aimed at ensuring that marriages are conducted in accordance with the provisions of the new law.

Speaking to IANS, Uttarakhand Waqf Board Chairman Shadab Shams said the primary objective of the initiative is to create awareness within the community and protect people from legal complications and offences that could arise from practices such as polygamy, triple talaq, halala and forced religious conversions.

Uttarakhand became the first state in the country to implement the UCC.

According to Shadab Shams, the implementation of the UCC has prohibited practices such as polygamy and triple talaq, while certain other practices have also been brought under the ambit of offences.

Speaking to IANS, Shams said, "Uttarakhand became the first state to implement the UCC under the leadership of Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama. After the implementa-



tion of the UCC, polygamy has been banned, triple talaq has been prohibited, and practices like halala have been made offences. Keeping this in mind, the Uttarakhand Waqf Board decided in its previous board meeting to bring a new Nikahnama for the Muslim community, ensuring strict compliance with the UCC. This is aimed at protecting the Muslim community from the difficulties and offences they may face."

The proposed Nikahnama will also contain an affidavit requiring the parties to provide complete and truthful information. Shams said legal action would be initiated if anyone provides false information or violates the provisions mentioned in the document.

"We have prepared this Nikahnama with this in mind," Shams said, explaining the reasoning behind the inclusion of the affidavit and other safeguards.

He further said that practices such as triple talaq would not be permitted under the new provisions and that strict action would be taken against those found violating the law.

"The new Nikahnama will bring awareness in the society, and people will be able to avoid these problems. No person will be able to marry more than once now. In developed countries like America, England, Germany and France, a person lives with only one wife, and it should be the same here. All these things will be written in the Nikahnama, so that no one can cheat anyone," Shams told IANS.

The Waqf Board chairman also said the new framework was intended to prevent situations involving religious conversion and marriage that could potentially lead to disputes or legal complications.

"We all know that many times the at-

mosphere in the state has deteriorated when someone has changed religion and got married. Since all mosques and madrasas come under the Waqf Board, and some Waqf properties are also under the jurisdiction of the Board, it is the responsibility of the Waqf Board to ensure that there are no irregularities and to hold accountable those who violate the rules," he said.

Shams further explained that the Board would regulate the appointment of Qazis and Imams who conduct marriages and would ensure that Nikahs are solemnised according to the prescribed procedure.

"Only those Qazis and Imams who will be appointed by the Waqf Board will be able to conduct the Nikah. The Nikah will be conducted on this Nikahnama. There will be no Nikah on any separate document. It is a very big Nikahnama, in which detailed and correct information will have to be given."

The Waqf Board chairman also said that people would be made aware of the legal consequences of religious conversion in connection with marriage at the time of Nikah. (IANS/UNI)

Bengal police bust fake call centre racket; 67 held

KOLKATA, SEP 3

West Bengal police have busted two fake call centres operating from south Kolkata and arrested 67 people, including 41 women, for their alleged involvement in a nationwide fraud racket, officials said on Thursday. The arrests followed successive raids conducted on Rajdanga Main Road in the Kasba area.

Acting on a tip-off, police on Wednesday (September 2) raided a premises on Rajdanga Main Road where several individuals were found operating from an office-like setup and making calls to people across the country.



During the search, officers seized 39 mobile phones, nine chargers, nine diaries, two ATM debit cards, and cash worth Rs 16,000.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the accused allegedly posed as representatives of telecom companies, banks and insurance firms to lure

victims with promises of 5G mobile tower installations, high-return insurance schemes, health insurance policies and low-interest loans. Victims were reportedly persuaded to transfer money into designated bank accounts under the guise of processing fees and other charges. (IANS)

Dayalbagh to observe Soami Ji Maharaj's Bhandara

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
DAYALBAGH, SEPT 3

The Holy Bhandara marking the birth anniversary of Param Purush Puran Dhani Huzur Soami Ji Maharaj, founder and first Sant Satguru of the Radhasoami Faith, will be observed at Dayalbagh, Agra, on Friday, September 4, coinciding with Janmashtami. Huzur Soami Ji Maharaj was born as Seth Shiv Dayal Singh Ji on the holy night of Janmashtami, between August 24 and 25, 1818, at Panni Gali in Agra. He is credited with revealing Surat-Shabda-Yoga as a direct path to Nij Ghar. He opened the doors

of public Radhasoami Satsang on Basant Panchami, February 15, 1861. The birth anniversary is observed by followers at Dayalbagh and various Radhasoami centres in India and abroad.

The Bhandara Week is being observed from September 2 to 6, with the main observance scheduled for September 4. Satsangi brothers and sisters and registered Jigyasu participants from Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha, the eastern States and Europe are expected to attend the programme at Dayalbagh.

Old Naxal weapons unearthed in Narayanpur forest

NARAYANPUR, SEP 3

Security forces achieved a significant breakthrough on Wednesday when a joint team of Narayanpur (Chhattisgarh) Police and the Border Security Force (BSF) recovered a cache of old Naxalite weapons, ammunition and explosives from the dense Hachekoti forest area of the district.

The recovery was made during an intensive search operation conducted on September 2 under the supervision of Superintendent of Police Sandeep Patel and Battalion Commandant of BSF, Mukesh Kumar. Additional Superintendent of Police (Operations) Akshay Sabdra provided operational assistance in supervision.

The team thoroughly combed the suspected location in the inaccessible forest terrain and discovered materials previously hidden by Naxalites. Among the items recovered were one rusted and buttless .315 rifle, 16 .315 cartridges, two .303 cartridges, four 7.62 mm cartridges, one 5.56 mm cartridge and 18 twelve-bore cartridges.

The forces also seized six electric detonators, two bundles of commercial cordtex, Naxalite literature, flexible wire, LED lights and two pouch strips.

Officials said the discovery showed the persistent presence of remnants of Naxalite activity even in areas that have been freed from active Maoist influence. (IANS)

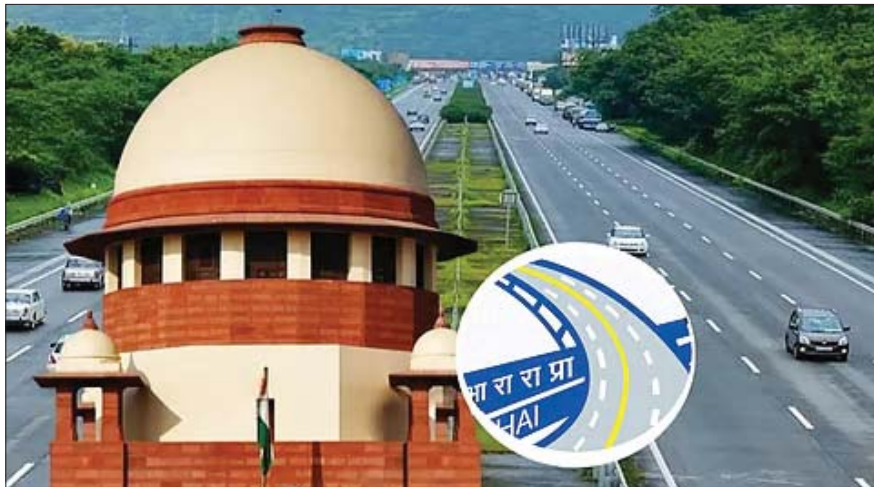
Why not monitor highways through toll plaza cameras, SC asks NHAI

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to explore the possibility of installing cameras at toll plazas and setting up dedicated monitoring rooms to keep a check on encroachments and vehicles parked illegally along national highways.

A Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta was hearing the suo motu proceedings in the matter titled "In Re: Phalodi Accident", concerning fatal road accidents and safety lapses on national highways.

The apex court questioned the NHAI as to why surveillance through cameras installed at toll plazas could not be used to



monitor highways and prevent unauthorised parking and encroachments.

"Why can't you think of a system of monitoring through cameras? A separate arrangement can be made for monitoring at all toll plazas," the Justice Nath-led Bench said.

Appearing before the

top court, the NHAI submitted that directions had been issued for regular patrolling to prevent unauthorised parking on highways.

Amicus curiae, senior Advocate A.N.S. Nadkarni, submitted that illegal parking of vehicles along highways was one of the major problems and often resulted in

road accidents.

In its order, the Justice Nath-led Bench recorded that the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Ministry of Home Affairs and the Tamil Nadu government had not yet filed their respective affidavits in the matter.

The Supreme Court directed the two Union

Ministries and the Tamil Nadu government to file their affidavits before the next date of hearing.

The matter has been listed for further hearing on October 6.

The proceedings stem from the apex court's suo motu cognisance of fatal highway accidents, including the November 2025 Phalodi accident in Rajasthan and a separate accident on the Telangana-Bijapur highway.

Earlier, the Supreme Court had issued a comprehensive set of interim directions aimed at curbing illegal parking, removing encroachments and strengthening highway safety mechanisms, saying that the "right to safe passage" is an integral facet of the right to life

under Article 21 of the Constitution.

The top court had directed a complete prohibition on parking of heavy and commercial vehicles on national highway carriageways and paved shoulders, except at designated bays or wayside amenities, and ordered enforcement through Advanced Traffic Management Systems (ATMS), including real-time alerts, GPS-tagged photographic evidence and e-challan mechanisms.

It had also directed nationwide inspection and surveys of highways to identify encroachments and compliance with safety measures, besides ordering removal of unauthorised roadside structures within the Right of Way of national highways. (IANS)

Turning growth into upward mobility

India's development story is entering a new phase. After making substantial progress in reducing extreme poverty, the country's next challenge is to ensure that more households can steadily move up the income ladder. The focus is increasingly shifting from reducing deprivation to creating sustained opportunities for higher earnings, productive employment and improved living standards.

The progress on poverty reduction has been significant. Extreme poverty at the \$2.15-a-day threshold, measured at 2017 purchasing-power parity, has fallen from more than 16 per cent to 2.3 per cent, while poverty at the \$3-a-day threshold has declined from 27.1 per cent to 5.3 per cent. At the same time, wealth remains concentrated, with the top 1 per cent accounting for around 40.1 per cent of wealth in 2022-23. The contrasting trends underline the need to make growth increasingly broad-based.

Consumption inequality, however, has also shown improvement. The consumption Gini index declined by about 11 per cent between 2011-12 and 2022-23, indicating narrowing disparities in consumption. The challenge now is to translate these gains into sustained income growth, particularly for households that remain economically vulnerable despite moving above extreme-poverty levels.

The state-level dimension is critical to this next stage. Income mobility differs considerably across states, reflecting variations in economic structures, governance, infrastructure, human capital and labour markets. This makes competitive and cooperative federalism increasingly important, as state governments have a central role in converting national economic growth into opportunities for households and workers.

