

## Arunachal Governor urges digital tools to strengthen food distribution system

**Itanagar, Aug 12:** Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt. Gen. K.T. Parnaik (Retd.) has called for a comprehensive digital overhaul of the state's food distribution framework, emphasizing the need for technology-driven transparency, regular social audits, and enhanced accountability across welfare schemes.

The Governor made these observations during a high-level review meeting with Arunachal Pradesh State Food Commission Chairman Tarh Tarak at Lok Bhavan in Itanagar. The discussions focused on reinforcing food security mechanisms, plugging operational leakages, and ensuring that government welfare entitlements reach every eligible beneficiary, particularly in geographically challenging, remote, and border settlements.

Highlighting the transformative role of modern technology in public governance, Governor Parnaik recommended the end-to-end digitization of the state's food supply chain. To prevent diversion and track food grain movements in real time, he advocated for the widespread



implementation of GPS-enabled transportation systems, Electronic Point of Sale (e-PoS) devices at Fair Price Shops, Aadhaar-enabled biometric authentication, and centralized digital monitoring networks.

The Governor noted that adopting a robust tech-enabled infrastructure is vital for a frontier state like Arunachal Pradesh, where rugged terrain and scattered populations often complicate last-mile logistics. The proposed digital measures are intended to minimize pilferage, streamline inventory management, and guarantee the timely delivery of subsidized rations.

To complement technical solutions, Governor Parnaik advised the State Food Commission to institute mandatory social audits across key welfare initiatives, including the Public Distribution System (PDS), the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, and the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). He noted that community-led social audits act as an effective feedback loop, enabling authorities to identify operational bottlenecks, curb irregularities, and foster greater public trust in state machinery.

Beyond logistical efficiency, the Governor underscored that food security must be

paired with comprehensive nutrition security. He urged the inclusion of locally harvested, nutrient-rich foods—such as millets, fresh fruits, indigenous vegetables, eggs, and pulses—into government-sponsored meal programs.

Parnaik stressed that targeted nutritional support must prioritize vulnerable demographics, including young children, adolescent girls, pregnant women, and lactating mothers, to combat malnutrition and build healthier communities across the state. He reaffirmed that a combined strategy of digital tracking, social accountability,

and indigenous nutrition will form the bedrock of an equitable food security model in Arunachal Pradesh. Elaborating on the logistical hurdles of last-mile delivery, Governor Parnaik emphasized that the state's rugged terrain, dense forest cover, and scattered border habitations necessitate a tailored infrastructure approach. He highlighted that traditional supply chain monitoring often struggles in high-altitude zones, making real-time digital tracking indispensable for verifying transit times, fair price shop stock levels, and distribution schedules in remote outposts. To overcome these spatial constraints, the Governor recommended establishing automated grain dispensaries and strengthening local storage hubs to prevent stockouts during monsoon-induced road blockages. During the review—which was also attended by State Food Commission members Maji Chokar and Ngasah Tanjang—the Governor called for closer coordination between the Civil Supplies Department, Social Welfare, Education, and District Administrations to unify data platforms.

## BJP Nagaland condemns Ranchi student crackdown



**Kohima, Aug 12:** Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Nagaland has strongly condemned the alleged police crackdown on students protesting in Ranchi, Jharkhand, accusing the Congress-Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) government of using excessive force against youth demanding employment, justice and action against alleged job scams and paper leaks.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP Nagaland office, Supermarket Dimapur, state vice president Basu Damani termed the alleged action against students a serious matter and accused the Jharkhand government of suppressing a peaceful democratic protest. He said the BJP stood firmly with the students and youth of

Jharkhand, asserting that the protesters were raising genuine concerns about their future and employment through peaceful means.

Damani alleged that the students had neither resorted to abusive language nor engaged in violence, yet the administration responded with “brutality.” “The sheer brutality with which the Congress-JMM government has rained batons on unarmed, innocent students peacefully protesting for their rights and employment is highly unfortunate,” he said.

BJP Nagaland state secretary Therali Ezung also questioned the silence of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, accusing him of maintaining a “double standard” on student protests. She alleged

that Gandhi was quick to express concern over protests at Delhi's Jantar Mantar but had remained silent on the situation in Jharkhand. “Where is Rahul Gandhi's sympathy now?” she asked, demanding that the Congress party apologise to the youth of the country.

BJP leader Zaremo Kikon accused Gandhi of repeatedly shifting his demands during the ongoing controversy, alleging that he initially sought the resignation of the Union Education Minister and later demanded a discussion on NEET in Parliament. Kikon referred to statements by Union Ministers Kiren Rijiju and Piyush Goyal, who had assured that the Union Home Minister would answer questions in the House.

## Arunachal Minister Kento Jini distributes LPG connections in Tadin village

**Itanagar, Aug 12:** In a major push toward sustainable rural development and clean energy adoption, Arunachal Pradesh Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Kento Jini distributed free Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) connections to over 80 households in Tadin village under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) scheme.

The distribution ceremony, organized by the Department of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, aimed to reduce reliance on traditional fuelwood and promote eco-friendly living among rural communities in the Alo East constituency.

Addressing the gathering, Minister Jini emphasized the environmental and health benefits of switching from traditional biomass cooking methods to clean fuel. He noted that the excessive harvesting



of firewood not only accelerates deforestation and soil erosion across fragile Himalayan slopes but also exposes rural women and children to severe indoor air pollution and chronic respiratory illnesses.

“The distribution of LPG connections under CAMPA is a strategic step toward environmental conservation and

community welfare,” Jini remarked. He highlighted that providing accessible alternative energy sources directly addresses the root causes of forest degradation while significantly improving the everyday quality of life for village women.

The Minister urged the beneficiaries to make full use of the

clean fuel connections and actively participate in local conservation drives. He reiterated the state government's commitment to balancing rural infrastructure development with forest protection, emphasizing that community-led conservation remains vital to preserving Arunachal Pradesh's rich biodiversity.

## ‘Har Ghar Tiranga’ exhibition inaugurated

**Dimapur, Aug 12:** As part of the ongoing Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations, the Department of Art & Culture in collaboration with the Home Department inaugurated the “Har Ghar Tiranga” Exhibition 2026 at Nagaland Civil Secretariat.

The initiative calls upon citizens to bring the Tiranga into their homes and hoist it with pride to commemorate India's Independence. Beyond symbolism, the campaign seeks to foster a personal connection with the National Flag as an embodiment of unity and nation building. This year's campaign also marks the 150th anniversary of India's national song, “Vande Mataram.”

According to DIPR report, gracing the occasion as special guest, Kuko Mero, secretary Home, said the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign is designed to showcase the



unity, strength and integrity of the nation. He emphasized that the exhibition is a core component of the broader Har Ghar Tiranga 2026 initiative, which will be accompanied by commemorative activities in the coming days. The programme was chaired by Kr. Temjenjungla, Assistant Archivist, Department of Art & Culture, and witnessed the presence of senior officials including Elizabeth Ngullie, secretary Home Department; Bodeno S Colo, commissioner & secretary, Art & Culture; Adela

Moa, director, Art & Culture, along with officers and staff from both departments. The curated exhibition is designed to immerse visitors in India's historical heritage and evoke patriotic pride. Students, citizens and members of the public are invited to explore the displays and participate in the celebrations. To capture the spirit of the occasion, dedicated Photo Booths have been installed at two locations: Gate No. 1, Nagaland Civil Secretariat (Main Exhibition Venue) and State Museum.

## Mama Natung inaugurates Seppa fire station

**Sepa, Aug 12:** Arunachal Pradesh Home Minister Mama Natung inaugurated a new Fire & Emergency Services Station in Seppa, East Kameng district, while simultaneously launching the “SAATAM” mobile application and an operational handbook on the NDPS Act to strengthen regional public safety and drug enforcement. Addressing the inauguration gathering alongside local administrative heads and senior police officials, Minister Natung emphasized that establishing the dedicated fire station addresses a long-standing infrastructure demand of East Kameng district. Equipped with modern fire tenders and trained response personnel, the facility is slated to significantly shorten emergency response times during urban fires, forest blazes, and natural disasters across the region.

# Gov calls for stronger enforcement to curb illicit liquor, drug trafficking

**Kohima, Aug 12:** Nagaland Governor Nand Kishore Yadav has underscored the imperative need to overhaul enforcement mechanisms, expand manpower, and augment institutional capacity across the state to systematically combat illicit liquor trade and drug trafficking. Excise and Prohibition secretary T. Wati Aier and other officials attended the meeting.

Chairing a comprehensive review meeting with the Department of Excise & Prohibition at Lok Bhavan in Kohima, Governor Yadav evaluated the department's operational performance, legislative mandate, revenue generation, and pressing logistical hurdles, emphasizing its crucial role in safeguarding public health and maintaining public order. The department briefed

the Governor on its statutory duties under the Nagaland Excise Act (1967), Nagaland Excise Rules (1972), Nagaland Liquor Total Prohibition (NLTP) Act (1989), National Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act (1985), and the Drugs & Cosmetics Act (1940).

Detailed enforcement data presented for the five-year period from April 2021 to March 2026 revealed widespread seizures across all districts, including Indian-Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL), country liquor, poppy straw, opium, heroin, codeine-based cough syrups, and pharmaceutical tablets. Simultaneously, excise revenue collection demonstrated consistent growth over the quinquennium, rising from ₹3.17 crore in 2021-22 to ₹5.92 crore in 2025-26, bringing total cumulative

collections to ₹22.51 crore.

The review highlighted infrastructure progress under the Excise Housing Programme for 2025-26, which encompasses the construction of new departmental offices in Phek and Peren, alongside a state-of-the-art bonded warehouse in Dimapur. Officials also outlined ongoing public awareness initiatives, seizure drives, and the systematic public destruction of confiscated narcotics and contraband. Nagaland's excise personnel-to-population ratio stands at a critically stretched 1:6,000, compared to neighboring Mizoram's ratio of 1:2,000.

The department has not undergone a formal cadre review since its inception, stalling career progression and organizational expansion. Porous inter-state and international borders, combined



with the discontinuation of permanent inter-district check gates, have created transit loopholes for syndicates. Field personnel face severe mobility limitations and rely on outdated firearms

when confronting heavily armed trafficking networks. The entrenched local demand for illicit liquor continues to challenge the enforcement of the total prohibition mandate. Responding to these

systemic bottlenecks, Governor Yadav urged immediate policy intervention to modernize weapons, upgrade transport fleets, and conduct a thorough cadre review to boost personnel morale. The

department's strategic roadmap moving forward prioritizes dismantling organized crime networks, enhancing inter-agency coordination, improving revenue collection, training field officers, and building a drug-free Nagaland. To address these operational deficits, the state government is considering a multi-pronged overhaul aimed at equipping excise personnel with modern tactical gear, body cameras, and high-tech tracking software to monitor contraband movement along transit corridors. Enhancing intelligence-sharing mechanisms with the Assam Police, Border Security Force (BSF), and Assam Rifles is also identified as a critical priority to seal porous border points and intercept multi-state smuggling syndicates before illegal consignments reach urban centers

like Dimapur and Kohima. Furthermore, civil society organizations, tribal apex bodies, and youth groups across Nagaland have echoed the Governor's call, advocating for stronger community-led vigilantes and rehabilitation facilities alongside law enforcement measures. Given that addiction and illegal trade severely impact the state's socio-economic fabric, the proposed administrative restructuring will focus heavily on establishing dedicated de-addiction counseling centers within departmental infrastructure. By aligning strict border enforcement, legislative reform, and grassroots public awareness, Nagaland aims to build a resilient, well-resourced law enforcement framework capable of curbing the menace of narcotics and bootlegging effectively.

## Youth leader's violent post Meghalaya BJP leadership dodges questions

**Shillong, Aug 12:** Meghalaya BJP leaders are dodging the fallout from a social media post by Youth Wing President Mewaker Lyngdoh Pakma. Pakma suggested protesters at Jantar Mantar should be shot. State general secretary Wankitbok Pohshna refused to discuss the Instagram post on Tuesday. He claimed individual accounts are not worth commenting on. He also stayed quiet when asked if the party planned to discipline Pakma.

Pohshna steered the conversation toward what he called important issues. He instead lashed out at the Jharkhand government



over their handling of student protests in Ranchi. He took aim at the Congress and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha alliance. He called their police response to employment protests barbaric. Pohshna condemned the

state for attacking unarmed protesters.

“The sheer brutality with which the government of the Congress and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha has rained batons on unarmed, innocent students

is highly unfortunate,” he said. He labeled the ruling coalition a Thug-bandhan. He insisted the country is watching the disciplined struggle of students facing what he described as merciless atrocities.

## PWD has submitted bills to NHIDCL for the damages incurred on-Dawki Road

**Shillong, Aug 12:** The Public Works Department is requesting Rs 1.72 crore. They have submitted a damage assessment to the Additional Deputy Commissioner of East Khasi Hills following the construction activities on the Shillong-Dawki road. The issues arose from a project undertaken by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited. During a hearing at the High Court of Meghalaya on Tuesday, Deputy Solicitor General of India Dr. N. Mozika provided an update on the project. He stated that the NHIDCL has contracted the installation of crash barriers at all critical locations. The teams are expected to complete this task within six weeks. Additionally, the agency has contributed an ambulance to the Pongkung Primary Health Centre. Workers have also repaired a washed-out section of the road and completed a bypass for the village. There are ongoing disputes regarding the financial aspects. Dr. Mozika contended that the PWD should have involved NHIDCL officials during their initial evaluation.

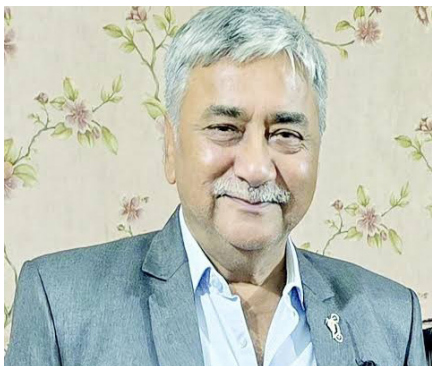


He remarked, “The PWD should have conducted the assessment in the presence of NHIDCL officers.” The agency is now planning to carry out its own independent inspection of Mawlieh L.P. School and will report its findings in the next session. Chief Justice Revati Mohite Dere and

Justice W. Diengdoh have instructed the East Khasi Hills Deputy Commissioner to ensure that the damage letter dated May 20, 2026, is finalized. The court has scheduled the next hearing for September 7, allowing Amicus Curiae Philemon Nongbri time to review the most recent status report.

## Former Shillong Times Editor Rabiul Islam Dies

**Guwahati, Aug 12:** Rabiul Islam died last Saturday. He served as the Chief Sub-Editor of The Shillong Times. The Shillong Socio-Cultural Assamese Students' Association mourned his passing. The group remembered his dedication to his work. He provided significant help to the organization, specifically by managing the printing and publication of its magazine. Association members called the death an irreparable loss. “The Shillong Socio-Cultural Assamese Students' Association has expressed deep grief over the passing of Rabiul Islam.” The group offered prayers for his eternal peace. They sent their deepest con-



dolences to his family.

## Protest Erupts at Assam-Arunachal Border Area Over Gogamukh Firing

**Guwahati, Aug 12:** A massive protest was held at Rajgarh in Gohpur along the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border against the alleged indiscriminate firing by people from Arunachal Pradesh in the Mingmang Badati area of Gogamukh in Dhema district. Protesters blocked the road leading to Arunachal Pradesh, disrupting vehicular movement.

The protest was jointly organised by the Tribal Migrants Protection Committee (TMPK) and several local organisations. Demonstrators strongly condemned the firing incident,

which reportedly took place two days ago and demanded the immediate arrest and stringent punishment of those responsible. Protesters raised slogans and displayed placards condemning the incident.

Calls for a district-wide bandh in Dhema-jj have also emerged following the incident. Local residents and organisations expressed concern over repeated incidents along the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border and urged the administration to take effective measures to ensure the safety of people living in the border

areas.

The protesters also demanded stronger security arrangements along the inter-state boundary to prevent such incidents in the future. Around 11 people from Assam were reportedly injured in the recent firing and are undergoing treatment at different hospitals.

Meanwhile, the governments of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh are in contact over the incident and are working towards an investigation and strict action against those found responsible.

## Assam Flood Situation Improves, 112,718 People Still Affected Across 441 Villages

**Guwahati, Aug 12:** The flood situation in Assam is gradually improving as water levels in several rivers continue to recede, although seven districts are still affected. Many flood-hit people continue to take shelter in relief camps and temporary plastic tents along embankments as the administration maintains relief and rescue operations.

According to data released by the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) for August 11, the Dhansiri river at Numaligarh and the Kushiara river in Sribhumi district are still flowing above the danger level. The flood-related death toll in the state has reached 102.

Floodwaters have affected 441 villages across 25 revenue circles in seven districts — Golaghat, Sivasagar, Hojai, Jorhat, Darrang, Lakhimpur and Nagaon. A total of 112,718 people remain affected, while 10,879.03 hectares of agricultural land are

submerged.