Economic size alone does not guarantee stronger household income growth. Evidence from PLFS data for 2021-22 and 2023-24 indicates a positive, though relatively loose, relationship between state GDP and wage growth. Haryana and Goa, for instance, recorded among the strongest wage growth rates despite their relatively smaller economic bases. This suggests that sectoral composition, labour-market conditions, policy choices and development trajectories can significantly influence outcomes. State-led structural transformation can be an important engine of upward mobility. Investments in education, healthcare, infrastructure and skills can improve productivity and attract private investment. Tamil Nadu's experience illustrates how sustained investments in human capital, manufacturing and services can support the movement of workers from agriculture into higher-productivity activities, thereby strengthening long-term income prospects. Urban economic centres can provide another powerful growth multiplier. Large, specialised hubs such as Gurugram and Bengaluru concentrate businesses, skilled workers and capital, generating productivity gains that can spread to surrounding areas. Gujarat, Karnataka and Uttarakhand demonstrate how strong state-level fundamentals and dynamic economic centres can reinforce each other. Such agglomeration effects can help states accelerate investment and employment.

WATER SECURITY From augmenting supply to retaining rain

India's water-management challenge is evolving from simply creating additional sources to making better use of the water it already receives. Rapid urbanisation, groundwater stress, shrinking permeable surfaces and the simultaneous occurrence of floods and seasonal shortages highlight the need for greater emphasis on infiltration, storage, recharge and regulated release. India's policy approach has increasingly recognised this broader requirement.

Several government initiatives already address different aspects of water conservation and management. NITI Aayog's Composite Water Management Index assessed states on groundwater, irrigation efficiency, source augmentation and governance, while programmes such as Atal Bhujal Yojana, Jal Jeevan Mission, AMRUT 2.0, watershed development and wetland restoration contribute to conservation, recharge and improved water management. Together, these initiatives provide an important foundation for a more integrated approach.

The principal challenge is that these interventions operate across different institutional mandates. Wetlands, watersheds, groundwater, irrigation and urban stormwater are handled by different agencies, while Jal Jeevan Mission focuses primarily on rural piped-water supply and AMRUT 2.0 addresses urban water supply, sewerage, water-body rejuvenation and aquifer management. Greater coordination and data-sharing could help connect these efforts and measure their combined impact on water security.

International experience also points towards managing rainfall within the landscape. China's Sponge City programme emphasises infiltration, detention, storage and reuse; Australia promotes water-sensitive urban design; and the Netherlands' Room for the River programme creates additional space for high river flows. These examples reinforce the principle that water security can depend not only on expanding supply, but also on retaining and regulating water more effectively.

Maharashtra illustrates why such an approach is particularly relevant to India. Annual rainfall ranges from around 400 mm in the driest areas to nearly 6,000 mm along the Konkan coast and Western Ghats. Around 40 per cent of the state is classified as drought-prone, while about 7 per cent is flood-prone. Water availability is also highly uneven: west-flowing basins occupy only about 10.7 per cent of the state's geographical area but account for 44.5 per cent of dependable water yield.

The contrast becomes sharper because much of the western water flows towards the Arabian Sea, while the Western Ghats make large-scale transfers inland difficult and costly. Meanwhile, east-flowing basins contain about 92 per cent of Maharashtra's cultivable land and more than 60 per cent of its rural population, many parts of which face recurring water stress. This raises an important policy question: how much of the state's water challenge is determined by rainfall, and how much by the ability of landscapes to absorb, store, recharge and regulate that rainfall?

A proposed Retention Security Framework (RSF), supported by a Retention Security Index (RSI), could complement existing government assessments by focusing specifically on outcomes. The framework could examine four dimensions: climate and hydrogeological conditions; the capacity of natural and built systems such as wetlands, tanks, forests and recharge structures; actual hydrological performance; and governance and demand pressures including extraction, maintenance, land-use change and irrigation requirements.

Aligarh and the unfinished mission of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan



S. MASOOD HUSAIN

AMU's greatest challenge is not to preserve its past, but to renew the intellectual revolution that Sir Syed began

The Aligarh Muslim University occupies a unique place in the history of modern India. Few educational institutions have had such a profound influence on the intellectual, social and political evolution of a community. Its origins lie in the vision of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who recognised, in the aftermath of 1857, that the greatest challenge before Indian Muslims was not merely political decline but educational and intellectual backwardness.

Sir Syed's response was revolutionary. He wanted Muslims to acquire proficiency in English, modern sciences and contemporary knowledge while retaining their ethical and cultural heritage. The Scientific Society, the journal Tehzib-ul-Akhlaq and the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College were all parts of this larger programme. His objective was to cre-



ate a bridge between tradition and modernity, faith and reason, and the East and the West. AMU itself describes his purpose as combining Western education with Islamic values and developing a scientific temperament.

after nearly 150 years of the Aligarh movement, an uncomfortable question deserves to be asked: Has the institution remained sufficiently faithful to the transformative spirit of Sir Syed's vision?

The answer cannot be an outright yes or no.

An extraordinary success—but an incomplete mission

There is no denying AMU's extraordinary achievements. It has produced generations of scientists, doctors, engineers, administrators,

academics, writers, politicians and public intellectuals. It has opened its doors to students from different parts of India and the world and today offers hundreds of courses in modern as well as traditional disciplines.

Yet the success of a university cannot be measured only by the number of degrees awarded or distinguished alumni produced. Sir Syed's objective was much larger. He wanted to transform the Muslim mind.

He wanted Muslims not merely to become educated but to become intellectually confident, rational, scientifically minded, socially progressive and capable of engaging constructively with the rapidly changing world.

This is where the

unfinished part of the Aligarh mission lies.

From transforming minds to preserving identity

Over the decades, a gradual change in emphasis appears to have taken place. Sir Syed's central concern was modernisation of the Muslim community. In later periods, the preservation of Muslim identity and institutional interests sometimes came to occupy greater attention.

There is, of course, nothing wrong with preserving cultural identity. Sir Syed himself valued Muslim history, language and traditions. His genius was precisely that he did not regard cultural identity and modern education as contradictory.

The danger arises when identity becomes

defensive.

A modern Muslim university should give its students the confidence to engage with modern science, other religions, different philosophies and competing political and social ideas without feeling threatened. Sir Syed wanted Muslims to enter the modern world with confidence, not retreat from it in the name of preserving identity.

The weakening of the reformist spirit

Sir Syed was not simply an educationist; he was a social reformer. Through Tehzib-ul-Akhlaq, he challenged social customs, superstition and intellectual stagnation. His Scientific Society sought to make modern knowledge accessible and cultivate scientific thinking.

The question today is whether this spirit of internal reform and critical self-examination remains sufficiently strong.

A university inspired by Sir Syed should be among the first places where difficult questions concerning Muslim society are discussed openly.

(Writer is an Aligarh resident and former Chairman, Central Water Commission, Gol who writes occasionally on technical, social and community issues.)

This is part 1 of the Article, Part -II to be continued.

The road to Viksit Bharat lies through state capitals. BJP top brass should let go

BANUCHANDAR NAGARAJAN

There seems to be a major funk in the commentary of top Indian economists in the recent past. Nothing catchy, nothing big, but a lot of quibbling over minutiae of trade deals, quarterly GDP numbers and so on.

Perhaps, the majority of second-generation economic reforms thought about in the 2000s have either been carried out or seriously attempted by the Modi government over the past 12 years. Except for land and agricultural reforms, most structural changes have been addressed, at least intellectually. The new labour codes, for example, are now in force.

In this setting, the national goal of Viksit Bharat 2047 is slowly taking shape in the public square. At the same time, the wave of AI and technological change and unpredictable geopolitical tensions are reshaping the world economy. India now needs a new consciousness in drafting a policy roadmap for the next 25 years.

The same group that pushed the second-generation reforms perhaps is unlikely to offer this forward-looking leadership, as many remain stuck in older ways of thinking. It is time to move beyond hand-waving and talk about details about layers that have to be put



in place.

Reaching developed-country status by 2047 (per capita income of about \$14,000) will need a new set of bold reforms. As economist Neelkanth Mishra has argued recently, even small differences in key factors can change the timeline for achieving high-income status by several years. Mishra points to law and order, urbanisation, women's labour force participation, and capacity building as vital drivers.

If we notice keenly, most of these areas come under the State List or Concurrent List of the Constitution. States are, therefore, best placed to deliver the dream. Recent public unhappiness about urbanisation shows this clearly. India's unplanned urban sprawl has badly hurt the quality of life for millions of people.

Perhaps, the next set of reforms and the path to Viksit Bharat will originate in the Chennai and Lucknows rather than from Delhi. Some states of India will reach the goal earlier. A comparison of Indian states with similar populations underlines the point. Currently, Vietnam's per-capita GDP stands at about \$5100 dollars per person, while Tamil Nadu is at about \$6300.

The Centre should focus on sharing best practices and smooth coordination across states. The PRAGATI meetings is a good model. Centre's main duties should be keeping peace at the borders, managing stable and friendly external relations, ensuring fiscal care, and maintaining internal security.

Organisational spectrum are a decentralised right-of-centre party (BJP) and nation-

alist regional parties, (such as JDU, TRS) in every state. This mix can best deliver Viksit Bharat. A sample of it is evident in the development of Andhra Pradesh now.

Purists on the right wing will scoff at the allusions to Vajpayee Que BJP, which they feel was less forceful in espousing the Hindu cause than Modi sarkar, but the next 20 years might warrant such an arrangement.

But some major work still left undone at the centre -the most important is the overhaul of the judiciary and the criminal justice system. Using technology and thoroughly reforming judicial structure must become a top priority. It is now widely accepted that the pendency of cases, lethargy and inconsistency have become a major block to India's progress.

This raises the question of where the BJP stands. If the right wing ecosystem wants to avoid a return to Congress rule and the old establishment, it must take a hard look now. The organisation is increasingly filled with a bureaucratic mindset and appears captured, making real reform hard. Remember that only a flexible party system could nurture the brilliant political talent of someone like PM Modi in the 80s and 90s. Can anyone in the current

BJP run an equivalent of his famed Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation election of 1989 now? The RSS was meant to act as a moral check, but is grappling through its own challenges in adjusting to extended proximity with power in its centennial year.

As the saying goes, the fish rots from the head. This is a lesson from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Real classical liberals and right-wingers should rediscover themselves and strongly push for deregulation, decentralisation, and liberty. Some compromises made sense when a rare leader appeared in the fray along with technological tools such as Aadhaar. Yet just as the politicians can be ruthless, the people can also be harsh. We saw that in a limited way in the results of 2024.