The state government continues to operate 92 relief facilities, including 47 relief camps and 45 relief distribution centres. As many as 7,982 people are staying in relief camps, while 22,223 non-camp residents are receiving relief from distribution centres. The flood has also affected 29,650 animals, including 12,395 large animals, 11,108 small animals and 6,147 poultry birds. In Nagaon district, 2,000 poultry birds were reported to have been washed away by floodwaters.

In Sivasagar district, 130 kutcha houses and 21 pucca houses have been completely damaged. Another 246 kutcha houses and 79 pucca houses have suffered partial damage. Ten other huts and 31 cattle sheds have also been damaged.

The SDRF, DDRF, police, Fire and Emergency Services, circle offices, local administration, civil defence personnel and trained volunteers are engaged in

relief and rescue operations. The government deployed 67 medical teams in flood-affected areas on Tuesday, while 10 boats were used for rescue and relief operations. A total of 121 people were rescued by boats and moved to safer locations.

Relief materials distributed among affected people included 420.323 quintals of rice, 74.715 quintals of pulses, 22.4162 quintals of salt and 2,058.9534 litres of mustard oil. Animal feed comprising 112.23 quintals of wheat bran and 321.36 quintals of rice bran was also distributed.

Floodwaters have caused extensive damage to roads, bridges and other infrastructure across the state. The government is reviewing the situation and taking steps for restoration and repair. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and other ministers are holding regular meetings with senior officials and monitoring relief and rehabilitation efforts.

## NSDMA Denies River Erosion Funding in Chümoukedima

**Kohima, Aug 12:** The Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority clarified Tuesday that recent flood work in Chümoukedima was never meant for river erosion control. Officials dismissed reports claiming otherwise as inaccurate. The agency insists all projects under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment scheme met their specific scope. Confusion remains high in Diphupar A and Seithekhiema. The Authority finished restoration at K Khel, spanning from the Diphupar A Gate to K Khel. Crews completed flash flood mitigation along the Airport Road connection and from Naga United Village, Ruve Khel to Seithekhiema Basa. These jobs prioritize road infrastructure protection. The NSDMA stated: “These works were executed in accordance with the approved scope and site requirements, with the objective of mitigating flash-flood impacts and protecting vulnerable road infrastructure.”

## Groups in Dimapur are opposing the closure of the railway goods facility

**Kohima, Aug 12:** Dimapur business and civic leaders are pushing back against the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) plan to stop goods unloading at the Dimapur station starting August 12. The shutdown stems from ongoing remodelling work at the site. Now, local groups demand a halt to the plan.

The Dimapur Urban Council Chairmen Federation (DUCCF) and the Dimapur Railway Freight and Goods Owners' Association (DRF-GOA) joined forces to pressure the Lumding Division authorities. Both groups argue that Dimapur acts as the primary commercial hub for Nagaland. Closing the current facility threatens the flow of essential commodities. Supplies will dry up.

DRFGOA leaders Zheito Chophy and Sanjay Jain met with the divisional railway manager and senior divisional operations manager on Tuesday to deliver their formal objections. They warned that moving operations to a distant location would spike transportation, fuel, and labor costs. Prices for daily necessities have already jumped by more than 10 percent since news of the closure broke. Costs will land on the consumer.

The DUCCF, led by president Za-



sivikho Zakiesato and general secretary Bokato Wotsa, filed a separate representation through the Dimapur deputy commissioner. They argue that infrastructure upgrades should serve the public, not cause economic hardship. The federation noted that any added logistics expenses will eventually reach households already struggling with living costs. “Railway modernization and administrative changes should facilitate economic development and public convenience rather than create addi-

tional hardship for consumers.”

Both associations suggest using the Food Corporation of India (FCI) Siding in Dimapur as a temporary unloading site while the station undergoes construction. They claim this move remains technically feasible if safety and operational clearances are met. The groups maintain they do not oppose modernizing the station, provided the supply chain remains intact. They are demanding a phased approach to protect traders, transporters, and the public welfare.

## Meghalaya Initiates a Large-Scale Recruitment Campaign for 20,000 Employment Opportunities

**Shillong, Aug 12:** Twenty thousand job vacancies are opening up for Meghalaya youth. The Meghalaya State Skills Development Society is spearheading the recruitment drive, which kicks off in East Khasi Hills on August 17. The program covers every block in every district, matching applicants with roles based on their specific skills and interests.

East Khasi Hills Deputy Commissioner Abhilash Baranwal says the agency partnered with various employers across India and abroad to compile these listings. Salaries for these roles range from Rs 15,000 up to Rs 40,000.



Baranwal wants locals to show up in force. He told the youth, “Wherever you feel that there is something you would want to do and you find yourself suitable

for the vacancy, please do apply.” The process starts with basic registration and an initial screening interview. Officials will verify candidate qualifications

during this first stage. Once cleared, names go to the respective employers. Companies will then run their own internal interviews based on individual recruitment policies. Successful applicants land the jobs directly after this final stage.

Baranwal pushed for transparency during the application process. He advised candidates to ask tough questions about facilities and housing before they sign on. Applicants should stay informed and ignore any hesitation about the search. This exercise offers a direct pipeline for youth to evaluate their futures and pick the right career path.

## VPP urges Amit Shah to reconsider FCRA provisions on asset takeover Voice of the People Party (VPP)

**Shillong, Aug 12:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah to reconsider the proposed amendments to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2026, particularly provisions relating to the takeover or control of assets belonging to organisations whose FCRA registration is cancelled.

In a follow-up representation submitted through Meghalaya Governor C.H. Vijayashankar, VPP president Ardent Miller Basaiawmoit reiterated the party's concerns over the proposed provisions and sought adequate safeguards for property rights, institutional autonomy, natural



justice, due process and transparency. The VPP said the issue assumes particular significance

for Meghalaya and the Northeast, where several institutions and socio-religious organisa-

tions have been functioning for decades and contributing to education, healthcare, social welfare, rural development and humanitarian services. Northeast travel guide

“Many of these institutions, including those run by minority communities, serve remote communities

The party expressed concern that provisions allowing the State to assume control over institutional assets following cancellation of FCRA registration could have consequences beyond the intended regulatory objective if adequate safeguards are not provided.

## The resignation of Chairman N Chandrasekaran costs the Tata Group Rs 26,800 crore

**New Delhi, Aug 12:** Following the announcement of N Chandrasekaran's resignation as chairman of Tata Sons, the Tata Group lost more than Rs 26,800 crore. His current term expires on February 20, 2027. Chemicals, automobiles, information and technology, telecommunication, power generation, consumer goods and retail, hospitality, and travel are just a few of the many industries in which the Tata Group operates. Tata Consultancy Services had the biggest loss among the stocks in the most recent data at 1:25 pm, with a 4.8% decline. Tejas Networks saw a 2.84 percent decline, Tata Consumer Products saw a 2.8 percent decline, and Tata Elxsi saw a 2.58 percent decline. Tata Communications saw a 1.62 percent decline, while Tata Steel saw a 2.02 percent decline. Tata Power lost 1.32 percent, while Tata Teleservices (Maharashtra) down 1.24 percent.



Tata Investments shares fell 1.68%, Indian Hotels Company shares down 1.51%, and Trent shares fell 0.55%. Tata Chemicals was up 0.91 percent at 1:15 pm, while Voltas and Tata Capital showed modest increases of 0.16 and 0.38 percent, respectively. In his statement, Chandrasekaran said that he has chosen to step down since one of the Board members did not support the decision to extend his tenure by five years. He said Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and Sir Ratan Tata Trust had unanimously resolved and recommended the extension of his next term for a period of five years, which was recorded and recommended by the Tata Sons Nomination and Remuneration Committee and the Board. Subsequently, the resolution was tabled in the Tata Sons Board on February 24 this year. "However, the proposal was not carried through because one of the Board Members did not support it, and in the absence of unanimous support, I chose to defer the decision," he wrote. Six months have passed since that Board meeting, but no resolution has been

reached as of yet, according to Chandrasekaran. Tata Sons is a huge organization with numerous strategic initiatives that are at crucial phases of implementation. In addition to having a leader in place to guide the Group past February 2027, he stated that clarity over leadership is crucial for partners, employees, investors, and other stakeholders. Chandrasekaran made the decision not to apply for the reappointment as a result. "I have asked the Board to decide on the succession soon to ensure a proper transition," he said. Chandrasekaran has spent almost 40 years working for the Tata Group. Since January 2017, he has been the Chairman of Tata Sons and the Tata Group. In 1987, he began working as an intern at Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), rising to the position of Chief Executive Officer in 2009 before assuming leadership of Tata Sons.

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## Dipke claims rural children failed miserably and unveils the CJP campaign for Independence Day



**New Delhi, Aug 12:** According to founder Abhijeet Dipke on Wednesday, the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) would start a campaign on Independence Day called "School Thik Karo" to enhance the state of government schools in rural areas. The name of the nationwide campaign was disclosed on Wednesday, but Dipke had declared it on Monday. "Kids in villages shouldn't be pleading for basic facilities at school after 80 years of Independence," Dipke wrote in a post uploaded on social media platform X. "As a nation, we have done the

worst conceivable thing to rural children. The CJP would start the "School Thik Karo" campaign this Independence Day to enhance government schools in rural areas, he continued. On Monday, Dipke declared a campaign to enhance local government schools. The 30-year-old, who is currently in charge of a "pressure group" opposing the administration, urged parents and sarpanches to assume the "social and moral responsibility" of providing children with better basic facilities. On August 15, India's 80th Independence Day, Dipke urged people to make a commitment

to the cause. He declared that he would start the campaign from his home hamlet, Hingoli, in the Marathwada district of Maharashtra, by going to the sarpanch and asking for improvements to the local government schools. Dipke questioned why pupils in rural regions still lack resources that are available to kids in larger cities and claimed that government schools in villages had been "neglected and ignored" for the previous 80 years in a video message shared on social media. How challenging it must be for young females. Therefore, I believe that if we should focus on anything on August 15, it should be starting afresh, and we need to start by fixing our government schools," he stated. The children in Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh, protested the state of a roughly 1.5-kilometer road that serves many settlements along the Yamuna belt, a day after Dipke announced a drive to improve government schools in rural. After the rains, the area

has become mud and slush, making it challenging for locals to get around. Nearly 3,000 people who live in Chandpur and the adjacent deras—including Brahma ka Dera, Banvasi ka Dera, Athbhaiyan ka Dera, Bachchi ka Dera, Bhikhua ka Dera, Gusai Baba ka Dera, and Gangwa ka Dera—use the road as their primary entry point. According to locals, the state of the road has made it challenging for kids to travel to school and has made it more difficult to get sick people to hospitals. Along with police officers, SDM Sadar Abhishek Kumar and CO Yashpal Singh arrived along the protesters' path on Tuesday morning as they marched in the direction of the Collectorate and made an effort to halt them. Even so, the kids arrived at the Collectorate and blocked the main entrance. The children refused to leave the protest despite attempts by officials to get them to do so. Employees and officials inside were unable to leave.

## Traffic diversion on the Pune-Mumbai Expressway for upkeep and repairs



**New Delhi, Aug 12:** The Pune-Mumbai Expressway's Connecting Link portion was stopped by the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) on Wednesday from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. for maintenance and repairs as well as a mock drill. The Connecting Link between Pune and Mumbai will be temporarily blocked, according to an alert released by the MSRDC on Tuesday. During this time, vehicles heading toward Mumbai will be redirected via the ghat portion of the former Mumbai-Pune Expressway. Drivers utilizing the route during this time were urged to heed the authorities' instructions and traffic signs. According to the MSRDC, the Connecting Link road-way that transports people from Mumbai to Pune is still in use. The purpose of the traffic diversion was to support a mock exercise and maintenance and repair operations on the Connecting Link. In order to prevent delays, the authorities had urged drivers to comply with the interim traffic arrangements.

## Delhi High Court requests that Meta clarify its copyright management tool access policy

**New Delhi, Aug 12:** On Wednesday, the Delhi High Court ordered Meta to clarify the requirements for granting users access to its copyright management service, which enables users to manage and safeguard their original content on Facebook and Instagram. Mohit Kumar, a content creator, filed a petition with a bench of Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani, claiming that certain individuals had downloaded his videos and used the Meta Rights Tool to assert copyright. Kumar argued that because Meta had not granted him access to the tool, he was unable to assert copyright over the recordings. "So why isn't it available to everyone? Justice Bhambhani said, "It's like giving the key to the thief instead of the house owner." In a lawsuit filed by Kumar, an Indian e-commerce and AI business coach who produces instructional content on social media under the handle "Rise with Mohit,"



the court noted that while people with only a few hundred followers seemed to have gained access, Kumar claimed he applied for access to the tool three times, but his applications were denied without explanation. He went on to say that a legitimate creator's account might be shut down overnight due to bogus copyright strikes, eliminating years of work, monetization, brand partnerships, and commercial potential.

Meta's attorney argued that the content that had been removed in response to the bogus strikes against Kumar had been restored. In Kumar's lawsuit, however, the court issued a summons and scheduled the hearing for September 24. It noted that the problem appeared in multiple instances involving content producers and hence called for more investigation. It has been observed that there are certain weaknesses and vulnerabil-

ities. The court said, "We better figure this out." Days after agreeing to investigate on September 24 whether social media companies can suspend or remove user accounts based only on copyright strikes, the court issued its directive. In a case filed by content creator Saurabh Maurya, whose Instagram account was suspended after a copyright strike that was later proven to be bogus, the same judge is taking up the matter.

## The SpiceJet Delhi-Pune flight enters a gas chamber due to the lack of air conditioning

**New Delhi, Aug 12:** After a passenger referred to the plane as a "gas chamber," a two-hour and ten-minute SpiceJet journey from Delhi to Pune became a terrifying nine-hour ordeal. On Tuesday night, passengers were scorching due to the aircraft's malfunctioning air conditioning system. SpiceJet flight SG-105 was supposed to take off from Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport's Terminal 1 at 9:45 p.m., however it was postponed till 10:30 p.m. Passengers started to feel hot and suffocated as soon as they entered the flight. One of the fliers, Lehpal Javalge, described the nightmare as follows: "We felt suffocated, but that the AC will start soon, and the temperature will settle down." Sweat was all over us. There was no air conditioning or ventilation for the 150 passengers aboard the trip. While the pilots were getting ready to take off, the passengers and cabin personnel were battling with the growing

warmth. But the plane kept taxiing in the direction of the runway. "The passengers on board included elderly people, children, and pregnant women. Everyone was terrified for their lives. Kids started crying," Javalge continued. The flier stated that rather than shouting slogans, they were advised to behave politely. The cabin crew allegedly turned on blowers in response to multiple complaints, worsening the situation and creating a "gas chamber," according to Javalge. "A pregnant woman began to have trouble breathing and was on the verge of passing out." We warned that if the pregnant woman was not taken care of immediately, she would perish. "The temperature increased. The volume of protests increased. The takeoff was canceled. The passengers were deboarded and asked to wait for 20 minutes before boarding again. The passengers, however, sat on the runway for about two hours and demanded the plane be changed. Passen-

ger alleged delay in medical assistance for the pregnant woman and said no refreshments were arranged for them during the hours-long delay. Hours later a technical team showed up that identified the issue and suggested plane be changed. The flight finally took off at 5 a.m. Passengers are seen fanning themselves with menu cards and magazines in a number of films that Javalge posted on social media platform X. In another video, a pregnant woman in a wheelchair is seen having trouble breathing. A SpiceJet representative responded to the concerns by stating that the technical issue caused the takeoff to be delayed. SpiceJet flight SG 105, which was supposed to go from Delhi to Pune on August 11, 2026, experienced a last-minute technical problem. After a different aircraft was scheduled, the trip went to Pune. The passenger's inconvenience is greatly regretted by SpiceJet, the spokesperson stated.

# For a year, Karnataka prohibits the sale of pan masala and gutkha that include nicotine or tobacco

**New Delhi, Aug 12:** On Wednesday, Karnataka issued a one-year ban on the production, storage, distribution, transportation, and sale of pan masala and gutkha that include nicotine or tobacco. The ban was implemented in accordance with clause (a) of sub-section (2) of Section 30 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, read with Regulation 2.3.4 of the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulation, 2011, according to a notification dated June 15, 2026, issued by the Commissioner of Food Safety, Karnataka State. The order was issued citing public health concerns, and it prohibits gutkha and pan masala containing tobacco or nicotine across Karnataka with effect from the date of the notification. It also includes additional products sold separately that have nicotine or tobacco in the finished product, regardless of their brand, whether they are packed or unpackaged, and whether they are sold as a single item or packaged in a way that makes it easier for customers to mix them. "Any other products marketed separately that contain tobacco or nicotine

in the finished product under any name, whether packaged or unpackaged and/or sold as a single product, or the packaged as separate products, sold or distributed in a way that makes it easy for the consumer



to mix. "The notification stated, "Gutkha/ Pan masala that contains tobacco and nicotine as ingredients and is packed in sachets, pouches, packages, containers, etc., or by whatever name it is called in the entire State of Karnataka for a period of one year with effect from the date of notification." Previously, plastic and foil packaging for pan masala was outlawed by the Food Safety Authority of India (FSSAI). Manufacturers are prohibited from packing pan masala with plastic-based materials, plastic laminates, aluminum foil, or metalized layers under

the new Food Safety and Standards (Packaging) Amendment Regulations, 2026. Pan masala can only be sold in conventional rigid containers or environmentally friendly packaging going ahead. According to a news release, the new regulations, known as the Food Safety and Standards (Packaging) Amendment Regulations, 2026, will take effect on the day they are published in the Official Gazette. Paper, paper board, cellulose, or other naturally produced materials may be used to pack pan masala in accordance with the revised requirements.

enforcement agencies, such powers are restricted to officers not below the rank of Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) of Police. Additionally, he stated that intermediaries must receive written, well-reasoned notifications outlining the precise URLs implicated, the nature of the alleged breach, the pertinent statutory prohibitions, and the legal foundation for the action. The minister added that the necessity, proportionality, and legality of all content takedown orders are evaluated on a monthly basis by an officer at least as high as Secretary to the relevant government. According to him, the revised framework aims to strike a balance between citizens' constitutional rights and the government's duty to uphold state security, public order, and national sovereignty.

## Amit Shah says the government is prepared to talk about student protests in a letter to Speaker Om Birla

**New Delhi, Aug 12:** In a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Union Home Minister Amit Shah stated that the administration is prepared to talk about the student protest and asked him to engage with the opposition about the best time to do so. Shah referenced Kiren Rijiju, the minister of parliamentary affairs, who said during the Business Advisory Committee meeting that the government was prepared to discuss the student movement and the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate), or NEET (UG) paper leak in Parliament. "I should

also point out that the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026 was discussed earlier in the current session of Parliament at the request of the Opposition, and no honorable Member of Parliament from the Opposition voiced any opinions in the House regarding the NEET examination."

In the Hindi letter, he stated, "Despite this, the government is ready to discuss this issue again." Shah stated that he is prepared to respond to all inquiries from the opposition and that he wants to attend the House for the discussion. In a democ-

cracy, dialog and discussion are the only ways to find solutions. He wrote, "I firmly believe in democracy and democratic institutions, and I think this House is specifically designed for discussion and dialogue."

Shah stated earlier in the day that if the opposition permits the House to function, the government is prepared to examine the student protests and the ensuing police action. Despite requests for his attendance and a speech in the House on the matter, he insisted that he has been visiting Parliament on a regular basis. Shah indicated that the Opposition

does not want the discussion in an unusual remark to reporters outside Parliament. He further stated that in order for the debate to start at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, the Opposition must send a letter to the Speaker by 2 p.m. Over the last two weeks, the ongoing monsoon session of Parliament has mostly been abandoned. In response to claims of police abuses and the use of pellet guns during the protest march on July 20, the Opposition has insisted on Shah's statement in the House, calling for the resignation of then-Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

## Following a query from an Owaisi, the center describes new safeguards for content takedown

**New Delhi, Aug 12:** In order to maintain an open and secure internet while ensuring greater accountability, transparency, and due process in content takedown and blocking actions, the Center announced on Wednesday that it has implemented certain safeguards under the Information Technology (IT) guidelines. Asaduddin Owaisi, a Hyderabad MP and head of AIMIM, requested information on the implementation of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules and its subsequent revisions. The Lok Sabha responded. Owaisi requested aggregate data on content removal, blocking orders, and account suspensions issued over the previous year in an unstarred question about whether the government had examined the implementation of the IT

regulations. Additionally, he inquired about particular steps being taken to increase the legal openness of such actions. Union Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Jitin Prasda responded in writing that the government is still dedicated to maintaining an open, secure, trustworthy, and responsible internet.

The minister stated that the legal framework for digital intermediaries and online material is provided by the IT Act, 2000, and the IT Rules, 2021. He emphasized a number of procedural protections brought about by modifications that went into force on November 15, 2025. He said directions to remove or disable unlawful content can now be issued only by senior officials of the rank of Joint Secretary or above or equivalent. In the case of law

enforcement agencies, such powers are restricted to officers not below the rank of Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) of Police. Additionally, he stated that intermediaries must receive written, well-reasoned notifications outlining the precise URLs implicated, the nature of the alleged breach, the pertinent statutory prohibitions, and the legal foundation for the action. The minister added that the necessity, proportionality, and legality of all content takedown orders are evaluated on a monthly basis by an officer at least as high as Secretary to the relevant government. According to him, the revised framework aims to strike a balance between citizens' constitutional rights and the government's duty to uphold state security, public order, and national sovereignty.

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## Editorial

## Decoding Beijing's view on the Pak-Saudi-turkey alignment

The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement, signed by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, has generated considerable interest on Chinese social media. One commentator described it as a “Sunni NATO,” while other discussions focused on declining United States’ influence, Iran as a target, and the implications for India, with some suggesting that New Delhi should be on high alert.

On Weibo, hashtags including “Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan sign joint defence agreement” and “Iran welcomes the defence agreement” have attracted thousands of views and generated extensive discussion. A recurring theme in Chinese commentary is that the Mecca defence pact is a defensive and open-ended security framework rather than an offensive alliance. Strategically, it is seen as balancing Iran and Israel while allowing the three signatories to reduce their dependence on the US without directly confronting Washington. Qin Tian, Deputy Director of the Middle East Research Institute at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, argued that since the outbreak of the US-Iran conflict earlier this year, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Turkey, and Egypt have stepped up diplomatic coordination and held multiple foreign ministers’ meetings, with Pakistan playing a key role in efforts to advance US-Iran negotiations. The pact, in this sense, is being discussed as part of a wider push for greater coordination among regional Muslim powers.

Chinese commentary frames the Mecca pact as a “money, gun and nuclear” combination, bringing together three complementary military and strategic strengths: Saudi financial power, Turkish military capabilities, and Pakistan’s nuclear deterrent. A Weibo post similarly argued that the agreement would allow the three countries to combine their political, economic, and military capabilities and respond collectively to major geopolitical and security challenges. The role of the US is central to these interpretations. One commentary argues that the tripartite alignment signals a shift from a US-dominated Middle Eastern security order towards greater regional self-reliance. In this reading, Iran is a key target of deterrence and containment, while Pakistan emerges as a perceptibly important security partner. The pact could constrain Iran through a stronger collective defence network while also challenging aspects of the US and Israel’s strategic positions. Chinese commentary also portrays the agreement as the beginnings of a more institutionalised regional security framework, potentially expanding to countries such as Egypt and linking the Gulf, Red Sea, Arabian Sea, and South Asia.

Commentators also attached significance to the choice of venue. One person asked, “Why choose Mecca?” The answer offered was that signing the agreement

in Mecca carries profound political and symbolic significance. In this interpretation, Mecca, as the holiest site in Islam, transforms the agreement from a narrow security arrangement among three countries into a broader statement about the security of the Muslim world. The most consistent argument in Chinese commentary is that the Mecca defence pact highlights declining confidence in US security guarantees and a broader movement towards greater regional strategic autonomy. One commentator argued that a Middle Eastern alliance could significantly weaken the US-led regional order built over decades. Another wrote that the three countries had begun constructing a security network that is firm yet flexible, and which does not depend on the US. Li Shaoxian, head of the China-Arab States Research Institute at Ningxia University, described the pact as evidence of what he sees as the erosion of the US security umbrella in the Middle East. Yan Xuetong, Honorary Dean of the Institute of International Relations at Tsinghua University, posed a provocative question: ‘If the US military cannot even protect its own bases, how can it protect its partners?’ China Central Television (CCTV) reporter Wang Zheng similarly contended that the agreement showcases the regional demand for more diversified and effective security guarantees. More importantly, he presented it as evidence that the Middle East is moving away from an era of “Western dominance” towards a “new era of autonomous security,” in which regional powers coordinate and develop their own security frameworks. India has attracted particular attention in Chinese commentary.

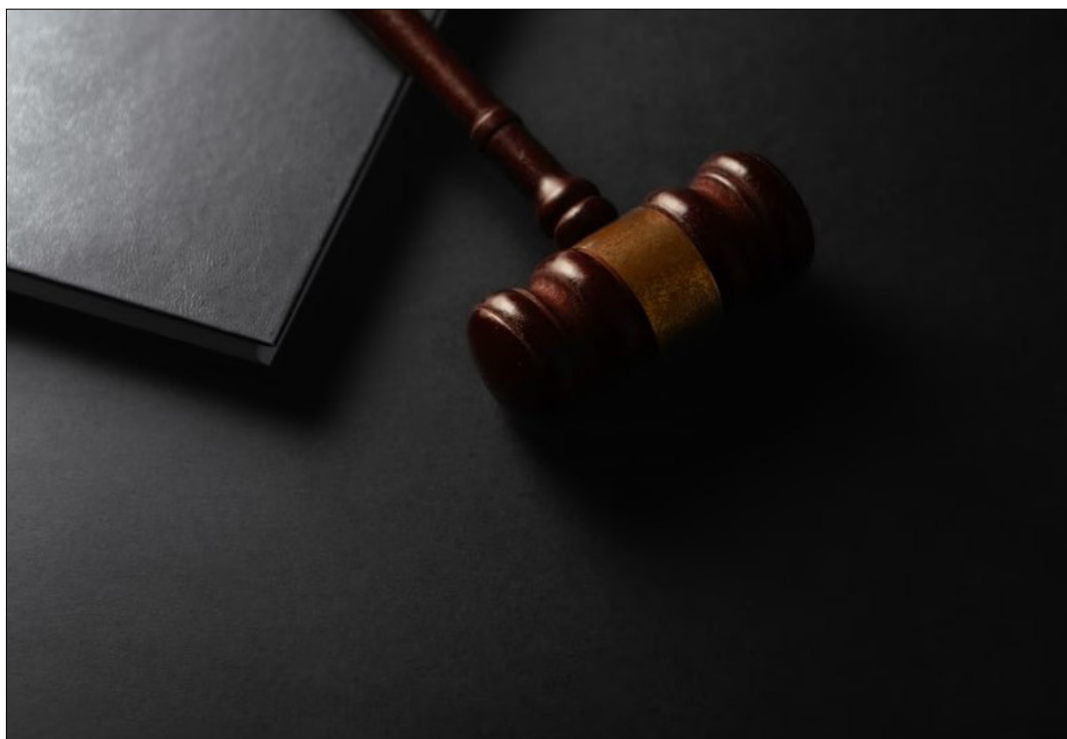
A commentary on Sina Finance argued that the pact could reshape regional strategic calculations by strengthening deterrence against Iran and raise costs for Israel, while closer Saudi-Pakistan ties could narrow India’s strategic space. Another commentator argued that for India, consequences of the pact matter more than the precise intentions behind it, which is to expand Pakistan’s strategic depth beyond South Asia. There are, however, limits to how far Saudi Arabia can move against India. Riyadh and New Delhi have deep economic and trade ties, and India remains an important purchaser of Saudi oil. Saudi Arabia has strong incentives to preserve its relationship with India. Nevertheless, Chinese commentary suggests that the very existence of the pact has altered the regional strategic equation and is a cause of concern for India. Another analysis identified three challenges for India. First, the pact could strengthen Pakistan through Saudi financial support and Turkish defence capabilities, potentially raising the costs of any future India-Pakistan confrontation. Second, it could contribute to a broader West Asia-South Asia security network, potentially narrowing India’s strategic space.

# The promise and pitfalls of the new tribunal reforms bill

The Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2026, recently passed by the Lok Sabha, should be judged not by the shortcomings of earlier experiments but by whether it has learnt from them. On vacancies, independence and accountability, it makes a serious attempt to do precisely that.

The Bill, passed by the Lok Sabha, is best understood against the unsettled history of tribunal reform. Its Statement of Objects and Reasons traces that history from the rationalisation exercise that began in 2015, through the Finance Act, 2017, the 2021 Ordinance and finally the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021. But the significance of the 2026 Bill lies in what happened thereafter. In Madras Bar Association v. Union of India (2025), the Supreme Court (SC) held that important parts of the 2021 framework did not sufficiently respect the separation of powers and judicial independence. The Court was particularly troubled by provisions which substantially revived arrangements it had already disapproved, including a four-year tenure, a minimum age requirement of 50 years, a system requiring two names to be sent for every vacancy, and an appointment timeline under which the government was required to act only “preferably” within three months. It also reiterated a more fundamental concern: Tribunals could not indefinitely remain administratively dependent upon the very executive departments whose decisions they were often required to review.

That is why the essence of the 2026 Bill is structural, not cosmetic. The SC did not merely ask Parliament to alter a few service conditions. It advised the establishment of an independent National Tribunals Commission (NTC) capable of supervising appointments and functioning, providing professional and adminis-



trative oversight, and reducing the fragmented dependence of tribunals on their parent ministries. The Statement of Objects and Reasons expressly acknowledges that directive. The Bill replaces the 2021 Act’s dispersed framework with a common architecture built around a permanent NTC governing the principal tribunals listed in its First Schedule. In that sense, the Bill attempts to change the institution through which the model itself is administered. The four-year tenure becomes five years. Instead of requiring the search-cum-selection committee to send a panel of two competing names for each vacancy, the new Bill requires it to recommend one suitable person, with one additional name kept on a waiting list. Instead of allowing the government to merely “preferably” decide within three months, the Bill requires it to process the recommendation and make the appointment within three months. The statutory 50-year minimum

age that figured prominently in the earlier challenge is not re-enacted in the Bill. Above all, the institutional vacuum identified by the apex court is answered through the creation of the NTC.

On the principal concerns identified by the Court, the answer is difficult to ignore: This is not the 2021 framework in new packaging. At its centre, is something the Court itself repeatedly sought: a statutory NTC. The NTC is responsible for the selection processes, tribunal performance, complaints, and a National Tribunals Data Grid. Its chairperson must be a former Supreme Court judge or a former High Court chief justice. Its membership combines judicial and technical experience. The Bill therefore moves tribunal administration away from a fragmented model towards a permanent institution. This is particularly significant because the first threat to tribunal justice is often not a dramatic assault on independence.

It is an empty chair. A tribunal created for specialised and speedy justice is of little use if its benches cannot sit. The apex court has described prolonged vacancies as capable of making tribunals ineffective. The 2026 Bill responds by institutionalising the selection process. That change is constitutional in consequence.

The Bill also substantially answers the concern over tenure. Chairpersons and members are to ordinarily hold office for five years, subject to age limits of 70 and 67, respectively. Those limits closely track the tenure architecture earlier directed by the apex court, which had warned that truncated terms discourage capable candidates and weaken institutional independence. The NTC has a second role: reviewing tribunal performance, participating in the complaints mechanism and building a national data architecture for tribunals. Its accounts are subject to Comptroller and Auditor-Gen-

eral audit and its annual report is to be placed before Parliament. Independence should protect adjudication from interference, not institutions from scrutiny. A tribunal system must be independent enough to decide without fear, but transparent enough for the country to know whether it is actually deciding at all.

The government will inevitably remain involved in appointments, expenditure, administration and rule-making. Independence does not require institutional isolation. It requires that participation does not become domination. The real inquiry must, therefore, concern safeguards, structure, and balance. The judicial character of the commission, the search-cum-selection mechanism, defined tenure, statutory timelines, parliamentary reporting and financial audit must be considered together, rather than in isolation. Judicial review performs its highest function when it identifies a constitutional defect. But constitutional dialogue succeeds only when the legislature is permitted to cure that defect. The SC’s directions cannot sensibly mean that every future tribunal law must inherit the constitutional suspicion earned by its predecessor. Indeed, the Court’s own 2025 judgment demanded a NTC as a structural response to decades of piecemeal reform. Parliament has now attempted that response. The Bill may be tested, scrutinised and improved. That is what legislation in a constitutional democracy should undergo. But there is a difference between scrutiny and reflex. The Lok Sabha’s passage of the Bill on August 10 should therefore be seen for what it is: An attempt to move the debate from repeated institutional litigation to institutional construction. The proper question is how much farther the Bill has travelled from the last attempt’s shortcomings.

## Managing the tripartite shift: India's options amid changing regional dynamics

On August 7, 2026, a trilateral mutual defence agreement was signed between Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan in Mecca. The venue, which has Islam’s holiest mosque, symbolises a convergence of three powerful Islamic nations. The mutual defence clause reflects Article 5 of the Nato agreement. Though Egypt had joined the negotiations earlier, it kept away. Turkey’s foreign minister, Hakan Fidann, expects it to join soon. Turkish leaders emphasised that the agreement was not aimed at any country and was a purely defensive measure.

Though not a “Middle Eastern Nato”, some term it the “Islamic Nato”. Members of Nato had shared concerns about countering the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries. In fact, their joining the 2001 US intervention in Afghanistan went beyond the original mandate. Also, Nato countries have a joint command and control system and a shared nuclear deterrence, though the US retains the control of forward-deployed nuclear weapons. The three Mecca agreement nations have some, not totally, overlapping threat concerns. Turkey has had differences with Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu even declared that “our next target is Turkey”. Consequently, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced that “now you can’t even touch our hair”. Turkey has berated Israeli military intrusions into Lebanon and pressure on the Syrian re-

gime, which Turkey helped install. Turkey’s relations with Iran have fluctuated. But they share an interest in containing the aspirations of the Kurdish community which dominates eastern Turkey, the northern parts of Syria and Iraq as well as western Iran. Reportedly, Turkey restrained Israel from employing Iraqi Kurds for a ground operation against Iran, co-opting Iran’s Kurdish minority, at the start of the US-Israeli war.