For Viksit Bharat 2047 to succeed, the BJP and the wider system must shift toward genuine decentralisation, stronger state capacity, and a new generation of ideas. Without these changes achieving the goal will be delayed. But, people of India, who are in no mood to give up on their destiny, will look for political options that will deliver it to them.

(Banuchandar Nagarajan was the advisor to Minister of Human Resources Development)

Bharat NCAP 2.0 to roll out in 2027

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said the government is working on a graded points system for driving licences and vehicle registration as part of efforts to improve road safety in the country.

Addressing the 66th SIAM Annual Convention, Gadkari said road safety remains a major concern for India, which continues to record a very high number of road accidents.

Under the proposed system, traffic violations would result in points being deducted from a driver's licence.



If the deductions cross a prescribed threshold, the licence could be suspended and eventually cancelled. At the same time, the government is considering a system of rewarding responsible motor-

ists by awarding them "good" points. Drivers accumulating good points could receive incentives from insurance companies and other benefits, Gadkari said.

"This is a very impor-

tant and good scheme. Every offence will cut points on the driving licence, and after a particular limit the licence will get suspended or even cancelled further. However, people with good points will get

incentives from insurance companies and other benefits," the minister said.

Gadkari also highlighted the need to strengthen safety standards for buses.

He said accidents involving buses claimed 3,855 lives in 2024, underlining the need for stricter enforcement of safety regulations. The minister said the government has introduced a bus body code as part of a new safety regime and warned that strict action would be taken against Regional Transport Offices (RTOs) that violate prescribed norms or

fail to enforce them properly.

Meanwhile, Gadkari announced that the government is planning to roll out Bharat NCAP 2.0 from October 2027, with the upgraded programme expected to assess a more comprehensive safety framework for vehicles. He highlighted the progress made under Bharat NCAP, India's official vehicle safety assessment programme. The initiative provides independent safety ratings for passenger cars based on crash tests, with vehicles assigned ratings ranging from one to five stars. (IANS)

Govt notifies 'One Nation, One Time' rules



NEW DELHI, SEP 3

In a bid to develop modern digital and critical infrastructure, the government has notified the Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2026 — marking a significant step towards establishing Indian Standard Time (IST) as the common, legally recognised and traceable time reference for the country.

The rules comes into force 180 days from the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

The initiative supports the government's vision of "One Nation, One Time", ensuring that critical sectors and digital systems across the country operate with a common and reliable time reference.

The rules provide a comprehensive framework for the generation, maintenance, dissemination and use of IST.

According to an official statement, telecommunications, financial transactions and digital payments, power grids, transportation, data centres, government information systems and other critical services depend on accurate time synchronisation and reliable time stamps.

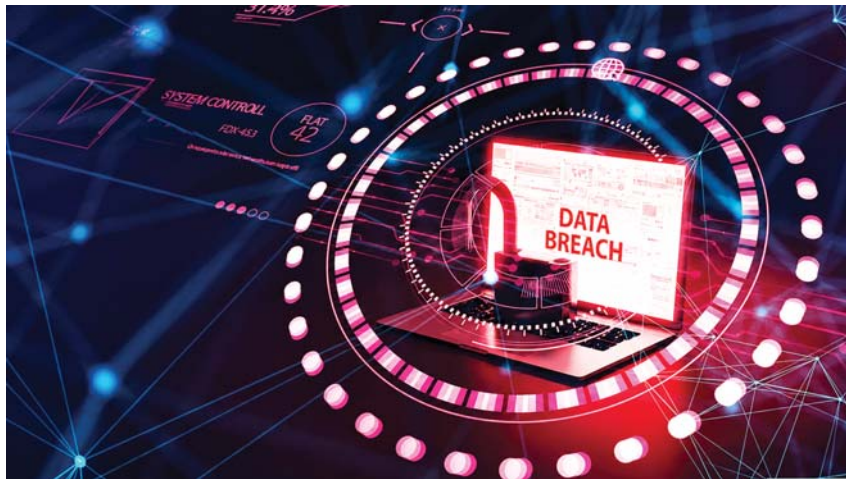
A common national time reference also has an important cybersecurity dimension.

Accurate time stamps are essential for correlating events across multiple systems during cyber incidents and for effective security monitoring. The CERT-In Guidelines on Information Security Practices for Government Entities, 2023, recommend synchronisation of ICT systems with standard time sources including NPL and NIC, said the statement.

Recognising that making IST a legal reference must be accompanied by adequate availability and geographical reach of traceable time, CSIR-NPL, ISRO and the Department of Legal Metrology under the MoCA jointly established secondary timescales at five Regional Reference Standard Laboratories (RRSLs) located at Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Faridabad and Guwahati.

These secondary time scales are continuously traceable to IST maintained by CSIR-NPL, thus creating a distributed national architecture for reliable dissemination of IST. (IANS)

Nearly 40 million Tving accounts compromised in data breach in S. Korea



SEOUL, SEP 3

Nearly 40 million user accounts of South Korean streaming platform Tving were compromised in a massive data breach stemming from a hacking incident reported in June, a joint investigation showed on Thursday.

The Ministry of Science and ICT announced the results of a three-month government-civilian investigation into the breach at Tving, an online video streaming platform operated by entertainment giant CJ ENM Co, reports Yonhap news agency.

A total of 39.54 million user accounts and 361 technical assets, including source code, were found to have been compromised in the breach reported on June 1, although the account figure includes multiple accounts held by the same users, the ministry said. Tving has since strengthened its security measures,

and no signs of additional attacks have been detected so far, it noted.

By registration method, they included 7.26 million accounts registered directly with Tving, 8.63 million CJ ONE integrated membership accounts and 22.47 million accounts created through social media log-in services, including Naver, Kakao, Facebook, Apple and X. Of the total, 22.06 million were active accounts that could be used to log in, while 17.37 million were inactive accounts, including dormant and closed accounts.

The leaked information covered 20 categories comprising 70 types of data, including names, dates of birth, mobile phone numbers, email addresses and connecting information, though the type and extent of information exposed varied depending on how users registered their ac-

counts. The Personal Information Protection Commission is expected to separately determine the extent of the personal data breach and decide on the amount of penalties.

Investigators found that an unidentified hacker stole a developer's access key and used it to infiltrate Tving's internal systems. The investigation also found that Tving failed to report the breach to the Korea Internet & Security Agency within 24 hours of detecting the incident on May 30, reporting it only on June 1 and potentially facing a fine for the delay.

Investigators warned of potential secondary damage, saying the hacker could exploit the compromised data to carry out further attacks, while leaked personal information could be used for cybercrimes such as smishing and voice phishing. (IANS)

E-Waste offers India a new urban mining opportunity

TFP | CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The rapid growth in the use of smartphones, laptops, televisions, electric vehicles and household appliances is making e-waste one of the world's fastest-growing waste streams. Discarded electronics, however, contain valuable materials including gold, silver, copper, palladium, lithium, cobalt, nickel and rare earth elements, creating an opportunity for "urban mining" through recovery and reuse of these resources.

Urban mining can reduce dependence on conventional extrac-



tion while supporting India's growing requirements for critical minerals, electric mobility, renewable energy and advanced manufacturing.

Countries such as Japan have demonstrated the potential of resource recovery, including through the Tokyo 2020 Olympic

medals made using metals recovered from discarded electronics. Sweden has promoted repair and refurbishment, while the European Union's Extended Producer Responsibility framework requires producers to support collection and environmentally sound recycling.

Rare Earth Magnet Scheme gains industry support

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

India has received 20 bids to build integrated rare-earth permanent magnet manufacturing facilities and the government aims to create an integrated chain stretching from NdPr oxide to finished magnets, a new report has said.

The report from Times Kuwait highlighted that India's broader critical-mineral strategy increasingly focuses on value addition, processing and manufacturing rather than stopping at the extraction stage.

The warm response by bidders to the initiative has given fresh



momentum to a policy effort that goes beyond securing a raw material to forming industrial capacity necessary to convert India's rare-earth resources into

high-value products for the country's fastest-growing sector, the report said. India's \$7.74 billion rare-earth permanent scheme aims to create 6,000 metric

tonnes per annum of integrated REPM manufacturing capacity in India.

Ministry of Heavy Industries invited proposals on March 20, 2026

and opened technical bids on August 13, 2026, as companies including Larsen Toubro, Coal India, ReNew, Attero Recycling, 20 Microns, Lohum Magnets & Energy Solutions, NEO Performance Materials of Singapore and Proteal India responded.

"Twenty companies and consortia submitted bids, bringing together established engineering companies, public-sector enterprises, recycling specialists, energy companies, magnet manufacturers and international participants," the publication said. (IANS)

Nepal Flood devastation sparks AI debate

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The devastating floods that struck Nepal last month and left a trail of destruction across the Himalayan nation have reignited a broader debate over climate change, ecological vulnerability, and the environmental footprint of artificial intelligence (AI).

The Bhotekoshi and Trishuli river floods, reportedly triggered by a glacial collapse, left more than 1,000 people dead and nearly 5,000 missing in Nepal, highlighting the fragility of Himalayan ecosystems under mounting climate stress.

In the aftermath, discussions have expanded beyond climate



change to examine the growing energy and water demands of AI infrastructure, particularly large-scale data centres. While some social media posts circulated claims linking glacier instability to alleged underground server farms in the Himalayas, experts have

largely dismissed such assertions due to a lack of evidence.

Reports have noted China's significant investments in AI, cloud computing and data-centre infrastructure, alongside major hydropower projects in the Himalayan region. While environmental-

ists have long raised concerns about the ecological impact of large dams and hydropower projects, the direct role of AI infrastructure in Himalayan degradation remains a subject of debate.

According to a Kathmandu Post report, development expert

Ashutosh Tiwari pointed out that AI played little role in real-time rescue operations during the disaster, arguing that discussions around the technology in Nepal often remain confined to policy and academic forums rather than practical applications.

Addressing online claims that Chinese server farms may have contributed to glacier melt, journalist and sustainability strategist Karin Kloosterman wrote this week that "there is currently no evidence establishing that connection", while noting that obtaining reliable data from Beijing would be difficult. (IANS)

Dell launches 'uDaan' to skill 23,000 youth for AI economy

RATNA CHOTRANI
HYDERABAD, SEP 3

Dell Technologies on September 3 launched 'uDaan: Empowering India's Future Workforce', a national skill-building initiative aimed at training 23,000 young Indians for roles in AI, cloud computing, and electronics manufacturing. The programme is being rolled out through a consortium of FITT-IIT Delhi, Learning Links Foundation, and Generation India Foundation.

The initiative will span 100 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and 90 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across five technology hubs: Delhi NCR,

Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Pune. FITT-IIT Delhi will design and certify four industry-aligned curricula—AI Application Development, Cloud Development, Assembly Line Operations, and Field Technician—validated by more than 40 employers.