Ironically, the Turkish Ottoman Empire, after recapturing Diriyah, the first Saudi state, in 1818, took the al-Saud family ruler and his sons prisoner. They were beheaded in Istanbul, then Constantinople, in 1818. Recent Saudi-Turkish differences first arose over Turkey supporting the Arab Spring in 2010-11. Then came the brutal killing of American journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. Now the shared threats eclipse the past differences. Saudi Arabia basically perceives a threat from Iran and its allies like Yemen’s Houthis and Iraq’s pro-Iran militias. Yemen has had a truce since 2022, but recently the Houthis targeted Saudi Arabia’s Aramco oil facility. Regarding Israel, the Saudis have resisted US pressure to sign the 2020 Abraham Accords and normalise relations, demanding that Israel must first present a pathway to a Palestinian state. In fact, the Saudis hurriedly signed a mutual defence agreement with Pakistan in September 2025, days after Israel targeted Hamas in Qatar, which

created a perception of the US being unable or unwilling to control Israel targeting the GCC countries. However, the US-Israeli airstrikes on Iran on February 28 triggered the Iranian retaliation on US military bases and assets in the GCC nations. Thus, the present Mecca agreement covers Saudi Arabia’s perceived threats from both Israel and Iran plus its allies.

Pakistan presents a different case. Since independence, it has repeatedly tried grabbing the India-controlled Jammu and Kashmir by force or multilateral UN intervention or terrorism-based blackmail. After 1947, while India chose nonalignment during the Cold War, Pakistan accepted military alliances with the US and Britain. In 1954, it signed the mutual defence assistance agreement with the US for obtaining military assistance in exchange for an anti-Communist posture. The new Air Force aircraft and the Army’s tanks gave Pakistan a military advantage over India, which instead was focused on development and not strengthening its defence forces. China militarily defeating India in 1962 and the 1964 death of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru left the Indian defence forces demoralised and under-equipped. Perceiving Indian vulnerability, Pakistan tried in 1965 to militarily grab Kashmir, but failed.

The military alliance with the United States slowly weakened after Pakistan declined to send troops to assist America during the Vietnam War. It eventually



collapsed after India won the 1971 war, leading to the creation of Bangladesh. Pakistan since then has aligned with China as both countries want to contain India while keeping their outstanding disputes alive. In between, Pakistan again became the military spearhead of the US-Saudi countering of the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in 1979. In the new trilateral arrangement, the Saudis bring oil wealth and religious standing; Turks contribute a modern army and weapons compliant with Nato standards; and Pakistan represents the only Islamic nation possessing nuclear weapons. But the “mutual defence” commitment has limits. Iran’s recent targeting of Saudi Arabia, over the existence of US military bases on its soil, saw Pakistan continuing to play the mediator

without threatening Iran with retaliation.

Similarly, in Pakistan’s standoff with the Afghan Taliban regime, the Saudis have maintained neutrality, perhaps helping financially or by military supplies. How does the Mecca agreement impinge on Indian interests? Firstly, the Indian policy of military retaliation for Pakistan-sponsored terror attacks in India requires reassessment. The Iran war has demonstrated the failure of US airstrikes to intimidate Iran. The 2025 Operation Sindoore was an enhanced version of the 2019 Balakot airstrikes. And yet, Pakistan was not deterred. Saudi Arabia and Turkey are unlikely to openly join Pakistan if India undertakes such an operation again. Though in the past, Turkey had supplied advanced drones to Pakistan, both may now openly transfer

arms.

But between US President Donald Trump’s pampering of Pakistan’s military and civilian leadership, Pakistan’s Iran war mediation and now the Mecca agreement, both the global and the regional diplomatic standing of Pakistan has risen. Closer engagement between the defence industries of Pakistan and Turkey, with Saudi financial backing and Chinese technological assistance, could present India with a stronger and economically revived antagonist. Persisting with non-dialogue with Islamabad, as even the RSS has argued, is a fairly poor diplomatic strategy. Two other factors are relevant. First, the Mecca agreement allows China to market its weapons in the Gulf, using Pakistan. Reportedly, Pakistan has already sent Chinese F-17 fighter planes and other systems to Saudi Arabia after the September 2025 defence deal. Second, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s extensive diplomacy to woo the Gulf ruling families now faces a split within the GCC, with Pakistan selectively regaining influence. Clearly, the Indian government’s alignment with the US-Israel-UAE axis and Mr Modi’s continuing personalised engagement with Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu has become quite counter-productive. Add the BJP’s domestic majoritarianism, and an opportunity arises for Pakistan’s influence to resurface in the Gulf and important Islamic nations, while shrinking the strategic space for New Delhi.

# Only 15 of 132 Auctioned Commercial Coal Blocks Have Started Production, Government Data Shows

**Mumbai:** Only 15 of the 132 commercial coal blocks allocated through auctions since June 2020 have entered production, highlighting the time required to move auctioned reserves from allocation to actual mining operations. Union Minister of State for Coal and Mines Satish Chandra Dubey provided the figures in Parliament, while the government continued efforts to accelerate the development of the remaining blocks.

Of the 132 allocated blocks, 23 have received Mine Opening Permission, allowing them to proceed to the operational stage. The other 109 blocks are at different stages of statutory development and are required to follow the timelines and conditions specified in their respective Coal Mine Development and Production Agreements.

Commercial coal mining was opened to private-sector participation in 2020, marking a shift from the earlier

system in which coal blocks were largely linked to specified end-use industries.

The first commercial mining auction was launched in June 2020, with the new framework allowing successful bidders to produce coal for commercial sale rather than restricting output to their own captive requirements.

The government has subsequently expanded the auction programme and introduced measures intended to shorten the time taken to operationalise mines. These include a single-window clearance mechanism, dedicated Project Management Units to assist successful bidders with regulatory approvals, infrastructure support, monitoring of development progress and measures aimed at simplifying procedures.

The Ministry of Coal has identified faster operationalisation of allocated blocks as an important component of increasing domestic production. Its monitoring mecha-



nism focuses on identifying delays, facilitating clearances and providing support to project developers so that coal reserves can be brought into production within prescribed timelines. The scale of production from captive and commercial mines has nevertheless increased in recent years. During the financial year 2025-26, production from captive and commercial coal blocks reached 210.46 million tonnes, up 10.22 per cent from 190.95 million tonnes in the previous financial year. Dispatches rose to 204.61 million tonnes

from 190.42 million tonnes. Twelve captive and commercial blocks received Mine Opening Permission during the year, adding more than 86 million tonnes of annual production capacity, while seven blocks commenced production during the same period.

Policy changes have also provided greater flexibility to captive coal mine operators. Captive mine owners are permitted to sell up to 50 per cent of their annual production in the open market after meeting the requirements of their specified end-use sectors. The measure is intended to

make greater use of available domestic coal and improve supplies to other consumers.

The government has been pursuing commercial mining as part of a broader strategy to raise indigenous coal output, strengthen supplies to power-generating units and reduce dependence on imports wherever domestic resources can meet demand. The auction framework is designed to bring additional private investment into mining while increasing the availability of coal for the wider economy.

The comparatively low number of producing blocks among those allocated since 2020 also underscores the gap between auctioning a coal asset and bringing it into commercial operation.

Land, statutory approvals, infrastructure development, mine preparation and compliance with development schedules remain important stages before production can begin.

# Seven Chairmen Who Transformed Tata Sons From 1868 to the Modern Era



**Mumbai:** Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata Group, has been led by seven key chairmen since the business was founded in 1868, with each leadership era contributing to the conglomerate's transformation from a trading enterprise into a global business group.

Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata founded the organisation as a private trading venture and later laid the groundwork for several major industrial and infrastructure initiatives. His vision extended to steel manufacturing, hydroelectric power and hospitality, including the establishment of the Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai. After his death in 1904, his elder son, Sir Dorabji Tata, took over the leadership of the group.

Sir Dorabji Tata played a major role in turning his father's industrial ambitions into established enterprises. Under his leadership, Tata Iron and Steel Company was institutionalised, while the family's philanthropic activities expanded through the creation of charitable trusts. These initiatives also contributed to the gradual transfer of a substantial portion of Tata Sons' ownership into philanthropic

institutions.

Sir Nowroji Saklatvala became chairman in 1932, succeeding Dorabji Tata. He was the first chairman of Tata Sons who was not a direct paternal descendant of Jamsetji Tata. Saklatvala remained at the helm until his death in 1938, after which Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhoy Tata, better known as J.R.D. Tata, assumed leadership.

J.R.D. Tata took charge at the age of 34 and went on to become the longest-serving chairman in Tata Sons' history, leading the group for more than five decades. His tenure saw the Tata Group expand into aviation, chemicals, engineering, hotels and other sectors. He also oversaw the development of Tata Consultancy Services, which later emerged as one of India's largest information technology companies.

His leadership combined industrial expansion with an emphasis on professional management and social responsibility.

Ratan Naval Tata succeeded J.R.D. Tata as chairman in 1991, at a time when India was entering a period of major economic reforms. His tenure marked a significant transformation in the group's strategy, with Tata companies increasing-

ly pursuing international expansion and acquisitions. Major overseas deals included the purchase of Tetley by Tata Tea, Corus by Tata Steel and Jaguar Land Rover by Tata Motors, helping establish the Tata Group as a multinational business conglomerate.

Ratan Tata stepped down as chairman in 2012 and was succeeded by Cyrus P. Mistry. Mistry, who came from the Shapoorji Pallonji Group, became the sixth chairman of Tata Sons and was the first person from outside the Tata family to be selected for the permanent chairmanship. His tenure, however, lasted only four years before he was removed from the position in 2016.

Following Mistry's removal, Ratan Tata returned as interim chairman while the group searched for a permanent successor. In February 2017, Natarajan Chandrasekaran was appointed executive chairman of Tata Sons, becoming the first professional manager without a Tata family connection to hold the position on a permanent basis.

Under Chandrasekaran, the group has focused on consolidating its businesses, expanding strategic investments and strengthening the Tata brand across technology, automotive, electronics, aviation, retail and other sectors. His appointment marked another significant transition in the group's leadership history, continuing the shift toward professional management while retaining the Tata Group's long-standing institutional and philanthropic framework.

# Zerodha Mutual Fund Launches New Arbitrage Scheme With Rs 5,000 Minimum Investment



**Darbhanga:** Zerodha Mutual Fund has introduced the Zerodha Arbitrage Fund, an open-ended equity-oriented scheme aimed at generating returns by exploiting price differences between the cash and derivatives segments of the equity market.

The New Fund Offer (NFO) opened for subscription on August 12 and will remain available until August 14, with allotment expected to be completed by August 18. The scheme will be managed by Kedamath Mirajkar and benchmarked against the NIFTY 50 Arbitrage Index Total Return Index. It will be available only as a direct plan under the growth option.

The fund seeks to generate income and capital appreciation by identifying pricing differences between market segments while maintaining relatively low volatility. Its strategy will primarily involve fully hedged arbitrage positions between shares in the cash market and their corresponding futures contracts.

To retain equity-oriented tax treatment, the scheme will invest at least 65 per cent of its assets in equity and equity-related instruments. The remaining portion, up to 35

per cent, can be deployed in debt securities, money market instruments and cash equivalents, providing flexibility for liquidity management and short-term investment requirements.

Investors can enter the scheme with a minimum investment of ₹5,000, while additional investments can be made in multiples of ₹1,000. An exit load of 0.25 per cent will be charged on units redeemed within 30 days of allotment. Redemptions after the 30-day period will not attract an exit load.

Since the scheme will maintain more than 65 per cent exposure to equity and equity-related instruments, its gains will receive the tax treatment applicable to equity-oriented mutual funds. Units held for less than 12 months will attract a short-term capital gains tax of 20 per cent.

For investments held for more than one year, long-term capital gains will be taxed at 12.5 per cent on gains exceeding the annual exemption threshold of ₹1.25 lakh. The structure is aimed at combining arbitrage opportunities across equity markets with the tax framework applicable to equity-oriented schemes.

# Rupee Gains 3 Paise to 83.95 Against US Dollar as Crude Prices Ease

**New Delhi:** The Indian rupee strengthened by 3 paise to trade at ₹83.95 against the US dollar in early deals on Wednesday, supported by softer crude oil prices and continued foreign capital inflows into domestic equity markets. The local currency opened at ₹83.97 against the dollar in the interbank foreign exchange market before gaining ground to ₹83.95. The movement marked a 3-paise improvement from its previous close. A weaker US dollar index and a positive trend in domestic

equities supported the rupee during early trading. Improved investor sentiment in the Indian stock market also provided support to the currency by encouraging foreign investment flows into domestic assets. However, demand for the US dollar from importers limited the rupee's gains. Crude oil prices also offered support to the rupee. Brent crude, the global benchmark, was trading around \$79.60 a barrel after declining 0.88 per cent. Lower crude prices are generally favourable for

India because the country depends heavily on imports to meet its oil requirements, and cheaper crude can help reduce the domestic import bill and pressure on the currency. Domestic equity markets opened higher, further strengthening market sentiment. A combination of lower oil prices, steady foreign investment and positive stock-market conditions helped the rupee maintain its upward momentum, although importer demand capped a sharper appreciation.

# Gold Nears \$4,400 as Central Bank Buying and Weaker Dollar Lift Prices

**Mumbai:** Gold prices continued their upward move, trading close to the key \$4,400-per-ounce level after breaking out of a prolonged consolidation phase, supported by strong institutional buying, continued central bank purchases and weakness in the US dollar.

International gold prices have risen around 8.7 per cent since the beginning of August, with the rally gaining pace after gold recorded a weekly increase of more than 7 per cent last week. It marked the metal's strongest weekly performance since January. On the do-

mestic Multi Commodity Exchange, gold futures climbed to ₹1,54,600 per 10 grams.

The recent gains have been supported by changing expectations around US monetary policy. Weak labour market data has reduced expectations of a Federal Reserve rate hike in September, increasing the appeal of non-yielding assets such as gold. Exchange-traded gold funds globally also attracted 22 tonnes during the week ended August 7.

Central bank demand has provided another ma-



jor source of support. The People's Bank of China extended its gold-buying streak to 21 consecutive

months after adding around 640,000 ounces to its reserves in July, reinforcing expectations of sustained

official-sector demand. From a technical perspective, international gold faces immediate resistance around \$4,400 an ounce. A sustained move above this level could open the way toward targets of \$4,490 and \$4,580, while \$4,200 remains an important support level.

On the domestic market, MCX gold has resistance in the ₹1,57,600-₹1,60,900 range per 10 grams. Immediate support is seen around ₹1,50,800, followed by a stronger support level near ₹1,47,600.

Silver has also main-

tained strong momentum, gaining around 13 per cent over the same period and pushing the gold-silver ratio toward 67. Although the broader outlook for silver remains positive, analysts expect its near-term gains could face pressure from profit-taking after the sharp advance.

Market participants are also tracking upcoming US Consumer Price Index data for indications about inflation and the Federal Reserve's monetary policy path, which could provide fresh direction to gold and other precious metals.

# Retail Inflation Rises to 4.45% in July as Food Prices Increase

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# Public Capital Should Create Greater Space for Private Investment and Drive Economic Growth, Says Sitharaman

**New Delhi:** Public capital expenditure should function as a catalyst for attracting and expanding private investment rather than replacing it, Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said while addressing a seminar held alongside the BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting.

Delivering the keynote address on the role of the New Development Bank in mobilising private investment in member countries, Sitharaman underlined the importance of Multilateral Development Banks in creating conditions that encourage greater private-sector participation in large and complex projects. The Finance Minister said development banks could play a critical role in reducing risks associated with high-value investments,

improving the bankability of projects and strengthening confidence among domestic and international investors. By helping address financing and risk-related constraints, such institutions can make projects more attractive to private capital and support faster economic development.

Highlighting India's economic strategy, Sitharaman said sustained public capital expenditure over the past decade had created a strong foundation for private investment. Government spending has supported the development of highways, railways, maritime ports, logistics networks, digital infrastructure and energy systems, creating new economic corridors and improving connectivity across the country. She stressed that public investment should create the infrastructure and enabling

environment required for businesses to expand. The government has therefore combined capital expenditure with structural policy reforms designed to allow private investors to participate more actively in sectors and regions where new infrastructure has opened up opportunities for economic activity. The approach is aimed at creating a multiplier effect in which government investment generates additional private-sector spending, rather than leaving the public sector to carry the entire burden of infrastructure development and economic expansion. Representatives from BRICS member countries also discussed the structural difficulties faced by emerging economies in attracting private financing. Limited risk appetite, financing constraints and the challenges involved in

making large projects commercially viable remain important barriers to greater private investment in developing markets.