Learning Links Foundation will oversee delivery at HEIs, while Generation India Foundation will manage ITI execution and employment linkages. The programme emphasises job placement, apprenticeships via NATS and NAPS, and entrepreneurship support, with Year 1 targets of 25 deep-tech

startups from HEI learners and 10 micro-enterprises from ITI learners.

Support mechanisms include FITT's innovation ecosystem and over 2,000 hours of mentoring by Dell employees. Aligned with Skill India 2.0, NEP 2020, Make in India, and Digital India, uDaan will track employment retention at 3, 6, 12, and 24 months to assess livelihood outcomes.

"Dell's commitment is to build pathways from education to employment at scale," said Manish Gupta, President and Managing Director, Dell Technologies India.

India ready to help with Russia-Ukraine conflict: EAM

KYIV, SEP 3
Spotlighting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent call that endless war must now give way to the end of war, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar on Thursday stated that India stands ready to help in any way to find an end to the longstanding conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

The EAM cited India's readiness to help during his meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha in Kyiv. "Just two days ago in Bishkek, Prime Minister Modi declared that endless war must now



External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar meets Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv.

give way to the end of war. Every passing day of conflict only means more deaths and more destruction. Understandably, it is for the parties involved to find a way.

But if India can be of any help, in any manner, we are ready. And this was the core of my discussion today so far with Foreign Minister Sybiha," EAM Jaishankar highlighted.

He mentioned that his Kyiv visit has a bilateral purpose, but is taking place in the larger context of the war which has been underway since 2022.

"Only two days ago, an Indian national was also killed in an attack in Kyiv. We join in mourning every life lost and convey our deepest sympathy to every affected family," he stated.

He noted that the Russia-Ukraine war is in its fifth year and that India has consistently maintained that this is not an era of war and that solutions will not emerge from the battlefield. (IANS)

Trump to have his portrait on US currency

WASHINGTON, SEPT 3
US President Donald Trump's face is now an iconic highlight of American currency as his portrait now features on the new \$1 coins, making Trump the first ever living president in US history to have his likeness minted on real money.

The coin was launched on Wednesday with Trump's portrait alongside the words "LIBERTY" and "IN GOD WE TRUST", reports BBC.

According to the US Mint, the coins were not being put into circulation, but they may be used as legal tender. Despite their official \$1 face value, they are being marketed primarily as collectors' items.



The coins were priced at \$61 for a roll of 25 and \$154.50 for a bag of 100. Within hours of going on sale, the Mint's website listed them as "not currently in stock". They were also available from vending machines at the US Mint store in Washington DC. According to the Mint, the coin was "created to celebrate this historic national milestone" and as

a "once-in-a-generation anniversary design destined to become a stand-out addition to modern collections", as despite its golden appearance, they contain no actual gold. The Mint said they are made of 88.5% copper, with the remainder consisting of zinc, manganese and nickel.

Nonetheless, the introduction of Trump's portrait on currency has raised questions as under US federal law, the depiction of living people on US coins is generally prohibited.

The last time a living US president was previously featured on a commemorative currency was the half-dollar issued in 1926 to mark the coun-

try's 150th anniversary that featured then-President Calvin Coolidge alongside George Washington. The legislation authorising that coin stated that it would be legal tender at its face value. Although the coins were sold for \$1, their face value was 50 cents.

The Trump administration has relied in part on the Circulating Collectible Coin Redesign Act of 2020, enacted during Trump's first term. While the law prohibits portraits of living people on the reverse, or tails side, of coins, it does not explicitly extend that restriction to the obverse, or heads side, where Trump appears on the new \$1 coin. (IANS)

US judge blocks Trump's bid to limit birthright citizenship



WASHINGTON, SEPT 3
A US federal judge on Wednesday (local time) blocked the Trump administration from enforcing a renewed executive order seeking to restrict birthright citizenship, dealing another setback to President Donald Trump's effort to narrow the constitutional guarantee.

The judge observed that the policy was likely unconstitutional and violated the 14th Amendment. U.S. District Judge Deborah Boardman granted a preliminary injunction in a case brought by two immigration advocacy groups that had also challenged the Trump administration's initial attempt last year to limit who is eligible for automatic citizenship at birth, The Hill reported. Boardman wrote in a 35-page opinion that the new directive was "almost certainly unconstitutional as applied to the certified class," pointing to the Supreme Court decision in June that struck down Trump's Day 1 executive order.

"This Court must, once again, preliminarily enjoin enforcement of the President's most recent attempt to strip the right

to citizenship from them," Boardman, a Biden appointee, wrote. Her order prohibits the administration from enforcing the new restriction against any child born after February 19, 2025, to one or both parents who were not lawfully in the country at the time. Boardman said the Supreme Court had already established that children born in the United States are citizens at birth, including when their parents are unlawfully or temporarily in the country.

"The Supreme Court has spoken: Children in the certified class are 'citizens at birth,'" Boardman wrote in her 35-page opinion. The ruling marks the latest setback to Trump's efforts to narrow the constitutional guarantee of citizenship for people born in the United States. Judge Deborah Boardman ruling has barred the administration from enforcing the more limited policy issued after the Supreme Court rejected Trump's broader attempt to end birthright citizenship, while allowing federal agencies to continue preparing guidance on how the order would be implemented. (IANS/UNI)

As death toll nears 1300, Nepal seeks international assistance for recovery and reconstruction

KATHMANDU, SEP 3
The Nepali government on Thursday informed the foreign diplomatic community in Nepal that the Himalayan nation would seek further international assistance for the recovery and reconstruction of infrastructure damaged by the recent Bhote Koshi floods.

The death toll from the Rasuwa flood disaster had reached 1,252 by Thursday noon, with 4,216 people remaining out of contact, according to the latest data released by the National Disaster Risk



Residents pull a newly installed zipline to help people commute across the Trishuli river in the aftermath of flash floods at Bidur in Nuwakot district.

management Authority (NDRRMA).

North Korea drops unification goal, cements Kim as sole leader

SEOUL, SEP 3
North Korea has stripped references to "peaceful unification" with South Korea from the charter of its ruling Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), the full text of the document showed Thursday, in line with Pyongyang's redefinition of inter-Korean ties as those between "two hostile" states.

The text, released by Seoul's Institute for National Security Strategy (INSS), is the first public disclosure of the charter in full, Yonhap News Agency reported.

South Korea's intelligence authorities have previously said the charter was revised in June 2024 to reflect the North's new stance, but the actual



language had not been made public until now. The released text also includes updates adopted at the WPK's ninth congress in February.

The revised WPK rules strengthen the authority of leader Kim Jong-un, while removing references to the achievements of his predecessors, the late state founder Kim Il-sung and his father Kim Jong-il.

The change is widely interpreted as an effort to cement the third-generation leader's standing as the party's sole and unchallenged leader.

Beyond unification, the charter also removed mentions of the US military presence in South Korea and of "outside forces," in a move seen as reinforcing Pyongyang's position that the two Koreas are

entirely separate states and no longer bound by a shared national identity.

At the Supreme People's Assembly session in January 2024, Kim ordered the constitution to be revised, saying "peaceful unification" with the South was no longer possible and that the concept of the Korean nation as one state should be removed. In October that year, Pyongyang confirmed its constitutional revisions.

The charter also spells out the authority of the WPK's general secretary in greater detail, including the power to convene meetings and to appoint and dismiss officials or dissolve party departments. (IANS)

AI cuts three months of work to 17 minutes: Altman



CHAPEL HILL (NORTH CAROLINA), SEP 2

Artificial intelligence (AI) can now complete in minutes the work that start-ups were once expected to perform over three months, OpenAI Chief Executive Sam Altman has said, predicting an unprecedented surge in entrepreneurship and small-business creation.

"The work that we expected a startup to accomplish in three months is now probably doable in, like, 17 minutes with Codex," Altman added during a fireside chat with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick.

"This is just amazing. The world is not caught up with what this is going to mean," he said. Before establishing OpenAI, Altman ran a start-up accelerator. That experience, he said, convinced him that entrepreneurship was among the most important forces within capitalism and that many of the technology industry's significant ideas emerged from start-ups rather than large companies. He added that AI had dramatically reduced the time and resources needed to turn an idea into a product, test it and collect feedback

from customers.

"I think this, for example, will be the greatest boom in entrepreneurship and the creation and development of small businesses the world's ever seen," Altman said.

"People with promising ideas had often been held back because they could not raise enough capital, hire experts, develop new science or manage complicated supply chains," he added.

AI could now help them overcome many of those barriers.

"If you had a great idea, but you didn't have the resources or the ability to get enough capital together or hire experts to work on it or to figure out what it's gonna take to invent new science or manage a complex supply chain, you can do that with AI," Altman said. He cited the example of a laundromat operator whose business was struggling.

The owner used ChatGPT to prepare marketing material, seek advice on legal contracts and manage relationships with vendors.

"He was really the first person I met that had figured out how to use AI to effectively run a business," Altman said. (IANS)

El Niño intensifies, raising risk of extreme heat and disruptive weather through 2027

GENEVA, SEP 3
The El Niño climate pattern is rapidly intensifying and could become one of the strongest events on record, raising the risk of extreme heat, floods, drought and other disruptive weather across the world through early 2027, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said on Thursday.

The UN weather agency said El Niño is expected to reach "very strong" levels and peak around the end of the year. The likelihood that the phenomenon will persist through February 2027 is now close to 100 per cent, marking



the most unequivocal forecast for El Niño or its cooler counterpart La Niña ever issued by the WMO.

The intensification is being fuelled by excep-

tionally warm waters in the tropical Pacific. An unusually large reservoir of warm water has also accumulated beneath the ocean surface, with temperatures in

parts of the Pacific more than 8 degrees Celsius above normal in July and early August.

The latest readings show the speed at which the event is strengthen-

ing. The Niño 3.4 index, a key measure of sea-surface temperatures in the central tropical Pacific, averaged 1.5 degrees Celsius above normal between May and July. It reached 2 degrees Celsius in July, while weekly readings from late July to mid-August climbed as high as 2.6 degrees.

"El Niño is being supersized before our eyes," UN Secretary-General António Guterres said. "The science leaves no room for doubt: the planet is in uncharted waters, and those waters are heating up."

Forecasters expect above-normal tempera-

tures across nearly the entire Earth's surface from September through November, while rainfall patterns are also likely to shift sharply, increasing the risk of heavy rain and flooding in some regions and drought in others.