The participants explored the possibility of strengthening joint frameworks for risk mitigation and co-financing, with the objective of creating more favourable conditions for private capital. Greater cooperation among development institutions and member countries could help address financing gaps and improve the flow of investment into strategic sectors. The discussions also highlighted the broader role of Multilateral Development Banks in supporting infrastructure development across the Global South. By sharing risks, strengthening project structures and facilitating cooperation between public institutions and private investors, these

institutions can help mobilise additional capital for projects that may otherwise struggle to secure adequate financing.

Sitharaman's remarks reinforced India's broader emphasis on using public investment to build long-term economic capacity while encouraging private capital to participate in the next phase of growth. The strategy seeks to combine government-led infrastructure creation with policy reforms and financial mechanisms that can attract larger volumes of private investment. The BRICS discussions consequently focused on creating stronger links between public development spending and private financing, with risk-sharing and co-financing mechanisms seen as important tools for supporting investment-led growth across emerging economies.

# Richard Tice accused of ‘nasty tactics’ over legal threat to the Guardian

**UK:** Reform’s deputy leader Richard Tice has been accused of using “nasty tactics” in an attempt to intimidate journalists and deflect attention from his own financial affairs after issuing a legal threat to the Guardian.

In a letter sent from his lawyers, a Guardian correspondent was singled out for her reporting on a series of Tice’s financial transactions that were referred to the National Crime Agency.

Tice is now suing the NCA, claiming that the information could only have come from an officer within the agency.

In a separate letter to the Guardian, Tice’s lawyers made clear they would be seeking disclosure of documents that could reveal the details of sources.

John Whittingdale, a former Conservative culture secretary, condemned the move.

“The essence of a free press is that journalists can use verified information from sources without being forced to reveal who they are. This betrays a failure to understand how important that principle is to journalism.”

Margaret Hodge, the peer and former Labour MP and anti-corruption campaigner, said: “It is never acceptable for individuals to seemingly abuse our laws to silence investigative journalism and close down public criticism. That’s why we need to urgently reform our laws to stop rich people using their wealth to close down legitimate scrutiny.”

Jemimah Steinfeld, the chief executive at the Index on Censorship, added: “This has the appearance of an attempt to force a journalist to break the golden rule: that sources must be protected.

“This has been vital public interest reporting by the Guardian. The sources of such journalism are sacred. If the facts are incorrect, then they can be challenged, but the sources should not be chased down.

“This appears to be a tactic designed to not only silence journalists but those who talk to them. It is a nasty tactic and we should all be concerned.”

Theo Bamber, the chief executive at the News Media Association, said that “robust protection for journalists’ sources is absolutely fundamental to ensuring that reporters can scrutinise authority and hold the powerful to account on behalf of the people impacted by their actions and decisions.



“The use of legal threats by an individual or organisation

trying to force journalists to disclose their confidential sources is an attack on this important principle, and one that must be resisted at every turn.”

Tice and Reform’s leader, Nigel Farage, have been under intense scrutiny in recent months because of a continuing investigation by the Guardian into their financial affairs.

The Guardian revealed in a series of detailed reports that Reform UK received a secret £1m donation via a fundraising vehicle run by Tice and a secret £5m gift made to Farage shortly before he announced he would stand in the 2024 general election.

The Guardian also revealed that these and other transactions were reported by bankers to the National Crime Agency over fears they could involve laun-

dered money. Throughout its reports the Guardian has referred to financial industry sources.

Tice has suggested in a document filed at the high court that the Guardian’s award-winning City editor, Anna Isaac, could not have had sources at multiple banks. In legal correspondence sent directly to Isaac, Tice’s lawyers suggested he is seeking to unmask sources based on his own assessment of the reporter’s work.

Farage has also issued proceedings against the NCA.

A GNM spokesperson said: “Richard Tice’s legal threat against the Guardian appears to be a calculated attempt to deflect attention away from legitimate questions about his financial affairs and the funding of Reform UK.

“Instead of providing answers to those questions, he

seems intent on intimidating journalists and seeking to expose sources.

“The Guardian will oppose these attacks on the freedom of the press and will not be deterred from public interest-driven investigations into politicians and the parties they represent.”

Farage previously claimed – without providing any evidence – that the details of the £5m gift must have come from Russian spies hacking his phone.

The Guardian described Farage’s claim as “absurd” and “an attempt to deflect attention from legitimate scrutiny of his financial affairs”. The spokesperson added: “Nigel Farage is once again hiding behind a baseless attack on the media rather than facing up to scrutiny from journalists and politicians.”

## US Successfully Conducted First Tests of Golden Dome Missile



**Washington:** US developers of space-based interceptors for the Golden Dome missile defense program are moving to the next stage of testing after successfully completing their initial tests, Bloomberg reported, citing US Space Force General Michael Guetlein, who leads the project.

Bloomberg previously reported, citing sources, that the Pentagon planned to complete the initial tests under the space-based missile defense program by the end of 2026.

According to the news agency, the initial tests included transmitting data from sensors to an interceptor and testing the propulsion systems of their spacecraft.

Speaking to reporters at a conference on Tuesday, Guetlein said the companies were moving on to the next stage: testing their technologies directly in space.

In May 2025, US President Donald Trump unveiled the Golden Dome project, which is estimated to cost nearly \$175 billion. The multi-layered shield will integrate land, sea, and space systems to protect the US from missile threats. The first major test is reportedly scheduled for late 2028.

## Trump Insists Relationship With Netanyahu Is ‘Very Good’

**Washington:** US President Donald Trump has said his relationship with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu remains “very good”, despite growing differences between the two leaders over a US-backed proposal for Gaza.

Trump made the remarks on Monday while responding to a journalist’s question at the White House. His comments came shortly after Netanyahu publicly rejected the Gaza proposal, which calls for Israel to begin withdrawing its forces alongside the disarmament of Hamas.

The disagreement comes after Netanyahu had repeatedly emphasised his close relationship with Trump. The US president has strongly backed Israel on key security and foreign policy issues, including major decisions concerning Jerusalem.

The latest Gaza proposal is part of broader US-led efforts to sustain a ceasefire and reduce hostilities in the territory. However, Netanyahu’s opposition to the plan highlights the political challenges facing his government, particularly from right-wing and far-right coalition members who have opposed concessions involving Hamas.

Netanyahu is also facing a major political test ahead of Israel’s October 27 elections. The Gaza conflict, which began after the Hamas-led attack on Israel in October 2023, remains a central issue in the country’s political debate.

Trump and Netanyahu have previously differed over the handling of Iran as well. While Trump strongly supported Israel during the conflict, the two leaders later took different positions after the US president pushed for a ceasefire and subsequent negotiations.

The latest disagreement over Gaza has raised fresh questions about the extent to which Washington and the Israeli government will remain aligned on the future course of the conflict.

According to Gaza’s health authorities, which operate under the Hamas-controlled administration, more than 1,250 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli military operations since the ceasefire began. The figures have been cited by international organisations, including the United Nations. The Israeli military has reported five deaths among its personnel during the same period.

## Russia-Ukraine War: Kyiv Accuses Moscow of Using North Korean Missiles in Deadly Strikes

**Kyiv:** Ukrainian authorities have accused Russia of using North Korean-supplied ballistic missiles in a deadly overnight barrage that killed at least 10 people across Ukraine and wounded dozens more.

The southeastern city of Zaporizhzhia bore the brunt of the latest attacks, with seven employees of the Zaporizhstal steel plant killed and 21 others injured, according to Ukrainian officials. President Volodymyr Zelensky said the city was targeted with North Korean ballistic missiles, along with other Russian weapons.

According to Ukrainian authorities, the victims were employees of the steel plant who were attempting to reach shelters after an air-raid warning was issued. The attack also caused significant damage and disrupted operations at the facility.

The overnight strikes were reported across several Ukrainian regions. Three more people were killed in the neighbouring Dnipropetrovsk region, while attacks on Kherson and Kharkiv caused power outages. In Kyiv, an infectious diseases hospital was reportedly hit, while a children’s hospital sustained damage to its windows and surrounding areas. Ukrainian authorities said no children or medical staff were injured at the children’s facility because they had taken shelter.

Russia’s Defence Ministry said its forces had carried out a large-scale strike using precision weapons against military-industrial and transport-logistics facilities in Kyiv and Zaporizhzhia. Moscow has not acknowledged Ukraine’s allegation that North Korean ballistic missiles were used in the attack.

Zelensky Warns of Grow-



ing Russia-North Korea Military Ties

The latest accusation comes as Zelensky has repeatedly warned that military cooperation between Russia and North Korea is expanding. He recently claimed that Moscow had received additional ballistic missiles from Pyongyang

and alleged that a decision had been made to deploy between 30,000 and 50,000 North Koreans in Russia. Kyiv has not publicly provided evidence or a specific timeframe for the reported deployment.

Russia and North Korea signed a mutual defence pact in 2024, and North

Korean troops were subsequently deployed to support Russian forces during fighting in Russia’s Kursk region. Western, Ukrainian and South Korean officials have also repeatedly accused Pyongyang of supplying weapons to Russia.

South Korea has said it is closely monitoring the situation, with its Foreign Ministry describing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia as a direct security concern and a potential violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The intensifying military partnership has raised concerns in Kyiv and among its allies, particularly as Russia has increased its use of ballistic missiles in recent weeks. Such weapons are difficult to intercept, and Ukraine has repeatedly called for additional air-defence systems and interceptors. Ukraine has also stepped up long-range drone strikes against targets inside Russia, including energy infrastructure and logistics facilities, as Kyiv seeks to disrupt Moscow’s military supply chains and revenue sources.

## From Dubai luxury to an Irish jail cell: Daniel Kinahan’s drastic lifestyle shift

**Ireland:** It sounds like the penal equivalent of five stars: a private gym and library, daily outings to the exercise yard and a landing cleared of other prisoners.

Daniel Kinahan’s first full day inside the walls of Portlaoise prison on Monday, however, marked a drastic change from his luxury lifestyle in the United Arab Emirates.

The alleged leader of the Kinahan organised crime group is confined to a cell for about 20 hours a day, and instead of presiding over an empire said to be worth hundreds of millions of euros his only outlet for expenditure is the tuck shop.

The facilities, it turns out, are meagre consolation – a treadmill, some free weights and limited reading material. “The so-called gym and library are nothing much,” one source told the Irish

Times. “The gym is probably slightly bigger than a box room in a house.” That is the reality facing Kinahan, 49, for months until his trial – and possibly decades if convicted.

The Dubliner has not been convicted of any crime and remains innocent before the law, but his extradition on Sunday represents a victory for the Irish state and law enforcement agencies across the world.

Kinahan was named a leader of a cartel said to control about a third of Europe’s cocaine supply, along with running criminal sidelines in firearms and racketeering. From his base in Dubai he had appeared impervious to such allegations for almost a decade, while becoming an influential figure in sport through his boxing management company MTK Global, which arranged champi-



onship bouts. That changed after the US offered a reward of up to \$5m (£3.7m) for information that led to his arrest or conviction. The US treasury department said the Kinahan group had engaged in a gang war with another

group in Ireland and Spain, “resulting in numerous murders”. The US bounty helped Ireland to secure an extradition treaty with the UAE last year, paving the way for Kinahan’s arrest in Dubai in April on foot of an Irish war-

rant.

After failing to block extradition, Kinahan was flown in an Irish government jet to Casement aerodrome on Sunday and taken to the criminal courts of justice in central Dublin where he was charged with directing organised crime. Told by one of the three judges that a bail application would have to be made to the high court, the prisoner was phlegmatic. “I think we know I won’t be getting bail, but thank you,” he said.

Observers at the hearing noted that Kinahan, wearing a black hoodie, black tracksuit bottoms and white trainers, looked older than the photographs that show a smiling, more youthful figure. He was pale, reflecting his incarceration since April. Crowds lined part of the route to watch as he was driven in a Garda car – not a blast-proof prison van, as originally expected – to Portlaoise, a high-security prison 50 miles (80km) outside Dublin that used to house republican paramilitaries and is now home to drug gang members and others convicted of serious crimes. Kinahan is the sole prisoner on a landing in A block that usually hosts eight inmates. During visits to the yard, which has wire netting to prevent contraband being dropped in, he will be alone. He will be served breakfast at 8am, lunch at 12.30pm and supper at 4.30pm and have a tuck shop account to buy personal items from the prison shop. Video calls will afford contact with his wife and children in Dubai. A glass pane will separate him from in-person visitors. Kinahan is scheduled to return to the non-jury court on 5 October.

# Saw noticeable improvements after using these six lip balms every nite for a few weeks



I have consistently been the type of person who grabs a lip balm whenever my lips become dry; however, I had not considered the importance of using it regularly at night. My usual practice involved applying a small amount of balm throughout the day and then neglecting it afterward. This perspective shifted when I resolved to incorporate lip care into my evening routine. For a few

weeks, I tried six different lip balms before going to bed. I wanted to see whether regular use would actually make a difference to the texture and appearance of my lips. I also paid attention to how comfortable each balm felt, whether it stayed on through the night and how my lips looked and felt the next morning. My favourite 6 lip balms

1. Vaseline Lip Therapy Serum Infused Lip Balm

Advanced Hydration with Hyaluronic Acid & Petroleum Jelly: I started with Vaseline Lip Therapy because it is one of those products I have seen and used for years. The texture is thick and protective, which made it feel particularly suitable for night-time use. I applied a small amount before going to bed and noticed that it created a protective layer over my lips.

It did not disappear immediately, so I felt like it was working while I slept. After using it regularly for several nights, my lips felt softer and less prone to dryness in the morning.

What I liked most was its simplicity. It does not try to do too much. It mainly focuses on locking in moisture and protecting the lips, which is exactly what I wanted from an overnight balm.

2. Laneige Lip Sleeping Mask | Moisturizing Lip Treatment with Vitamin C + Shea Butter for Soft Hydrated Lips | Overnight Repair: The Laneige Lip Sleeping Mask felt very different from the others because of its rich, almost creamy texture. I only needed a small amount to cover my lips. I liked using this one on nights when my lips felt particularly dry. It stayed on for quite a while and made my lips feel smooth when I woke up. After a few weeks, I noticed that the flaky texture I sometimes experienced was less noticeable. For me, the biggest difference was how soft my lips felt in the morning. It also felt like a little self-care step before bed, although I would not say it is something I absolutely need every night.
3. NIVEA Cherry Shine

4.8g Lip Balm|24 H Melt in Moisture Formula|Natural Oils|Glossy Finish: NIVEA lip balm was probably the most familiar-feeling option in my routine. It has a lightweight texture and was easy to apply without making my lips feel overly coated. I used it mostly when my lips were only mildly dry. It gave me enough moisture without feeling heavy, which I appreciated because I do not always like thick products on my lips while sleeping. After using it consistently, my lips felt smoother and more comfortable. However, on particularly dry nights, I preferred something richer. So, for me, this worked better as an everyday maintenance balm rather than an intensive overnight treatment.

4. DOT & KEY Lip Plumping Mask With Shea Butter & Vitamin C + E For Naturally Glowing Lips | Smoothes Flaky & Dry Lips: This was one of the more interesting products I tried because of its mask-like texture. I used a small amount before bed and left it on overnight. What I noticed was that my lips felt moisturised and smoother the following morning. I did not expect any dramatic change in lip size or shape, and I did not see one either. For me, the

real benefit was the softness.

I also liked that I did not have to keep reapplying it. One application before bed was enough to keep my lips comfortable through the night.

5. indē wild Dewy Lip Treatment | Non-Sticky | Lip tint, balm, plumper all-in-1 | Overnight Repair Vegan Lip Balm & Moisturizer: I wanted to include a more everyday lip balm in my experiment, and this one fitted easily into that category. The texture was comfortable and not excessively sticky, so I could apply it just before going to sleep without thinking too much about it. Over time, I noticed that my lips were less rough. The difference was not overnight, but consistency seemed to help. I also found myself reaching for it during the day when my lips needed a quick moisture boost. This one reminded me that a good lip balm does not necessarily have to feel luxurious or complicated. Sometimes, a simple moisturising formula is enough.
6. Minimalist Lip Treatment Balm for Pigmented & Dark Lips | 8% L-Ascorbic Acid with Vitamin E, Radianskin & Glycerine: This was slightly different from the others because it contains SPF. While I

mainly tested these balms at night, I also liked the idea of having a lip product that could protect my lips during the day. I found the texture comfortable and easy to layer. It did not feel as heavy as some overnight masks, so I preferred using it during the day rather than specifically at bedtime. Over the few weeks, I realised that protecting my lips from the sun is something I had previously overlooked. We often remember sunscreen for our face, neck and hands but forget that our lips also need protection. What actually changed after a few weeks? The biggest change I noticed was not dramatic pigmentation reduction or suddenly having perfectly smooth lips. Instead, my lips simply became less dry and much softer. Before starting this experiment, I would occasionally wake up with slightly dry or flaky lips. Once I started applying a balm consistently every night, that happened much less often. I also realised that consistency matters more than constantly switching products. A lip balm can help, but applying it once and expecting an instant transformation is probably unrealistic. My lips improved

gradually as I made overnight lip care a habit. Another thing I learnt was that not every lip balm needs to be extremely thick. On days when my lips were comfortable, a lightweight balm was enough. When they were very dry, I preferred a richer balm or sleeping mask. My favourite part of the experiment If I had to choose what worked best for me, I would pick the richer overnight formulas when my lips were dry and flaky. They felt more nourishing and gave me noticeably softer lips the next morning. For everyday use, though, I preferred a lighter balm that was easy to apply and did not leave a very thick layer. I also think adding SPF to my daytime lip routine is something I will continue. It is a small step, but one that I had overlooked for years. Would I continue using a lip balm every night? Definitely. This little experiment made me realise that lip care does not have to be complicated. I do not need a five-step routine. Applying a suitable lip balm before bed takes less than a minute, and for me, the difference became noticeable after a few weeks of consistency.

## Straight Kurta versus A-Line Kurta: Which style is more flattering for you

The silhouette of kurtas significantly influences the overall appearance and sensation of an outfit. Among the most adaptable choices in Indian ethnic wear are straight and A-line kurtas. Although both styles can be effectively utilized for daily wear, they produce distinctly different shapes. A straight kurta follows a relatively clean line from the shoulders towards the hem, giving the outfit a structured, streamlined appearance. An A-line kurta, meanwhile, gradually widens towards the bottom, creating more movement and a softer silhouette.

So, which one should you choose? It really comes down to the kind of fit, movement and overall look you prefer.

Straight Kurtas: Clean, Classic and Easy to Style

Straight kurtas are probably one of the easiest silhouettes to build an everyday wardrobe around. They don't cling too closely to the body, but they also don't add much volume, which gives them a neat and polished appearance.

I particularly like straight kurtas for officewear and everyday ethnic dressing because they're incredibly easy to repeat. Change the trousers, jewellery or footwear and the same kurta can look completely different.

They're also a great option if you prefer a more streamlined outfit rather than something with a lot of flare.

1. BHARVITA Cotton Chikankari Straight Kurta Set: This cotton Chikankari set is a classic example of why the straight silhouette continues to work so well. The breathable cotton keeps it comfortable, while the embroidery adds timeless ethnic detail without making the outfit feel overly elaborate.



The straight cut creates a clean, elegant appearance while remaining easy to move in, making it particularly suited to everyday wear.

Style it with: Cigarette pants, flats and a structured handbag.

2. Seva Chikan Lucknowi Chikankari Rayon Straight Kurta: If you prefer softer fabrics, this rayon straight kurta offers a more fluid take on the silhouette. The clean cut makes it easy to style for work, casual plans or everyday ethnic dressing, while the Chikankari detailing keeps it from looking too basic. This is the sort of kurta that can quietly become a wardrobe workhorse because it doesn't rely on a particularly dramatic shape. Style it with: White trousers, oxidised jewellery and comfortable sandals.
3. Roman Silk Straight Kurta Set: A straight kurta set is also a practical choice when you want a coordinated outfit without having to spend time figuring out what goes with what. This style works particularly well for office

or casual ethnic dressing when you want the outfit to feel polished but uncomplicated. A-Line Kurtas: Softer, Flowy and More Playful

If straight kurtas feel a little too structured for you, an A-line silhouette offers a flattering middle ground.

A-Line kurtas are generally more fitted around the shoulders and gradually widen towards the hem. That gentle flare creates movement without the volume of a heavily flared Anarkali.

They're particularly useful when you want your outfit to feel comfortable but still have some shape.

4. Nermosa Embroidery Solid A-Line Kurta Set: This A-line set brings together a gentle flare and embroidered detailing for a more graceful silhouette. The shape adds movement while keeping the overall outfit sophisticated. Because it comes with coordinated pants and a dupatta, it can easily be dressed up for dinners, family celebrations or festive occasions without requiring complicated styling. Style it with: Statement

earrings and embellished footwear.

5. Women's Cotton A-Line Straight Kurti Set: For everyday dressing, a cotton A-line silhouette can be an easy way to introduce a little more movement into your wardrobe. The gradual flare gives the outfit a softer appearance while retaining the comfort associated with cotton ethnicwear. It's a good option when you want something more relaxed than a straight kurta without going all the way into a dramatic, heavily flared style.
6. Women's Cotton Embroidered Long A-Line Kurti: A longer A-line kurti takes the same principle a step further, creating a more flowing silhouette. The embroidered detailing adds visual interest, making this style better suited to occasions when you want your ethnicwear to feel slightly more dressed up. So, Which One Should You Choose? There isn't really a universal winner. Straight and A-line kurtas flatter different preferences. Choose a straight kurta if you love: Clean, streamlined silhouettes. Structured everyday outfits. Office-friendly ethnicwear. Easy styling and repeat wear. A less voluminous look. Choose an A-line kurta if you prefer: More movement around the legs. A softer, flowier silhouette. A little more shape and flare. Comfortable festive or occasionwear. Outfits that feel feminine without being overly fitted. Personally, I'd keep both in my wardrobe. A straight kurta is the reliable option when I want to look polished with minimal effort, while an A-line kurta is what I'd reach for when I want the outfit to feel a little more fluid and dressed up.

## How Frequently Should Your Face Be Washed

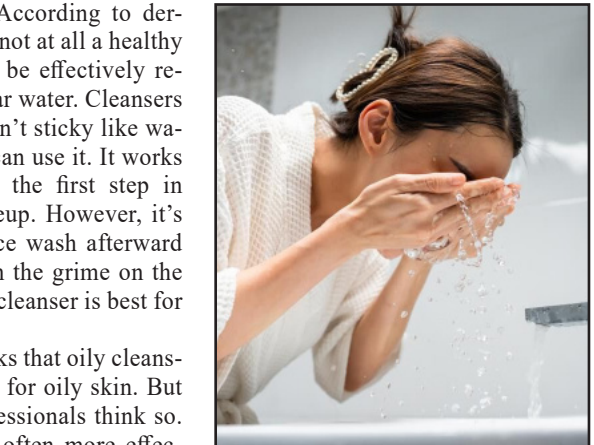
The range of cleansers available nowadays causes confusion for a lot of individuals. Additionally, every cosmetic business offers a different set of recommendations. What is the greatest option for your skin, then? Understanding skin type

A face wash or cleanser containing salicylic acid is good for acne-prone skin, ceramides are effective in protecting the skin's barrier, and glycolic acid helps to remove dark spots. In addition, each person has a particular skin type. Some people have flaky, dry skin all the time. Some folks have extremely greasy faces. Some people have a dry face overall, but their nose and forehead are greasy. It is common for cleansers to vary according to skin type. For dry skin, cream or oil-based cleansers work well. For oily skin, foaming face cleansers work better. Because it's quick and easy to remove makeup, some people use moist tissues or makeup wipes to

clean their faces. According to dermatologists, this is not at all a healthy habit. Makeup can be effectively removed with micellar water. Cleansers don't smell and aren't sticky like water. Any skin type can use it. It works incredibly well as the first step in getting rid of makeup. However, it's crucial to use a face wash afterward to thoroughly clean the grime on the face. What kind of cleanser is best for which skin type?

Many people think that oily cleansers are not suitable for oily skin. But not all beauty professionals think so. Oily cleansers are often more effective for removing sebum and makeup. Foaming cleansers are better for oily or combination skin.

How often is it necessary to use it? Makeup, oil, and grime need to be eliminated at the end of the day. Cleansing is the first step in the fundamental skin care routine that must be completed before bed. Nonetheless,



less, skin care professionals are emphasising the significance of cleansing both at night and in the morning. When they wake up, a lot of people believe that simply splashing some water on their face is sufficient. But the oil and perspiration that builds up on the face during the night cannot be removed by water alone.

## The real gut-hormone connection explains how your PMOS is reversed by gut health

You have been informed that your hormones are the issue. A prescription for birth control has been provided, perhaps along with a metformin tablet, and you have been given a pamphlet regarding "lifestyle changes". However, what if the true solution lies not within your ovaries, but rather in your gut? It appears that scientific research supports this notion, and the medical community is beginning to concur as well. The condition that many of us still refer to as PCOS was officially reclassified as Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS) in 2026, marking a global recognition that this condition extends beyond merely an ovarian concern. Fundamentally, it is a metabolic disorder. The problem nobody's talking about

PMOS affects 1 in 5 women in India and over 170 million women globally. Yet it remains chronically misunderstood and undertreated. "Most conversations stop at irregular periods

and fertility struggles, but beneath the surface lies a deeper metabolic crisis," Gut Health Coach Gargi Sareen, Sovia, tells Health Shots. Up to 70% of women with PMOS have insulin resistance (Endocrine Reviews, 2012), alongside elevated risks of type 2 diabetes, chronic inflammation, and unexplained weight gain. The question nobody was asking until recently is "Why?"

Where does it all start? Your gut is home to approximately 38 trillion microorganisms that collectively regulate hormones, govern insulin sensitivity, and control inflammation. One of the most consistent findings in women with PMOS isn't elevated androgens; it's gut dysbiosis. The hormonal chaos follows. "A landmark study in Nature Medicine (2021) found that women with PMOS had significantly lower microbial diversity and higher levels of inflammatory gut bacteria," shares the expert.

A separate study in the

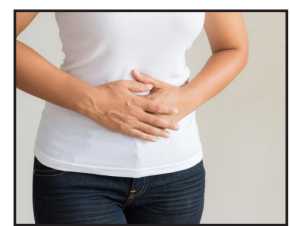
Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism (2018) confirmed that gut dysbiosis directly worsens androgen levels, the hormones behind acne, hair loss, and irregular cycles. An unhealthy gut doesn't just accompany PMOS. It may be actively fuelling it.

The gut-hormone connection

Here's what's playing out in millions of women's bodies that conventional treatment almost entirely ignores: Leaky gut triggers inflammation: A compromised gut lining allows bacterial toxins into the bloodstream

Inflammation worsens insulin resistance: The pancreas chronically overproduces insulin. Excess insulin spikes androgens: Signaling the ovaries to overproduce testosterone. High androgens damage the gut further: Completing a vicious, self-sustaining cycle

A 2023 meta-analysis of over 1,500 women confirmed that gut microbiome composition predicts



PMOS severity more accurately than BMI alone. Which probiotic is best for PMOS? A generic probiotic won't fix this. Women with PMOS are depleted in specific strains, and restoring the right ones changes everything. L. rhamnosus and L. acidophilus improve insulin sensitivity and lower testosterone; Bifidobacterium species cool inflammation at the source. The starting point is a stool test. Map what's missing, then target it precisely. PMOS is not a life sentence. But solving it means looking beyond the ovaries and into the gut. "Your microbiome is not a passive bystander; it is an active, modifiable participant in your hormonal health," says Sareen. The gut holds answers. Precision is how we find them.

## ENTERTAINMENT

# Kareena Kapoor Khan wishes Sara Ali Khan on birthday with heartfelt note



**Mumbai :** Kareena Kapoor Khan dropped a charming black-and-white photograph to extend her birthday wishes to Sara Ali Khan on the latter's 31st birthday today. The picture featured Kareena alongside her husband, Saif Ali Khan, and his children, Ibrahim Ali Khan and Sara.

With the picture, Bebo wrote an adorable birthday message that read: "Happy birthday, Sara darling ...to more pumpkin sabzi and now yoghurts. May your plate always be full..." She also tagged Sara's official Instagram account. Sara Ali Khan, daughter of Saif Ali Khan and his first wife, actress Amrita

Singh, shares an affectionate relationship with Kareena Kapoor Khan, Saif's second wife. Saif and Amrita, who also have a son, Ibrahim Ali Khan, got divorced in 2004. Following their separation, Sara and Ibrahim primarily live with their mother.

Saif later married Kareena Kapoor in 2012, and

the couple welcomed two sons, Taimur and Jehangir Ali Khan. Despite all the ups and downs in the family, Sara and Kareena developed a close bond over the years. Sara has previously opened up about her equation with Kareena, she described her as more than a friend rather than calling her as a "second mother" or "stepmother." Kareena, too, has spoken candidly about their relationship and said that she has never attempted to take on a motherly role in Sara and Ibrahim's lives.

On the work front of Sara Ali Khan, she is gearing up for her next film, Udda Teer in which she is paired opposite actor Ayushmann Khurrana. The film will be released theatrically on October 9. Meanwhile on Kareena's professional front, she will be seen in Daayra opposite Prithviraj Sukumaran which will be released in theatres on September 18.

# Sonu Nigam Shares Father's Funny Advice Against Performing Shows in Mumbai

**Mumbai :** Sonu Nigam is widely regarded as one of India's most versatile and beloved playback singers, having delivered countless iconic tracks over the decades. While speaking on a recent podcast, the ace singer opened up about how his father is a strict, disciplined man and recalled a hilarious incident when his father denied him permission to perform in Mumbai.

Sonu Nigam, in an interview with Komal Nahta on his podcast Game Changers, recalled why his father asked him not to perform in Mumbai and shared, "My father told me, 'Tu Bombay mein show nahi karega! You are good-looking, you sing well, you'll definitely get a girlfriend. You'll get entangled in an affair with some famous singer or dancer. You'll become friends with musicians and your co-singers, and then you'll settle here. If you stay in Delhi, you'll stay focused with me. You should not have any other work in Bombay apart from looking for opportunities.' Me being the good child, I complied. I respected him as a person and didn't rebel." Recalling their struggling days, the singer revealed, "My father is a very strict and knowledgeable person. When I came here in 1991, there were no reality shows. My father and I had to go to Delhi to earn some money and then



come back to Bombay. We used to stay here, and after running out of money in 2-3 months, we would go back to Delhi."

A video of singer Sonu Nigam singing Mohammed Rafi's classic 'Suhani Raat Dhal Chuki' on an operating table has gone viral. Following the video going viral, he clarified that he was wide awake under local anaesthesia for a minor surgery to treat a recurring growth on his left ring finger. Sonu Nigam is one of India's most celebrated

playback singers, known for his versatile voice and contributions to Hindi and several regional film industries. Born on July 30, 1973, in Faridabad, Haryana, he began performing at a young age and moved to Mumbai in the early 1990s to pursue a career in playback singing. He rose to prominence with songs such as "Accha Sila Diya," "Sandese Aate Hain," "Kal Ho Naa Ho," "Suraj Hua Maddham," "Main Agar Kahoon" and "Abhi Mujh Mein Kahin."

# Pankaj Tripathi top-earns in 'Mirzapur' film with reported ₹15 crore paycheck

**Mumbai :** Mirzapur fans have been waiting to see their favourite characters back in action, and now that the trailer of Mirzapur: The Movie is finally out, there's a lot to talk about. From Kaleen Bhaiya to Guddu Pandit and Munna Tripathi, the OG cast is back, but have you ever wondered how much these stars were paid for the film? If reports are anything to go by, Pankaj Tripathi has taken home a massive Rs 15 crore, making him the highest-paid actor in the film.

According to Filmii Talks, Pankaj Tripathi is reportedly taking home Rs 15 crore



for returning as the iconic Kaleen Bhaiya in Mirzapur: The Movie. If the reported figure is accurate, he is the highest-paid actor in the film. Divyenndu Sharma is

returning as the ever-popular Munna Tripathi in Mirzapur: The Movie. If reports are to be believed, the actor has been paid around Rs 3 crore for stepping back into

the shoes of the fan-favourite character.

Jitendra Kumar is joining the franchise as Bablu Pandit aka Yadav Ji and has reportedly charged Rs 1.5 crore for the role. He will be seen playing the character after Vikrant Massey, who portrayed Bablu in the original series. Shweta Tripathi will once again be seen as Golu Gupta, one of the most important characters in the Mirzapur universe. Reports suggest that she has been paid around Rs 95 lakh for her role in the movie.

As per a report by Flickn-click, Mirzapur: The Movie

has been made on an estimated budget of around Rs 250 crore. The figure, however, has not been officially confirmed by the makers. Presented by Amazon MGM Studios and Excel Entertainment, Mirzapur: The Movie is directed by Gurmmeet Singh, written by Puneet Krishna, and produced by Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan Akhtar under the banner of Excel Entertainment. The film is co-produced by Kassim Jagmagia and Vishal Ramchandani. Mirzapur: The Movie will release in cinemas on 4 September 2026.

# Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan clash in dark 'Haiwaan' teaser

**Mumbai :** The teaser of Haiwaan, starring Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan, has arrived, offering a brief but intriguing look at Priyadarshan's latest thriller. Rather than spelling out the story, the teaser leans into shadows, fragmented images and the uneasy dynamic between its two leading men. At the centre of it all is one question: "Hero ya Haiwaan?"

The film marks the reunion of Akshay and Saif after nearly two decades. The actors were last seen together in Tashan in 2008, and Haiwaan places them on opposite sides of an apparently dangerous conflict. Their contrasting characters are central to the intrigue, although the teaser carefully avoids revealing exactly what connects them. Saif's character immediately stands out. He plays a visually impaired man who navigates the world with the help of a stick, while the teaser suggests that his blindness does not necessarily make him vulnerable. There is an element of mystery to the way he moves through the story, with the film seemingly using his character's perception and limitations as part of its suspense.