The impacts could be amplified by already unusually warm global oceans and an atmosphere that has been heated by greenhouse gas emissions. Scientists have not established that climate change is making El Niño itself stronger, but a warmer atmosphere and ocean can increase the heat and moisture available to fuel extreme weather. (IANS/UNI)

Iran war escalation raises concern over civilian death toll

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
TEHRAN, SEP 3

The sudden recent escalation of the Iran war has cast renewed attention on its civilian toll after Iran reported 18 dead in the last US assault, including four killed and dozens wounded at a wedding.

Iran's health minister said 18 people were killed and 108 wounded in Tuesday night's US strikes across Iran.

The Iranian Red Crescent said four people were killed and 67 wounded at a wedding ceremony near the coast of the Strait



Rubble lies around a damaged house following a reported attack near a wedding gathering in Kuhistik, Sirik, Iran.

of Hormuz.

The return of combat operations has alarmed countries throughout the region, as Iran launched missile and drone attacks against what it said were US assets in Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait

supports the idea of declaring an end to the war with Iran.

Kuwait's army reported further missile and drone attacks early Thursday, saying they were intercepted by air defense systems.

The guns had largely gone silent since the previous exchange in July, although peace talks failed to advance in the interim.

US President Donald Trump threatened to unleash yet more military force, even though the war is unpopular at home and has driven up the cost of gasoline.

Arab states push power integration

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
KUWAIT CITY, SEP 3

Kuwait participated in the 17th meeting of the Committee of Electricity Experts in Arab Countries, which is examining ways to accelerate the establishment of the Arab Common Electricity Market and strengthen electrical integration among Arab states.

According to a statement by the Arab League, the meeting is reviewing progress toward signing and ratifying two agreements underpinning the proposed market, the General Agreement and the Market Agreement.

The discussions also cover ways to encourage public and private investment in major electricity generation and transmission projects of regional importance. Such projects are expected to support job creation and sustainable development efforts across the Arab region.

The committee is also reviewing developments in a pilot energy-exchange project involving Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The initiative is intended to serve as a nucleus for expanding electricity trade among Arab countries on commercial and economic grounds.

The agenda further includes consideration of participation in a workshop to be held in cooperation with the Association of Mediterranean Electricity Transmission Network Operators.

Jordan's King leads international effort to support Lebanon's stability

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
AMMAN, SEP 3

Amid regional developments, Amman has stepped up a diplomatic effort led by King Abdullah II and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi to mobilize international backing for Lebanese state institutions, foremost among them the Lebanese Army.

The initiative aims to forge a joint Arab, European and US position that would help preserve Lebanon's territorial integrity, uphold its sovereignty across all its territory,



halt Israeli attacks and enable the country's political institutions to carry out their responsibilities.

Senior Jordanian sources said King Abdullah had instructed the relevant institutions years ago, par-

ticularly the Jordan Armed Forces, to assist Lebanon by providing military, humanitarian and medical aid and to stand by the country in safeguarding its security and sovereignty.

The Jordanian monarch maintains close

ties with Lebanese leaders at both official and public levels. He has met Lebanese President Joseph Aoun on several formal and informal occasions, while the two leaders have held four telephone calls in recent months.

UAE launches AI Cabinet adviser

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
ABU DHABI, SEP 3

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, on Wednesday chaired the first Cabinet meeting of the new government season, unveiling an artificial intelligence system designed to help ministers make faster and more accurate decisions.

The meeting, held at Qasr Al Watan in Abu Dhabi, approved the launch and use of the Cabinet AI Adviser System, which will deploy 32 specialised AI assistants to analyse policies, legislation, strategies and govern-

ment systems.

The system will assess their potential impact, review international best practices and provide recommendations, while working with ministers around the clock to follow up on decisions and their implementation.

Sheikh Mohammed described the initiative as a new step in developing government decision-making, accelerating the assessment of policies, projects and initiatives and improving the quality of government outcomes. "Our goal is a more efficient government, with faster and more accurate decisions," he said.

Oman and Qatar discuss expanding economic and investment cooperation

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
MUSCAT, SEP 3

Anwar bin Hilal Al Jabri, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and Eng. Said bin Hamoud Al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, discussed today at "Invest Oman" lounge with Sheikh Faisal bin Thani Al Thani, Minister of Commerce and Industry in the State of Qatar, ways to enhance economic, commercial, industrial, and investment cooperation between the two countries.

They also explored new horizons for partnership in a number of sectors of mutual interest.

During the meeting,



economic and commercial relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar were reviewed, alongside discussing available opportunities to expand areas of cooperation, particularly in commercial, industrial, and investment sectors, as well as sectors related to transport, logistics, and modern technologies, in a manner that contributes to enhancing

economic integration and benefiting from the potential and opportunities in the two countries.

The meeting also covered ways to enhance mutual investments, encourage private sector institutions in both countries to establish qualitative partnerships and projects, and benefit from available investment opportunities, thereby contributing to supporting economic

diversification, maximizing added value, and enhancing the competitiveness of the Omani and Qatari economies.

The two sides discussed the importance of enhancing communication between businesspeople in the two countries and continuing coordination and integration between concerned entities, contributing to developing trade and investment move-

ment, creating more opportunities for investors, and opening broader horizons for partnerships and joint projects in promising sectors.

The visit comes within the framework of the firm fraternal relations connecting the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar and the continuous development they undergo across various fields. It reflects the keenness of both countries to build upon the achieved economic cooperation and transition it toward broader horizons by enhancing qualitative investments, developing commercial, industrial, and investment partnerships, and exploring new areas of cooperation.

Bahrain chairs 39th GCC Youth and Sports Ministers' Meeting

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
MANAMA, SEP. 3

Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS), Chairman of the General Sports Authority (GSA) and President of the Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC), chaired the 39th GCC Youth and Sports Ministers' Meeting, hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain.

He conveyed the greetings of King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and wishes of success to GCC ministers of youth and sports.

Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad said the long-standing ties among GCC countries and



their shared goals and destiny provide a foundation for further advancing joint GCC action, particularly in the youth and sports sectors, given their importance in shaping the future of GCC countries.

For his part, Jasem

Mohamed Albudaiwi, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), commended Bahrain for hosting the 39th GCC Youth and Sports Ministers' Meeting and highlighted the Kingdom's support for joint GCC action across

various domains, particularly the youth and sports sectors.

Albudaiwi said youth are a key driver of development across GCC countries, noting GCC leaders' firm belief in the importance of investing in youth,

enhancing their competitiveness and empowering them to play an active role across various sectors and areas of development.

The Secretary General commended the initiatives and programmes implemented by GCC

countries to train and prepare youth and develop their capabilities. He also highlighted the sporting competitions and events hosted by GCC countries and their contribution to strengthening connections and bringing GCC youth closer together, while fostering a spirit of competition.

The meeting discussed and approved items on its agenda, as well as joint youth and sports programmes and events. It also reviewed means to enhance cooperation and coordination among GCC countries in the youth and sports sectors, supporting joint GCC action and the aspirations of GCC youth.

Saudi, Indonesia to boost student exchange

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
JAKARTA, SEP 3

Saudi Minister of Education Yousef Al-Benyan affirmed the Kingdom's commitment to enabling Indonesian students to benefit from opportunities to study at Saudi universities and to learn more about these opportunities through the Study in Saudi platform.

During the meeting in Jakarta on Wednesday, Al-Benyan and Indonesian Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Cultural Affairs Pratikno discussed student and lecturer exchanges, joint degrees

and research, and scholarships to bolster bilateral education cooperation. Indonesian cabinet ministers, and university rectors attended the meeting held at the residence of Saudi Ambassador to Indonesia Faisal Abdullah Al-Amoudi in Jakarta on Wednesday.

Al-Benyan held an extensive meeting with rectors of several Indonesian universities, during which they discussed ways to expand opportunities for knowledge and student exchange between higher education institutions in both countries.



FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
WEST BANK, SEP 3

As of September, 200,000 Palestinians living in the West Bank will lose critical food aid after severe funding shortfalls forced the World Food Programme to halve its relief list.

"Families who were once thriving and earning a living from their land are now unable to afford enough food," said Shaun Hughes, WFP Country Director for Palestine.

The number of food aid recipients in the West Bank will fall from 400,000 to 200,000 in September, the WFP told Arab News following their announcement that they will slash in half the number of aid recipients on Tuesday.

The dramatic rollout of aid cuts comes as escalating settler violence, military operations, and widespread job losses double the region's food insecurity, leaving 900,000 residents struggling to meet basic daily needs.

Around 3 million Palestinians live across the West Bank and most are living in dire conditions and rely on food aid from humanitarian aid agencies such as WFP.

"Today an estimated 900,000 people are food insecure in the West Bank - with increased

settler violence and displacement disrupting livelihoods, deepening hunger and pushing families further into crisis," the WFP said.

The WFP's most recent food security analysis found 76 percent of households in the West Bank have experienced a significant decline in income, and food and fuel prices are on the rise forcing families to sell assets to survive.

"This is happening as the food needs in the West Bank are more than double what they were two years ago," he warned.

"At a time when WFP should be scaling up assistance to reach more people, we are being forced to make difficult decisions, prioritizing the most vulnerable while cutting assistance to others despite widespread needs. We urge the international community to act immediately and step up support for Palestinians," added Hughes.

Funding shortfalls are also affecting the WFP's operations in

Gaza, where the agency supports 1.5 million people, including one million who receive monthly food assistance.

In July, the WFP reduced by 40 percent the cash value of its assistance for 375,000 people.

Israel has occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem since 1967. The Israeli military has established many settlements which are regarded as illegal by the international community. Over the past few months, the West Bank has seen a surge in militant Israeli settler attacks on Palestinians as well as military raids into Palestinian towns.

"Intensified settler violence, prolonged and escalating Israeli military operations, severe movement restrictions, demolitions and widespread displacement in the West Bank have eroded Palestinian livelihoods and contributed to increased food insecurity," added Hughes.

FM Sitharaman pitches for India's reform-led growth story to investors in US

NEW YORK, SEP 3

Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman has pitched for India's reform-led growth story to investors at a high-level business roundtable here, highlighting the country's 7.8 per cent economic growth in the first quarter of 2026-27 and improved investment climate, it was announced on Thursday.

Addressing the roundtable organised by the Consulate General of India in association with Bank of America, FM Sitharaman said India contin-



ues to be the world's fastest-growing major economy despite global disruptions and challenges, the Ministry of Finance said on X.

Moreover, she highlighted a range of

reforms, including the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, saying these measures have provided greater regulatory certainty, eased compliance and reduced paperwork under the guidance of

Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

FM Sitharaman said the government has focused on creating capital assets and supporting industry through infrastructure development, particularly

in aviation, while also fostering a conducive investment climate, the ministry said.

Other focus areas include promoting artificial intelligence and data centres, supporting global capabil-

ity centres, ensuring credit availability to micro, small and medium enterprises and reducing non-performing assets of banks, she said.