Akshay, meanwhile, appears to be operating from



the shadows. His character watches Saif closely, with fleeting glimpses suggesting that he may be responsible for the danger surrounding him. The actor's unsettling presence gives the teaser much of its menace, marking a striking departure from the lighter collaborations that have defined much of his association with Priyadarshan. The teaser's biggest strength is arguably what it refuses to reveal. There are hints of violence, danger and a larger conspiracy, but little information about the motivations of either character. Akshay's sinister presence and Saif's seemingly composed demeanour create an intriguing contrast, leaving audiences to wonder who is

actually in control. The film is also notable for bringing Priyadarshan back into thriller territory. Haiwaan is an official Hindi adaptation of the filmmaker's own 2016 Malayalam thriller Oppam, which starred Mohanlal in the lead. Priyadarshan has previously spoken about approaching his Hindi adaptations with the Hindi-speaking audience in mind rather than simply recreating the original film scene by scene. The teaser suggests that the Hindi version will retain the suspense-driven core while giving Akshay and Saif room to create a fresh dynamic. The supporting cast includes Boman Irani, Saiyami Kher and Shriya Pilgaonkar in pivotal roles.

## Pamala serena addresses Bigg Boss restrictions

**Mumbai :** Netflix's reality show 'Lock Upp 2', hosted by Farah Khan and Riteish Deshmukh, ended on August 5 with Shreya Kalra emerging as the winner during the grand finale. Meanwhile, Salman Khan-hosted reality show Bigg Boss 20 is set to premiere from September 6, and speculation about the contestant list continues to fuel curiosity among fans. While the contestant list hasn't yet officially been announced, fans have been wondering whether they will get to see some Lock Upp 2 contestants on Bigg Boss' upcoming season. Now, Lock Upp 2 contestant Pamala Serena has shared an update, revealing that they are required to wait for a few months before taking up another reality show, potentially affecting their chances of appearing on Bigg Boss 20.

Pamala Serena has revealed an important update about Lock Upp 2 contestants joining another reality shows. When asked whether the contestants are currently allowed to participate in other reality shows including Bigg Boss 20, Pamala told Telly Talk India, "For a few months, we cannot do more reality TV shows." She further claimed that they have got many offers, but there is a waiting period of a few months. "We have got offers, offers toh bahut aa rahe hai and I think I will be coming to India quite a lot, abhi main yaha par hi hoon. Thoda sa projects hum kar rahe hai, kaam kar rahe hai," she said.

# Shalin Bhanot and Eisha Singh spark breakup rumors with social media unfollow

**Mumbai :** Shalin Bhanot and Eisha Singh, who have been rumoured to be dating each other for almost three years now, have unfollowed each other on social media, sparking breakup rumours. Their dating rumours first emerged in 2023 while they were working together, but Eisha had rubbished these reports. Later, during her time on Bigg Boss, Salman Khan too teased her about the same.

Even Karan Veer Mehra, who emerged as the winner of the Bigg Boss season and was also a part of Khatron Ke Khiladi with Shalin, claimed that during the shoot of the stunt-based reality show, Shalin Bhanot used to speak to a girl named Eisha, further fuelling the relationship rumours. In 2023, while dismissing the claims, Eisha had said, "It is not true! We like working together and enjoy each

other's company too. But that doesn't mean we are dating. These rumours are baseless, he is such a good friend." However, the rumours kept getting bigger, but now it looks like the alleged couple has parted ways.

Both Eisha Singh and Shalin Bhanot have unfollowed each other on Instagram, raising eyebrows. While some are claiming that it was Shalin who unfollowed Eisha first, a few

are saying that the Avisha reels (Avinash Mishra and Eisha Singh) have made Shalin jealous.

While speaking about the photos that sparked engagement speculation, Avinash Mishra told ETimes that they were clicked while promoting one of their music videos. "We were promoting a music video, which was a wedding song filled with mehendi, saangeet and pheras," he said.

# Salman Khan announces 'Extra Jeevan Daan' twist for Bigg Boss 20



**Mumbai :** Bigg Boss 20 is all set to premiere in a few weeks, and fans can't keep calm! While the first promo featuring Salman Khan dropped the cryptic hint 'Tathas-two', fans were left wondering what it meant, sparking plenty of speculation online. Now, Salman has finally revealed what it means. He introduced the biggest and never-seen-before twist this season, introducing 'Extra Jeevan Daan' for

contestants. The makers unveiled a new promo on Wednesday, in which Salman explains that contestants will get an additional lifeline this time around.

The latest Bigg Boss 20 promo opens with Salman Khan walking alongside a horse as two warriors battle each other. Both fighters are eventually injured and fall to the ground. Salman then enters the battlefield and says, "Tathas-two," hinting at

the season's new twist. He then reveals that contestants will get not one, but two chances in the game. Salman introduces the "Extra Jeevan Daan" twist, which gives contestants an additional lifeline. He also warns that with this new advantage, there will be no more chance to play a safe game. "Two lives ka vardaana for all gharwale, meri jaan," wrote the makers.

Salman Khan-hosted reality show Bigg Boss 20 is all set to premiere from September 6, exclusively on JioHotstar and COL-ORS. While the makers have not officially announced the Bigg Boss 20 contestant list yet, several names are being speculated online, including Santy Sharma, Arjun Bijlani, Sunil Pal, Pearl V Puri, Elnaaz Norouzi, Jannat Zubair and Mahhi Vij.

# Rhea Chakraborty recalls ₹3 lakh VJ salary, cosmetic treatments at age 17

**Mumbai :** Rhea Chakraborty's journey in the entertainment industry began long before she became an actor and entrepreneur. She started as an MTV VJ and went on to interview several celebrities during her early years in the industry. Over time, she transitioned to acting, appearing in films. In 2024, she also ventured into fashion and co-founded the clothing label Chapter 2 with her brother Showik Chakraborty and other partners. During a recent conversation, Rhea looked back at her early days as a video jockey. Recalling how much she was earning at the time, she claimed that she was making around ₹3 lakh as an MTV VJ by the time she was 17 or 18 years old.

While speaking to Tanmay Bhat on his YouTube channel, Rhea Chakraborty was asked about the first celebrity she ever met. She revealed that it



was Salman Khan, whom she interviewed during her early days as an MTV VJ. Talking about the same, she said, "I was a VJ on MTV. Everyone allowed me to do his interview and I didn't know why they were being so nice but it was because everyone was scared. There was a time when only good-looking people were allowed to speak." She went on to reveal that she used to earn Rs 3 lakh as a VJ.

Rhea said, "At that time, a VJ used to get good money. I think ₹3 lakh was my last salary. But I was also just 17-18 years old, so I really thought I was damn rich. Spent this money on fixing my face." When Tanmay Bhat jokingly asked whether he should also get his face "fixed", Rhea played along and said that everyone should consider doing it, adding that the technology available today has reached a

"next level."

Meanwhile, Rhea is all set to be seen in Karan Johar's reality show The Traitors Season 2. Apart from her, the show will also feature names like Mallika Sherawat, Munawar Faruqui, Shweta Tiwari, Abhishek Malhan, Krystle D'Souza, Parul Gulati, Dalip Tahil, Shahneel Gill, Shalini Passi, Ranveer Brar and more. It is set to stream on August 13 on Prime Video.

## To improve relations with Bangladesh, India’s High Commissioner meets with Prime Minister Modi



**New Delhi, Aug 12:** One day after making a courtesy call to Bangladeshi Prime Minister Tarique Rahman in Dhaka, India’s High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Dinesh Trivedi, visited Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Tuesday. The High Commission of India in Bangladesh posted on X that High Commissioner Dinesh Trivedi visited Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today to ask for his advice on how to further strengthen the long-standing and complex bilateral relationship between India and Bangladesh in a positive way with a people-centric approach. On Monday, during his interaction with Rahman, High Commissioner Trivedi extended greetings from Prime Minister Modi and expressed the commitment to collaborate with the Bangladeshi administration and its citizens in a positive, constructive, and forward-looking manner. “They exchanged views on matters of mutual interest and discussed avenues for further strengthening bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh with a

people-centric approach,” the High Commission of India in Bangladesh had stated after the meeting. The meeting at the Prime Minister’s Office in the Cabinet Division at the Bangladesh Secretariat assumed significance as Dhaka expressed “hope” that India will expedite the extradition process of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was ousted following a student-led uprising in 2024. At the beginning of the interaction, the Bangladesh Prime Minister welcomed the Indian envoy, who shared his experience of serving in Dhaka over the past two months. According to a statement issued by the Bangladesh Prime Minister’s Office, “Bangladesh expressed hope that India will expedite the extradition process of Sheikh Hasina.” Dhaka also reiterated its request to New Delhi for the return of individuals it alleges were involved in the murder of Shahid Osman Hadi, one of the prominent figures behind the July uprising, who was shot at close range on December 12, 2025. “At the same time, Bangladesh reiterated its request

to India to return the killers involved in the murder of Shahid Osman Hadi,” the statement added. During the discussions on key bilateral issues, Tarique Rahman emphasised the need to create a suitable environment for taking forward relations between Bangladesh and India.

The meeting was also attended by Bangladesh Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman, Prime Minister’s Foreign Affairs Adviser Humayun Kabir, and other relevant officials, coming a day after Trivedi held a one-on-one meeting with Foreign Minister Rahman. The high-level engagements come amid diplomatic friction between the two nations following a virtual press interaction by Sheikh Hasina in New Delhi on August 5. The event, organised by the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of South Asia to mark the second anniversary of her ouster, drew strong objections from Dhaka. During her address, Hasina stated that she remains resolute about returning to her homeland in December to put the nation on the “right track” by restoring democracy, despite acknowledging the risk of imprisonment or a death sentence upon her return. Bangladesh’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs swiftly responded by registering a strong complaint and denouncing the remarks, pointing out that the episode affected public opinion and hindered attempts to improve bilateral relations. However, India clarified that the government was not involved in the event in the nation’s capital and distanced itself from Hasina’s presence. Randhir Jaiswal, a spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), emphasized at a media briefing that the event was being organized by a “private media entity” and that New Delhi does not support any opinions that could be voiced there.

## Hardik Pandya’s “condition” becomes a deal-breaker as he wants the Gujarat Titans to return

**New Delhi:** The story of Hardik Pandya’s future in the Indian Premier League (IPL) has taken a new turn. The all-rounder, eager to leave the Mumbai Indians, is said to have discussed a trade with the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and the Chennai Super Kings (CSK) before the 2027 season. But according to recent reports, Hardik also made an offer to the Gujarat Titans, the team he played for for a few years before moving back to MI. Although GT was reportedly willing to welcome him back, his demand to be named captain of the squad has become a deal-breaker. In a report by the Indian Express, the Gujarat Titans even discussed the prospect of bringing Hardik back to the franchise with skipper Shubman Gill, who also gave his green light. But, as soon as Hardik put forth the condition for his return - being named the captain - every single person involved in the decision-making process said “No”. “The franchise was fine with him making a return. They had even discussed the same with their captain Shubman Gill, and he, too, had agreed that the franchise could trade him back. But when his condition of captaincy was put up, every-



one said no to it,” the paper quoted a source as saying. When Hardik’s spokesperson was contacted for a comment on the matter, it was clarified that the player himself didn’t hold talks with any franchise directly. The communication, so far, has only been directed through the Mumbai Indians. “Hardik Pandya had no direct conversation with any franchise whatsoever regarding a transfer, trade, or otherwise. If any approach has been made to

him, that has been directed to the MI franchise,” Pandya’s spokesperson said. Hardik famously led the Gujarat Titans to the IPL title in 2022. He also captained the franchise to the final in the next season. The following campaign, he returned to the Mumbai Indians. Hardik, who immediately succeeded Rohit Sharma as captain of the Mumbai team, found it difficult to gain the same level of acceptance among MI sup-

porters as he had at GT. Additionally, Hardik is reportedly not as respected in the MI dressing room as his captain predecessor, Rohit. The Mumbai Indians, on the other hand, are trying to reassemble their team after the coaching staff deemed a number of veteran players “uncoachable” after the end of the 2026 Indian Premier League. Many veteran players, including captain Hardik, are anticipated to be let go by MI prior to this year’s auction.

## In the Sinquefield Cup, R Praggnanandhaa defeats World Championship contender Javokhir Sindarov



**St. Louis:** According to ESPN, Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa maintained his stellar performance at the Sinquefield Cup by beating World Championship contender Javokhir Sindarov in the second round to take a share of the early lead. After a lengthy match that was mostly evenly matched, Praggnanandhaa emerged victorious. But Sindarov made a mistake on the 82nd move, which gave the Indian a string of precise answers before the Uzbek player gave up 13 moves later. With the win, Praggnanandhaa has collected 1.5 points from

two rounds and is tied at the top of the standings with Fabiano Caruana, Wesley So, Levon Aronian and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave. Meanwhile, Indian players endured a difficult second round at the Cairns Cup in St. Louis, with R Vaishali, Divya Deshmukh and Koneru Humpy managing just half a point between them, according to ESPN. Vaishali drew against Bibisara Assaubayeva, while Divya suffered a defeat against Alice Lee and Humpy went down to Tan Zhongyi. Vaishali and Humpy have 0.5 points each after two rounds, while Divya has one point.

Zhongyi and Lee lead the standings with two wins from as many rounds. Earlier this month, Praggnanandhaa secured the Grand Chess Tour St Louis Rapid and Blitz title. The 20-year-old drew against Javokhir Sindarov during the penultimate round to seal the tournament with a score of 23/35 points, finishing 1.5 points ahead of everyone else. The Indian Grandmaster made history in June when he defeated Germany’s Vincent Keymer in the eleventh and final round to win the Norway Chess 2026 title in Oslo. The triumph capped off an incredible late comeback for the Indian sensation, who won four straight classical titles to earn one of his greatest honors. On Monday, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay congratulated the Indian Grandmaster and gave him a cash prize of Rs 50 lakh on behalf of the Tamil Nadu Sports Development Authority. The Chief Minister and the 20-year-old Grandmaster played a game of chess at the felicitation event, which took place at the Chief Secretariat in Chennai.

## Gen Alpha Demonstrates for a Road to School in Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh



**Uttar Pradesh:, Aug 12:** “Chandpur se Hamirpur marg ka karo nirman, kisan, chhatri aur bimar pareshan. (Build the road from Chandpur to Hamirpur; the sick, farmers, and students are suffering.) Gen Alpha students in the Hamirpur district of Uttar Pradesh staged a “Tiranga Yatra” on Tuesday to demand the building of a road to their school while holding posters and the national flag. Along with their parents and local elders, the schoolchildren mounted a protest by marching over five kilometers to the collectorate’s office. The demonstrators assert that since independence, no road has been constructed to reach their community. They sat outside the district collectorate’s main gate, shouting slogans and

calling for the construction of a road that would connect their school. During the monsoon season, the dirt track gets submerged under water, effectively cutting off the village from the outside world. The students claimed that they are forced to walk through muddy water to reach their school. “Our school uniform gets soiled, and our shoes are ruined in the muddy water,” a student protester said. “We have raised this issue multiple times in the past, but all our demands have fallen on deaf ears. They keep giving false reassurances, stating the work will begin in a week or two, but nothing has moved.” Due to the absence of paved roadways, the posters depicted the predicament of students. “Road nahi to nahi hai

rozgaar” was written on one of the posters. There is no road to Vidyarthi Jeevan. (There is no work if there is no road. A student’s life is meaningless without a route. Another protesting student claimed that she had to drop out due to a lack of roads. “The muddy road makes it difficult to commute.” Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Abhishek Kumar and the circle officer held talks with the students and their parents. The protesters initially said they would continue their sit-in until construction work on the road began. However, the protest was called off after the students, and their parents were assured that construction of the road would begin at the earliest. The Gen Alpha protest received a thumbs-up from Gen Z protesters. Sharing a video of the protesters sitting outside the district collectorate, Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke wrote: “Salute to these kids who are fighting for their future! All they are asking for is a road to their school. Is that too much to ask after nearly 80 years of Independence? This should have been done decades ago.” CJP spokesperson Saurav Das also shared the video and wrote: “Well done.” CJP plans to launch a “School Thik Karo” campaign this Independence Day to improve government schools in villages.

## Food Safety Lens on Zomato, Inspection at the Bengaluru Warehouse Following Zepto



**Bengaluru, Aug 12:** The Karnataka Food Safety and Drug Administration Department started inspecting Zomato’s Bengaluru warehouse on Wednesday, one day after shutting a warehouse owned by the fast-commerce company Zepto due to suspected unsanitary conditions and safety infractions. After arriving at the Hyperpure By Zomato location on Bannerghatta Road in Bengaluru, the officials examined the food products. The agency has not yet released a comment about the inspection’s findings. In recent days, food safety regulators have been working nonstop, conducting raids and taking action against food delivery services as well as a number of large hotels and eateries. On Tuesday, a Zepto warehouse was sealed after an inspection found organic trash, discarded wrappers and bottles, accrued filth on the floor and empty cardboard boxes. The officials described the conditions at the warehouse as “extremely unhygienic”. The health department also flagged other violations, including “non-compliant labelling, misbranding and unhygienic food handling”. During the inspection, various food safety violations were observed, including non-compliant labeling, misbranding, unhygienic food handling and storage conditions, and other violations of FSSAI requirements,” the government reported. The health department has suggested that a lawsuit be brought against the warehouse operators in addition to shutting the premises and sending a notice. Zepto later claimed in a statement that the business was assisting the authorities.