These measures have helped create a more enabling business environment for banks and industry to grow and emerge stronger, according to the Finance Minister.

FM Sitharaman also reiterated India's commitment to fiscal prudence and discipline despite continuing challenges facing the global economy since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. (IANS)

India eyes 75% global trade access



NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday said that combined with upcoming free trade agreements (FTAs) and efforts to deepen market access, India could gain access to 75 per cent of global trade at rates lower than competitors.

India's nine FTAs spanning economies with about \$60 trillion GDP will provide preferential access to nearly two-thirds of global trade, Goyal said at an event here, calling for a focused, inclusive and nationwide effort to maximise the utilisation of FTAs to expand India's trade across the world and ensure that the benefits of enhanced market access reach businesses across the country.

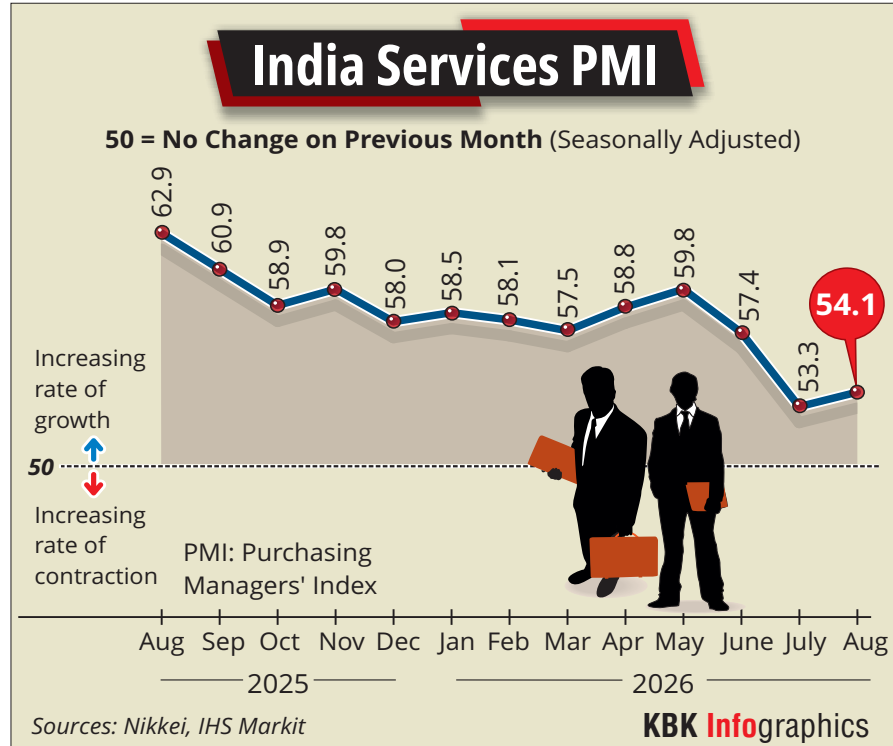
Addressing the National Workshop on "Leveraging FTAs an Outreach Programme" the minister emphasised the need for a concerted effort to translate India's

expanding network of FTAs into greater export opportunities for businesses across the country.

The initiative should rapidly take roots across the country and reach the last person, smallest businessperson, trader, entrepreneur, startup and woman entrepreneur across all 780 districts, big and small, said Goyal.

Every contribution, big or small, would be invaluable in achieving the larger objective of transforming India from a largely inward-looking domestic economy into an international player of significance, he added.

The other FTAs that India would conclude over the next few months and couple of years include with Canada, Mexico, Chile, Mercosur, SACU, GCC and Israel, together with efforts to review ASEAN, Korea and Japan or take other steps to secure greater market access. (IANS)



RBI's swap facility fuels forex reserves to defend rupee

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Reserve Bank of India's special swap windows raised a cumulative \$136.3 billion by end-August exceeding market estimates by a wide margin, likely pushing foreign reserves past \$750 billion and giving the central bank firepower to defend the rupee, a report said on Thursday.

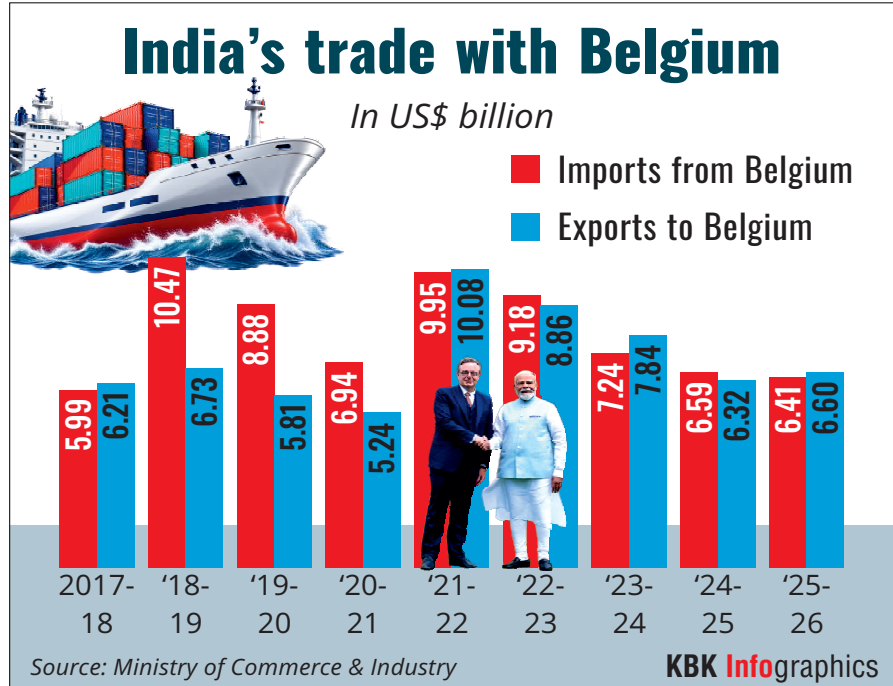
Further, the surge has already been reflected in a shift in intervention bias as USDINR corrected sharply, testing below 95 handle to mid-94 due to strong



intervention dollar sales and broader dollar swings, the report from DBS Bank said.

Nearly 92 per cent of the inflows came via FCNR(B) deposits at \$126 billion, with the remainder through offshore borrowing

facilities. "Given the swap arrangement, these inflows will add to an already abundant INR liquidity backdrop, which was at a four year high this month, depressing overnight rates," said Radhika. (IANS)



WhatsApp launches bill payments

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Meta-backed messaging platform WhatsApp on Thursday announced the rollout of bill payments in India which allow users to find, manage and pay household and utility bills directly.

The feature is being rolled out gradually and will be available to all Android and iOS users in the coming weeks, the company said.

Powered by the Bharat Connect (BBPS) network, the service will provide access to about 22,722 billers across 30 categories, including electricity, gas, water, FASTag, insurance, credit card and loan repayments.

In addition, users can access the bill payments feature by tapping the rupee icon at the top of the WhatsApp home screen.

They can also view past and upcoming payments, manage multiple accounts under a single provider and pay using UPI as well as credit and debit cards.

"For millions of Indians, WhatsApp is already the simplest way to stay close to family and friends, talk to businesses, access citizen services, and buy everything from metro tickets to insurance — all without leaving the app," said Arun Srivas, managing director and country head, Meta India. (IANS/UNI)

Airbus, Indamer Technics to set up radome repair facility

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Airbus on Saturday said it selected Indamer Technics to set up South Asia's first comprehensive radome repair facility in Maharashtra's Nagpur strengthening the aircraft manufacturer's regional aftermarket support and expanding India's aviation maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) capabilities.

Under a service agreement, Airbus has designated Indamer Technics as an authorised facility for the repair, storage and exchange of radomes for its A320, A330, A350 and A380 aircraft families.

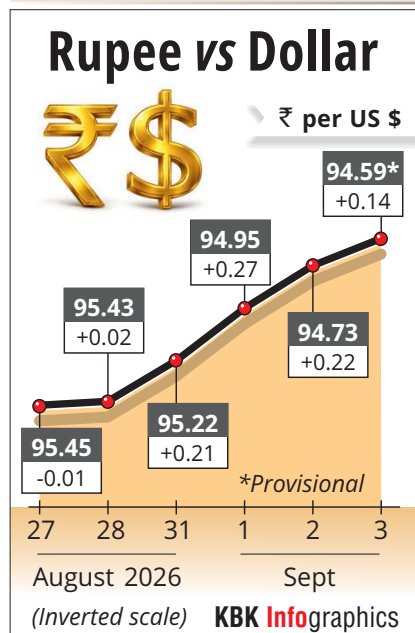
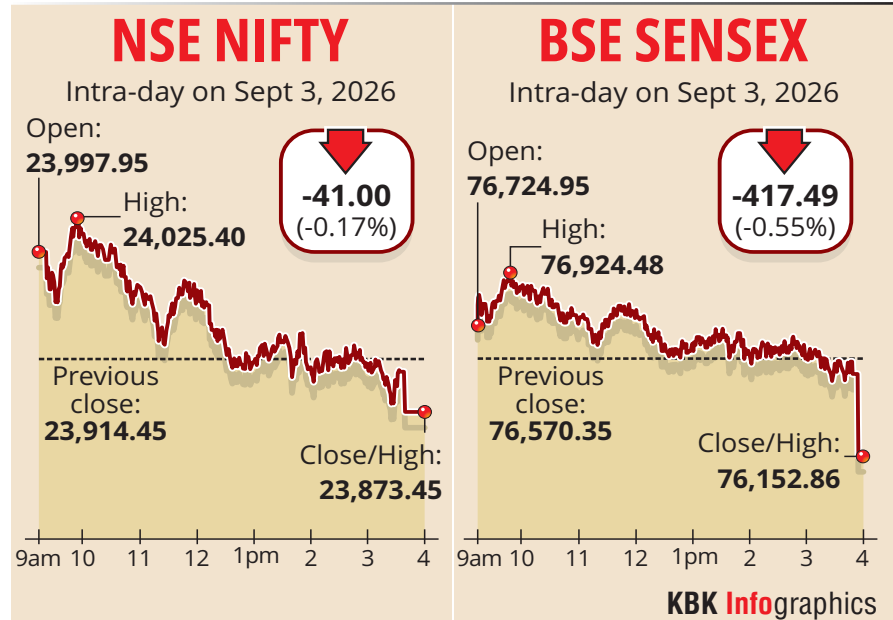


In addition, the facility will support Airbus customers in India and across South Asia and is expected to help reduce turnaround times for aircraft maintenance.

The agreement also marks a step towards developing a localised Airbus avionics repair network in South Asia, with the facility expected

to support upcoming widebody aircraft inductions and single-aisle maintenance in the region.