## Vijay moves a resolution urging the center to freeze 543 Lok Sabha seats

**Chennai, Aug 12:** Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay urged the Center to permanently set the Lok Sabha’s number at 543 in a motion he submitted in the Assembly on Wednesday against the Union Government’s planned delimitation operation. In order to increase the size of the Lok Sabha to 850 seats and hasten the implementation of the Women’s Reservation Bill enacted in 2023, the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 was tabled in the Lok Sabha on April 16. However, the measure did not pass because it did not receive the necessary two-thirds majority of members present and voting in Parliament that is needed under the constitution. The Tamil Nadu resolution aims to safeguard southern states’ political participation, contending that their achievements in population management shouldn’t result in a diminished voice in Parliament. The resolution points out that while a constitutional amendment bill proposes to increase the number of Lok Sabha members from 550 to 850 based on the 2011 census, such a move would be detrimental to states that have followed national directives on population management. Through the resolution, the Tamil Nadu government has placed four major demands



before the Union Government. First, the total number of Lok Sabha members should be permanently retained at the current 543. Second, the inter-state allocation of Lok Sabha seats must be frozen based on the current proportion of representation. Third, the existing ratio of 2.2:1 between population and states must be maintained, and fourth, a 33 per cent reservation for women should be implemented in the upcoming 2029 Lok Sabha elections based on the current 543 constituencies. The chief minister said that 33 per cent reservation for women must not be delayed anymore and asserted that “reservation for women is not a conces-

sion, it is their democratic right”. “The 33% reservation for women should be implemented in the 2029 Lok Sabha elections itself, based on the existing 543 constituencies. The 33% reservation for women should not be delayed any further.

In Tamil Nadu, more women have voted than men. Providing reservation for women is not a concession; it is a matter of social justice. The 33% reservation for women must be implemented without any further delay,” Vijay said. “We can’t deny the important role women played in the past and present. Because of sisters, elders, mothers, I got this place,” he added. Re-

acting to the resolution regarding delimitation, DMK spokesperson TKS Elangovan said the move aligns with the long-standing position previously advocated by the Dravidian party. Elangovan recalled how similar measures in the past saved Tamil Nadu’s political weightage. “What happened last time, they had pegged the number of seats in each state to the existing number. That is why we still have 39. Otherwise, we would have lost seats even during the last delimitation,” Elangovan said. The DMK leader suggested that the resolution brought by Chief Minister Vijay mirrors the logic and demands already raised by his party. “Maybe that is what he wanted now. So, what we said, he is following... They might have discussed what happened during the last delimitation process that should continue. Maybe that is the reason he is bringing in a resolution to that effect,” he added. While the Congress and the opposition parties have expressed support for the women’s reservation bill, they opposed the delimitation exercise, seeking to increase the number of seats in the Lower House of Parliament. The Opposition has demanded delinking of women’s reservation from the delimitation exercise.

## Atiqa Mir is the youngest Indian to finish in the top ten twice

**Glasgow:** In Round 4 of the FIA European Championship, a major event in the karting world, racing star Atiqa Mir became the youngest Indian to earn two outstanding top-10 results, adding another feather to her crown. In the heat races for the 12–14 age group, 11-year-old Atiqa shown incredible speed and perseverance to finish ninth and 10th. Given how fiercely contested the grid is, Atiqa, the first Indian to receive support from F1 Academy, qualified P11, which was astoundingly only 0.13 seconds off the quickest time. Driving as a wildcard in only her second ever FIA event, the Indian with Kashmiri roots battled hard with drivers as old as 14 despite being among the youngest on the grid. Atiqa has got race wins and pole positions under her belt in a fast rising career but considering the challenge at hand in the FIA European Championship, which is dubbed as ‘Formula 1’ of the karting world, she

was pleased with her performance in Sweden. “I’m super happy with my performance here. We achieved all our targets and we have a good technical understanding of these FIA events. I’ve improved my driving as well and I feel with some more experience I can fight towards the front of the grid. I feel ready for a full championship next year,” she said. Atiqa’s father Asif Mir, India’s first national karting champion, felt she exceeded expectations with her performance against drivers with a lot more experience. “Atiqa showed a lot of maturity far beyond her age. She was up against all star karters of the world including Formula 1 junior development drivers. Her speed in qualifying against them was very encouraging with only a tenth of a second separating her from the fastest time. She still has a lot to learn and driving amongst the best drivers in the world gives her an opportunity to learn from them.

# PSG Seek UEFA Super Cup Defence, Luis Enrique Warns Of Limited Preparation

**New Delhi:** Paris Saint-Germain will look to retain the UEFA Super Cup when they face Aston Villa on Wednesday, but manager Luis Enrique has warned that the match may lack the intensity of a typical top-level contest due to his side's limited preparation. PSG won the trophy for the first time last season after beating Tottenham Hotspur on penalties, completing a memorable campaign in which they also lifted the Champions League. They will now face Europa League winners Aston Villa in Salzburg as they begin their bid for a second successive UEFA Super Cup. The French champions have had little time to prepare after 15 of their players featured at the World Cup, which ended just over three weeks ago. Spain midfielder Fabian Ruiz was part of the title-winning squad, while five PSG players represented France as they reached the semi-finals. "The international-



als have only just come back, the French, Spanish and Moroccans came back on Monday, the Brazilians and Portuguese on the third, one week ago," Luis Enrique told reporters on Tuesday. "In terms of a top-level game tomorrow, it will be difficult to see that. Some of our

players have barely trained but the ones who have will play tomorrow. In terms of preparation, this is not how it should be." Luis Enrique said the club were pleased to be competing for another trophy but stressed that their priority was to ensure they peak later in the cam-

paign rather than at the start. "We set ourselves ambitious targets, we will continue to do so," he said. "We are preparing for the season intelligently and we want to be in the best condition at the end of the season, rather than at the start of the season." PSG will also defend the French Super Cup against Lens on Sunday, giving them the chance to add another trophy before turning their attention fully to the new campaign. The match in Salzburg comes amid wider turmoil in European football, with FIFA facing growing criticism over its plans and UEFA threatening to boycott FIFA competitions. Asked about the controversy, Luis Enrique declined to comment. "I focus on my team, my players, the transfer window. I have no words about that," he said. "That is for politicians, I am not a politician. I have an opinion for sure, but not here, that's not the place."

# Ranjit Bajaj Blasts AIFF, Questions India U-15 Coach Appointment Process



**New Delhi:** In an explosive video, Minerva owner Ranjit Bajaj launched a scathing attack on the All India Football Federation (AIFF) and its deputy secretary general M. Satyanarayan over the coaching role selection for the Indian U-15 team. The decision to pair Ranjit Bajaj with Bibiano Fernandes had already sparked questions, particularly over how the two would work together. Bajaj, the Minerva Academy owner, was appointed team manager, while Bibiano was set to take charge as head coach.

Bibiano was reportedly uneasy about the possibility of interference within the setup. Bajaj, meanwhile, had previously made it clear that he was prepared to step into the managerial role himself if Bibiano chose not to accept the coaching position. Once it was reported that Bibiano had declined the offer, it was claimed that Bajaj went back to accept the position. But in a U-turn on Tuesday, it was reported that Bibiano accepted the coach role, meaning that Bajaj was left in the dark over his position.

# World Padel League Season 4 Brings World's Top Players To DOME Stadium

**Mumbai:** With Season 4 of the World Padel League just around the corner, the focus is firmly on what promises to be a fiercely competitive five days of padel in Mumbai. Season 4 of the World Padel League is set to take place from August 12 to 16. The DOME, SVP Stadium will host six franchises featuring some of the biggest names in the sport. Season 4 includes Premier Padel champions, several players ranked inside the world's top 20 and former World No. 1s across 6 teams - Vedanta Leopards, Khan Tigers, VB Realty Cheetahs, Aussie Mavericks Jaguars, Hubtown Panorama Panthers and Game



Changers Lions, according to a press release. For Mahesh Bhupathi, Co-Founder of World Padel League, the strength of this season's

lineup is a sign of how far the sport has come, the uptake of padel in India, and a reason to look forward to what promises to be a

standout edition of WPL. "The level of competition this season is a reflection of the growth of padel here. To have some of the best players in the world competing in India is a big moment for the sport and will only accelerate the growing interest around it." The depth of the line-up means there will be no shortage of big matchups, with established champions from the international circuit bringing the best of padel to India. For fans here, it is a chance to experience the speed, skill and intensity of an elite-level padel up close as the sport continues to make its mark in the country.

# Iran Name Asian Games Kabaddi Squad, Fazel Atrachali To Lead

**New Delhi:** Veteran defender Fazel Atrachali and all-rounder Mohammadreza Shadloui will headline Iran's 12-member men's kabaddi squad for the Asian Games 2026 in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. Atrachali, 34, will captain Iran at the continental showpiece and is set to make his fifth Asian Games appearance. The experienced defender has won four medals at the Asian Games, including gold at Jakarta 2018 and silver medals at Guangzhou 2010, Incheon 2014 and Hangzhou 2023, according to Olympics.com. Atrachali is also the all-time leading defender in the Pro Kabaddi League and was named the league's Most Valuable Player last year after helping Dabang Delhi K.C. win the title. Shadloui, meanwhile, will provide further experience and firepower to the Iranian side. The all-rounder is tied fifth



on the PKL's all-time tackle-points list and captained Gujarat Giants last season. Mohammad Esmail Nabibakhsh is another experienced all-rounder in the squad. Seven members of Iran's 12-player squad were part of the team

that won silver at the Hangzhou Asian Games in 2023. Apart from Atrachali, Shadloui and Nabibakhsh, Reza Mirbagheri, Alireza Mirzaei, Amir Mohammad Zafardanesh and Amirhossein Bastami also return.

# David Miller, Heinrich Klaasen To Make ILT20 Debuts: Pre-Auction Signings List

## ILT20 Season 5 Confirms Three Major Overseas Signings

**New Delhi:** Finn Allen, David Miller and Heinrich Klaasen will headline the list of overseas players joining the ILT20, UAE's premier T20 competition, for the first time, with the trio confirmed as pre-auction signings ahead of the league's fifth season. New Zealand opener Allen will represent Abu Dhabi Knight Riders, while South Africa's Miller and Klaasen have joined Gulf Giants. Australian all-rounder Marcus Stoinis will also return to the competition with Dubai Capitals after a three-year absence. The pre-auction signings were completed by the six franchises on August 3, with each team allowed to sign up to four overseas players before the auction. The remaining squad slots will be filled at the Season 5 Player Auction in Dubai on October 1. The 34-match tournament, featuring six teams, will be played in November and December 2026. Allen is one of the most destructive openers in T20 cricket and arrives in the UAE after a prolific period in international cricket. The 27-year-old smashed a 33-ball century in New Zealand's T20 World Cup 2026 semi-final against South Africa and has scored 1,663 runs in 62 T20Is at a strike rate of 170.73. Miller, meanwhile, brings considerable experience to the Gulf Giants. The left-hander has scored 2,804 runs in 140 T20Is for South Africa,



while wicketkeeper-batter Klaasen has made 1,000 T20I runs in 58 appearances and remains one of the most sought-after hitters in the format, particularly against spin. Stoinis, a member of Australia's 2021 T20 World Cup-winning side, has played 87 T20Is and scored 1,416 runs at a strike rate of 146.28. He has also taken 53 wickets with his medium pace. The franchises have also opted for continuity, with several prominent names returning to their Season 4 teams. Abu Dhabi Knight Riders have retained Sunil Narine and brought back Jason Holder, while Desert Vipers have retained Shimron Hetmyer, Andries Gous and Dan Lawrence and added Afghanistan spinner Mujeeb-ur-Rahman. Dubai Capitals will have Rovman Powell and Mustafizur Rahman back, alongside new signing Noor Ahmad and re-

turning Stoinis. Gulf Giants have retained Azmatullah Omarzai and Blessing Muzarabani, in addition to their headline signings Miller and Klaasen. MI Emirates, meanwhile, will continue with Nicholas Pooran, Rashid Khan and Romario Shepherd and have added West Indies all-rounder Sherfane Rutherford. Sharjah Warriorz have signed Adam Milne, James Vince and Waqar Salamkheil. The moves come after a closely contested Season 4, which ended with Desert Vipers claiming their maiden ILT20 title. The Vipers defeated MI Emirates by 46 runs in the final in Dubai, defending a total of 182 for four after restricting their opponents to 136. Sam Curran's unbeaten 74 helped the Vipers seal the championship, with the England all-rounder also winning the tournament's MVP and Best Batter awards. The

Vipers had also produced one of the standout innings of the season in Qualifier 1, when Andries Gous smashed an unbeaten 120 off 58 balls against MI Emirates. His innings helped the Vipers post 233 for one, then the second-highest total in ILT20 history, while his score was the tournament's highest individual effort at the time. MI Emirates, who were chasing a second title, ultimately finished runners-up after their 46-run defeat in the final. The six franchises will now look to complete their squads at the October 1 auction. Players can register for the auction until September 12, while each team will be allowed one additional wildcard. The ILT20 cricket league in the UAE announces pre-auction signings for its fifth season, including stars Finn Allen (Abu Dhabi Knight Riders), David Miller, and Heinrich Klaasen

(Gulf Giants), alongside returning all-rounder Marcus Stoinis (Dubai Capitals). Six teams will compete in November-December 2026 with a 34-match schedule. Teams retained key players from the previous season, where Desert Vipers won their first title. The player auction is set for October 1, with squads finalized through pre-auction signings and the upcoming draft. The International League T20 (ILT20) Season 5 is set for a major overseas talent boost, with South African stars David Miller and Heinrich Klaasen confirmed as pre-auction signings. New Zealand batter Finn Allen is also among the prominent names secured ahead of the auction. The signings add considerable firepower to the tournament, with Miller and Klaasen bringing extensive experience in T20 cricket. Both players have featured prominently in franchise leagues around the world and are expected to attract significant attention during the upcoming season. Finn Allen, known for his aggressive batting, further strengthens the overseas contingent and adds another explosive option to the competition. The pre-auction deals come ahead of the ILT20 Season 5 auction, scheduled for October 1. Franchises will now look to complete their squads while balancing established international names with emerging talent.

# Mandaviya At Har Ghar Tiranga Rally: Cycling Promotes Fitness

**New Delhi:** Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday said cycling promotes fitness and can help address issues such as pollution and traffic, as he led the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' bicycle rally with MyBharat volunteers in Delhi. Addressing reporters, Mandaviya said more than 1,000 MyBharat volunteers participated in the bicycle rally and conveyed the message of fitness to the nation. "In Delhi, more than 1000 MyBharat volunteers have conveyed the message of fitness to the nation through the Har Ghar Tiranga bicycle rally. For any nation to become a developed nation, it is very essential for the citizens of the country to stay healthy," Mandaviya said. He highlighted the wider benefits of cycling, saying, "Cycling is a message of fitness, cycling is a solution to pollution, cycling is also a solution to traffic." Mandaviya also led the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' rally along with MyBharat volunteers from Delhi University as part of the celebrations surrounding Independence Day. On Monday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah appealed to citizens to participate in the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign through Tiranga Yatras (tricolour rallies), mentioning the event as a reflection of India's collective strength and uniting everyone in the Central government's endeavour to build a 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India). Shah took to X to share the message, urging people to participate in the campaign,



hoist the tricolour, engage in activities like mass singing of Vande Mataram, and upload a selfie on hargharrtiranga.com. He said the event, which coincides with the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram this year, makes the occasion even more heart-stirring for every patriot. "The #HarGharTiranga campaign, initiated by PM Shri @narendramodi Ji, is a reflection of our nation's collective strength, uniting us in our endeavour to build a Viksit Bharat. The movement, which coincides with the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram this year, makes the occasion even more heart-stirring for every patriot," Shah said on X. "I appeal to every citizen to participate in and celebrate this campaign through Tiranga Yatras, Tiranga Rallies and mass singing of Vande Mataram, and to hoist the Tiranga and upload a selfie on hargharrtiranga.com," he said. On August 9, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also called upon citizens to participate enthusiastically in the Har Ghar Tiranga movement and renew their collective resolve to con-

tribute towards building a Viksit Bharat. He further said that the tricolour is a symbol of India's pride and a constant source of inspiration for every citizen to strive to give their best for the nation. He had also expressed happiness that this year's Har Ghar Tiranga campaign is dedicated to Vande Mataram, as the nation marks the 150th anniversary of the national song. In a post on X, the Prime Minister had said, "Our Tricolour is our pride and a constant source of inspiration to always give our best for the nation. Let us participate enthusiastically in the #HarGharTiranga movement and renew our collective resolve to contribute towards building a Viksit Bharat. Glad that this year's efforts are dedicated to Vande Mataram and that too at a time when we are marking its 150th anniversary." The Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, which began in 2022 under 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', has become an annual national tradition, with crores of citizens voluntarily hoisting the national flag every Independence Day.