Located at the nose of an aircraft, a radome is a structural enclosure that protects radar and antenna systems from environmental and aerodynamic stresses while allowing electromagnetic signals to pass through. (IANS)



Govt launches 'BIO-NIVESH'

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The government on Thursday launched 'BIO-NIVESH', a strategic platform aimed at strengthening engagement between biotechnology innovators and the investment community and catalysing the flow of private capital into promising biotechnology innovations for scale-up and commercialisation.

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said innovation is incomplete without investment, while investment will not sustain itself without innovation, making closer engagement between innovators, investors, industry and Government essential for India's biotechnology-led growth. (IANS)

Foodgrain production estimated at 376.5 million tonnes amid robust decentralised grain storage infra

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The country's total foodgrain production is estimated at 376.563 million tonnes, according to the Third Advance Estimates (2025-26), which is nearly 18.8 million tonnes (5.3 per cent) higher than last year's production of 357.732 million tonnes, an official factsheet said on Thursday.

India also operates one of the world's largest food security programmes under the National Food Security Act, 2013, that covers about 80 crore people.

"India's expanding agricultural production and food security efforts have increased the



importance of decentralised grain storage infrastructure across the country. The Decentralised Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector, launched in 2023, is designed to improve storage, processing, procurement, and distribution sys-

tems through Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)," the factsheet noted.

The plan is supported through institutional coordination and financial support mechanisms.

Beginning with pilot projects across 11

states/PACS with 9,750 MT of storage capacity, the initiative has expanded steadily.

As of July 2026, go-down construction had been completed in 313 PACS across the country, creating more than 1.80 LMT of storage capacity. The framework

also emphasises quality standards, transparency and operational viability, according to the factsheet.

The Decentralised Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector seeks to reduce foodgrain wastage and strengthen food security; provide farmers with greater flexibility to avoid distress sales and secure better price realization; reduce transportation costs between procurement centres, warehouses, and Fair Price Shops; and expand the role of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) through diversification of agricultural activities. (IANS/UNI)

VVS Laxman to be India's coach for Asian Games

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Head of the Centre of Excellence (CoE) VVS Laxman will serve as the head coach of the Indian men's cricket team for the upcoming Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya.

The development was confirmed by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports as it confirmed the 768-member Indian contingent for the Asian Games, which will be comprised of 503 athletes, 246 team officials/ supporting staff, and 19 contingent staff.

Laxman will oversee the men's team as regular head coach Gautam Gambhir gets a rest ahead of the West Indies white-ball series, which will get



VVS Laxman

underway on September 27. As per the Ministry's release, Sunil Joshi, Hrishikesh Kanitkar, and Subhadeep Ghosh will join Laxman, while Amol Muzumdar will spearhead the women's team for the Asiad.

Laxman recently oversaw the Indian team during the T20I series against

Zimbabwe in July. This followed Gambhir being rested after the white-ball series against England.

The Indian men's and women's teams enter the Asian Games as defending champions, having won the title at the 2022 Hangzhou Games. Ruturaj Gaikwad led the largely second-string Indian side to gold at the Asiad, while Harmanpreet Kaur guided the Women in Blue to gold in the women's competition. Meanwhile, accommodation for the upcoming Asian Games has been in the news. According to Naoki Alex Miyaji, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Japan Cricket Association (JCA), partici-

pating teams in the Asian Games cricket event are being offered hotel accommodation despite limited room shortages across the host region.

"I can also assure you that the ACC have been discussing accommodation options with AINAGOC for a long time. The participating teams in Cricket are being offered hotel accommodation. Many other sports are being accommodated in much more limited facilities such as cruise ships or container hotels. The teams are free to arrange their own accommodation if they choose to do so," Miyaji said in a conversation with IANS on Wednesday. (IANS/UNI)

Sports Ministry adds athletes to expand India's Asian Games contingent

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports on Thursday added another 11 athletes to the 492-athlete list for the Asian Games as the Indian contingent for the Aichi-Nagoya Games was expanded to 768 members. The Ministry added athletes across athletics, mixed martial arts and surfing for the Games. Surfing is also making its debut at the Asian Games as four athletes - Kishore, Siv-araj, Kamali and Sugar Shanti - will represent India in the sport. MMA is also marking its debut at the Games.



Meanwhile, six in athletics - Praveen Kumar, Harita Bhadra, Kiran Pahal, Asha Ilango, Sindhu Shree Ganesha, and Sanya Yadav have been added, while Varun Sanyal will represent India in mixed martial arts as per the updated list from the

Ministry. The expanded list now sees India's Asiad contingent extend to 768 members, with 503 athletes (269 male and 234 female). 246 team officials/supporting staff and 19 contingent staff are also part of the Indian roster set to compete across 36

disciplines in the continental showpiece.

The Ministry has also confirmed the head of the Centre of Excellence and former player V.V.S. Laxman to be the head coach of the Indian men's side for the cricket event. Sunil Joshi, Hrishikesh Kanitkar and Subhadeep Ghosh will join Laxman, while Amol Muzumdar will spearhead the women's team for the Asiad. Muzumdar will have Aavishkar Salvi as the bowling coach and Munish Bali as the fielding coach in his coaching staff. (IANS/UNI)

What is heat hazard in F1, the caution FIA issued for Italian GP

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Formula 1 governing body, FIA, has declared a 'heat hazard' for the upcoming Italian Grand Prix at Monza, taking note of the expected rise in the mercury in the city over the race weekend.

"In accordance with Article B1.5.10 of the FIA F1 Regulations, having received a forecast from the Official Weather Service predicting that the Heat Index will be greater than 31.0 °C at some time during the Race at this Competition, a Heat



Hazard is declared," FIA said in a statement on Thursday.

"In addition, the difference in mass between the driver's personal equipment normally used and any items of a driver's personal equipment that form part of the system

must be compensated by the fitting of 0.5kg of ballast in the cockpit."

Meanwhile, Italian GP will be the fourth F1 race to be declared a 'heat hazard' after the Singapore GP and the United States GP in 2025 and the Austrian GP earlier this year. (IANS)

US Open: Sabalenka eases into third round

NEW YORK, SEP 3

No. 1 seed Aryna Sabalenka defeated Polina Iatcenko, 6-1, 6-1 inside Arthur Ashe Stadium to ease in to the US Open's third round.

Sabalenka, who is aiming to win her third straight US Open singles title, had little trouble eliminating Iatcenko, who's advanced to the main draw as a qualifier. The Belarusian struck 24 winners and converted six of her eight break-point opportunities in the 54-minute match.

With a win Sabalenka

runs her US Open winning streak to 15 matches, and she has won 22 straight second-round matches in Grand Slam events. Moreover, Sabalenka is now 30-2 at the US Open in matches where she wins the first set. The last time she lost a match in New York after winning the first set was the 2023 final against Coco Gauff.

Notably, a title here will halt the hopes of Elena Rybakina, Coco Gauff and Jessica Pegula in overtaking Sabalenka for the No. 1 ranking. (IANS/UNI)

Hyderabad Public School concludes inter-school sports meet

TFP | CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, SEP 3

The Hyderabad Public School, Warangal, concluded a grand inter-school sporting celebration on Wednesday as part of its 10th anniversary festivities, bringing together young athletes from 32 schools across Warangal, Kazi-pet, and Hanamkonda. The event also marked the culmination of the Academic Inter-House Sports Competitions for 2026-27, featuring disciplines ranging from football, kho-kho, and handball to chess, Tae-



kwondo, hockey, and throwball.

Prof. P. Ravi Kumar of NIT Warangal, the chief guest, emphasised sport's role in teaching honesty, discipline, and resilience, urging students to handle defeat with grace. Guest of Honour Prof. Dr Jay Chandra Tannet high-

lighted that learning extends beyond classrooms to nature and everyday experiences, advising students to "Never Give Up."

The Hyderabad Public School emerged as Overall Champion, with Skill Starke International School finishing as Runner-up.

ENTERTAINMENT



Sonam Bajwa reflects on unfulfilled wish

Punjabi actress Sonam Bajwa shared a thought-provoking note about unfulfilled wishes and faith.

Taking to Instagram, the 'Ek Deewane ki Deewaniyat' actress expressed how the absence of something one deeply desires can often bring them closer to their faith. Sharing the reflective thought, Sonam wrote, "Khwahish adhuri ho toh rab kitna yaad aata hai." Her words, which translate to "When a wish remains unfulfilled, how much one remembers God."

In the images, Sonam can be seen dressed in a traditional white suit, which she paired with green bangles and matching earrings. She is seen



striking different poses for the camera while showcasing her elegant traditional look. She opted for subtle makeup, completing her look with nude lipstick

while keeping her hair open.

Sonam Bajwa has established herself as a prominent name in the Punjabi film industry. She made her acting debut with "Best of Luck" in 2013, alongside Gippy Grewal and Jazzy B. The following year, she appeared in "Punjab 1984" opposite Diljit Dosanjh. She also ventured into Tamil cinema in 2014 with "Kappal," in which she starred alongside Vaibhav Reddy.

She has several popular Punjabi films to her credit, including "Guddiyan Patole," "Carry On Jatta 3," "Nikka Zaildar," "Honsla Rakh" and "Ardab Mutiyaran." Sonam has also ventured into Hindi cinema and expanded her presence beyond the Punjabi film industry. Bajwa appeared in Hindi films such as "Housefull 5" and "Ek Deewane Ki Deewaniyat."

'Kalki 2898 AD' makers caution public about fake casting calls

The makers of director Nag Ashwin's magnum opus 'Kalki 2898 AD', on Thursday issued a statement, cautioning the public to be aware of fake casting calls and individuals who were falsely claiming to represent them. Well known production house Vyjayanthi Movies, which is producing the immensely popular franchise featuring a number of top starts including Prabhas, Amitabh Bachchan and Kamal Haasan, took to its social media timelines to share a statement in this regard.

It shared the statement, saying, "Important Clarification: Please beware of fake casting calls and individuals falsely claiming to represent #VyjayanthiMovies. #Kalki2898AD."

In its statement, the production house said, "Vyjayanthi movies would like to clarify that we are not associated with, nor have we authorised, any third-party agency, com-



pany, individual, or casting representative to conduct auditions or casting on our behalf." The production house urged people not to share their details with any such persons or agencies. It wrote, "Please do not share personal information, audition material, or make any payments to anyone claiming to represent us."

Vyjayanthi Movies pointed out that it reserved all rights to take appropriate legal action against any unauthorised use or misrepresentation of its name.

Gajraj Rao calls Irrfan, Manoj Bajpayee his mentors

Actor Gajraj Rao has spoken up about his fellow actors in the industry, who inspire him and make him chase excellence. The actor called legendary thespians Irrfan, Manoj Bajpayee his mentors.

The actor recently appeared on the latest episode of 'Pehla Pehla' podcast with Gopal Datt, and looked back at the experiences, people and unexpected turns that shaped his journey from growing up in a modest railway quarter in Delhi to becoming one of the most recognisable faces in Indian cinema.

Gajraj winded the clock backwards, and spoke about discovering his love for cinema through the iconic theatres of Connaught Place, finding his way into theatre and unexpectedly landing his first major stage role. The actor also recollected his early years in Mumbai and the challenges that came his way.



Talking about the same, Gajraj Rao said, "You look for your mentors. I have many mentors. Irrfan, Manoj Bajpayee, they are my mentors. You look at them from a distance and see how they handle themselves. Anil Kapoor maintained himself in the 80s and 90s, and he is still trying to do that kind of work with that energy. Akshay Kumar, people have different opinions. I have worked with him in Jolly LLB 3, and I have changed my opinion about him".

Kangana Ranaut weighs in on Gen Z vs Millennials

Actress Kangana Ranaut has shared a video featuring a discussion on social media, technology and the generational impact of political and digital experiences. Reacting to the conversation, she highlighted a remark about millennials and their intelligence while adding her own take on the comparison with Gen Z. The video features social psychologist Jonathan Haidt and Oli Dugmore discussing the social media ban on the latest episode of "The Exchange."

Sharing the video on her Instagram stories, Kangana added her own humorous take on the discussion. She wrote, "Even though Gen Z is the flavour of the season, but according to surveys, millennials remain the most intelligent generation ever. A h e m a h e m, the host was like 'keep going'." Through her post, she

'Queen' actress appeared to agree with the observation about millennials while playfully drawing attention to the comparison between the two generations.

During the conversation, Haidt spoke about how political experiences during a person's formative years can influence their outlook for life.

Last month, actress and politician Kangana Ranaut had issued a clarification regarding her earlier remark on Gen Z during the student protest at Jantar Mantar in the national capital. Sharing a video featuring a Congress leader, she said that her statement was misconstrued.

She said, "A Congress leader said that I have called the youth of the whole country as gutter cchaaps. The youth of the whole country, if you only talk about Gen Z then their population is going to be around 30-35 crores, and the Jantar Mantar, there were only about 10,000 people gathered there, out of which more than half were people like Shabana Azmi, you saw all types of age groups were roaming."



Government pushes safe, green and smart public transport

TFP | ANZARUL BARI
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Delhi government on Thursday launched several major initiatives to make public transport more modern, safe, transparent and environment-friendly. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta inaugurated an Automated Testing Station (ATS) at the DTC's Tehkhand Depot, along with public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at the Hasanpur and Ghazipur depots.

Gupta also flagged off 50 new zero-emission electric buses



and launched an interstate e-bus service between Delhi and Rewari, while she also unveiled a coffee table book on the transport corporation.

The Chief Minister said that her government's aim is not just

to discuss problems, but to provide lasting solutions.

She assured that the government was continuously working to strengthen Delhi's transport system, while she appreciated the efforts of the department,

congratulating the officers concerned.

Gupta said the government would have to continuously work in four key areas to strengthen Delhi's transport system, including safety, sustainability, seamless connectivity and smart infrastructure.

She said passenger safety was the government's top priority, and keeping this in mind, the new EV buses are equipped with CCTV cameras, panic buttons and other safety features.

Delhi, neighbouring states prepare 7-month anti-pollution awareness plans

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Delhi and its neighbouring states have prepared seven-month Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Action Plans to increase public awareness and community participation in efforts to tackle pollution. The plans will be implemented from September 2026 to March 2027.

The plans for Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan include workshops by pollution control boards, meetings with resident welfare



associations (RWAs) and social media campaigns targeting different sources of pollution.

The respective state pollution control boards and the Delhi Pollution Control Committee will act as nodal agencies for implementing the plans. The

Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) reviewed the plans last month, which were subsequently presented to Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav.

Under Delhi's plan, 24 weekly citizen outreach activities involving print

media, LED displays and radio jingles will focus on diesel generator sets and road dust. RWA meetings and social media campaigns will also be used to discourage biomass burning.

Haryana's plan includes direct monthly outreach to 250 vehicle owners in each district on PUC compliance, clean fuels and electric vehicles. In its 14 NCR districts, gram panchayat-level camps and demonstrations on stubble burning and crop residue management are also planned.

AAP's Satyendar Jain granted bail in STP case

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

A Delhi court on Thursday granted bail to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and former minister Satyendar Jain in a case pertaining to alleged corruption and tender manipulation in the Delhi Jal Board (DJB).

Special Judge (PC Act) Dig Vinay Singh of the Rouse Avenue Courts passed the order on Jain's bail application.

"Your bail application is allowed," the judge told Jain.

The court granted bail to Jain on a personal bond of Rs 2 lakh.



The AAP leader was arrested by the Delhi government's Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) on August 18 along with former DJB CEO Udit Prakash Rai, an IAS officer, and four others in connection with the alleged corruption and tender-manipulation case involving augmentation and upgradation

of sewage treatment plants (STPs) in the national capital.

On August 19, the court had refused to declare Jain's arrest illegal while sending him to judicial custody. However, it had fixed his bail plea for hearing on August 25.

The other accused arrested in the case are Ankit Srivastava, a former contractual consultant with the DJB; Nagendra Yadav, proprietor of M/s AN Enterprises; Raja Kumar Kurra, owner of M/s Euroteck Environment Private Limited; and Pankaj Verma, proprietor of M/s Srijanhar.

BRICS: Central, govt offices to remain closed on Sep 11

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

For minimising public inconvenience on roads, offices of Central and Delhi governments will remain closed on September 11 in view of the security, logistical arrangements and Motor Carcade movement related to the 18th BRICS Leaders' Summit, an official said on Thursday.

While the Delhi government had earlier declared a holiday for its offices on September 11, the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions issued an official circular declaring a holiday for Central government offices

on that day.

Ahead of the international event, the Delhi Traffic Police has been conducting rehearsals for traffic movement during the Summit.

As part of traffic management drill for the events from September 11 to 13, the Traffic Police have planned diversions at 22 points with regulated traffic movement on more than 35 roads.

On Wednesday, the traffic police enforced curbs and diversions between 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. for a Motor Carcade Rehearsal ahead of the BRICS Business Forum and the 18th BRICS Leaders' Summit.

Congress questions 7.8% GDP growth, seeks clarity on revisions

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Congress on Thursday questioned the government over the latest GDP estimates, particularly the substantial downward revision in the size of the Indian economy over the past four years. The opposition party sought a detailed explanation of the methodology used for the revisions and the reasons behind an aggregate reduction of Rs. 43 lakh crore in the estimated GDP.

India's economy recorded a faster-than-expected growth of 7.8 per cent in the April-June 2026 quarter. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh, however, questioned the basis of the figure and alleged that changes in the previous-year base and the GDP calculation methodology had significantly influenced the headline growth rate.

Ramesh said the GDP estimate for the April-



Jairam Ramesh

June 2025 quarter had been revised four times, from around Rs. 86 lakh crore to approximately Rs. 80 lakh crore. He argued that lowering the base against which current growth is measured could make the latest growth rate appear higher. Citing calculations by former Finance Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg, Ramesh claimed that nominal growth in the quarter would have been closer to 2.6 per cent without the downward revision of the base. He further questioned the inflation adjustment used to arrive at the real growth

figure of 7.8 per cent.

The Congress leader said the revisions were not limited to one quarter but covered the four years since 2022-23. According to him, nominal GDP estimates for most years and quarters during this period were reduced by Rs. 8-12 lakh crore annually, resulting in a cumulative reduction of Rs. 43 lakh cr.

Ramesh sought answers on what components of the new methodology caused the revisions, who was consulted while developing it and the rationale behind the deflator used for calculating real GDP.

HC notice to govt over Lakshmi Yojana eligibility



FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday issued notice to the Delhi government on a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) challenging the mandatory requirement of obtaining an MP/MLA endorsement or recommendation letter for availing benefits under the Delhi Lakshmi Yojana, which provides financial assistance of Rs 2,500 per month to eligible women from economically weaker sections.

A Bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia issued notice on the petition filed by Shabana Husain and tagged it with a pending petition raising a similar issue.

The matter has been listed for further hearing on September 17. The PIL has challenged the requirement under which an otherwise eligible woman seeking benefits under the Delhi Lakshmi Yojana is required to approach an elected MP or MLA, obtain an endorse-

ment/recommendation letter and upload it on the registration portal.

The petitioner has contended that the requirement introduces an "unguided and discretionary political interface" between the government and beneficiaries of a welfare scheme.

The plea stated that the scheme does not prescribe any objective criteria governing the grant or refusal of such endorsement, any time limit for issuing it, reasons for refusal, an appellate or review mechanism, or any alternative administrative procedure.

"The limited issue before this Hon'ble Court is whether an elected representative's endorsement, which may appropriately be provided as voluntary assistance, can lawfully be converted into a mandatory condition precedent for an otherwise eligible citizen to access a State welfare benefit," stated the petition, filed through advocate Ashu Bidhuri.

CBI files chargesheet against builders of Greater Noida firm

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) filed a charge sheet in a Special Court here against a builder company and its officials for cheating home buyers who invested in "Casa Royale" project at Plot No. GH-10 in Greater Noida's Sector-1, an official said on Thursday.

The chargesheet was filed before the Special CBI Judge at Rouse Avenue District Courts in connection with large-scale cheating of homebuyers and fraudulent activities of Earthcon Universal Infratech and its directors, the official



said in a statement.

Investigation conducted by the CBI revealed that the accused builder company and its directors, allegedly induced homebuyers/investors through false assurances and fraudulent representations and obtained financial benefits by resorting to illegal and

deceptive means.

The CBI unearthed substantial evidence and the chargesheet has been filed before the competent court under relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code pertaining to criminal conspiracy, cheating and criminal breach of trust, the statement said.

AAIB probe into Air India flight incident nears preliminary report

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu on Thursday said the investigation is underway by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) in the August 4 Air India Phuket-Delhi flight incident and a preliminary report is expected to come out very soon.

The AAIB is looking into the incident related to Air India Flight AI 2379, which abruptly dropped by 300 feet at an altitude of 36,000 feet while flying from Phuket to Delhi on August 4, injuring at least



24 people on board.

Naidu told reporters that once the AAIB report is out, "further course of action will then be decided".

The minister further said that they engage with all the airlines every month regarding

difficulties or issues or challenges they have.

"We have been pushing them to step up their operations, especially the financial side of it. The airlines have assured they will be doing it quite soon," the minister said.

