



Makkah pact raises Pak investment hopes

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FinMin pushes PPI shift from WPI



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Tirante stuns Djokovic in Cincinnati open shock



India cooks up LPG safety net

Govt fixes refinery-wise LPG output targets to cut imports; Reliance tops list

NEW DELHI

India, for the first time, has set maximum cooking gas (LPG) production targets for individual public and private sector refineries and upstream companies.

The move aims to build a domestic supply buffer after the West Asia conflict exposed India's vulnerability to disruptions in imported LPG.

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry, in an order issued on August 13, has specified maximum LPG production levels for 21 refineries and upstream companies. Combined production potential has been set at 63,810 tonnes a day, more than double the domestic LPG output in FY26 and about 70% of the country's daily consumption. The production limits will kick in whenever there is a supply constraint.

Reliance gets highest target

As many as 18 refineries operated by public-sector oil companies have been assigned a combined LPG production target of 31,470 tonnes per day. Reliance Industries has the highest specified production potential at 18,000 tonnes per day, followed by BPCL's Kochi refinery at 4,800 tonnes and Nayara Energy at 4,480 tonnes. Together, the three account for 27,280 tonnes per day of the total potential.

In the private sector, Reliance Industries' 33 million tonnes-a-year domestic tariff area (DTA) refinery at Jamnagar, Gujarat, whose products are sold in the domestic market, has been assigned a production target of 18,000 tonnes per day. No target has



GOVT TO REVIEW TARGETS EVERY 6 MONTHS

The government has stated that it will review production targets every six months. Additional capacity generated by new refineries, new oil and gas fields, and technological upgrades will be factored in. In this way, the government has attempted to transform the temporary measures taken during the West Asia crisis into a permanent supply-security mechanism, ensuring that domestic consumers do not face shortages, rationing, or refill restrictions in the event of future disruptions in foreign LPG supplies.

been specified for Reliance's separate 35.2 million tonnes-a-year export-oriented refinery at the same complex.

Nayara Energy, backed by Russia's Rosneft, has been asked to produce 4,480 tonnes of LPG per day from its 20-million-tonne-a-year refinery at Vadinar, according to the order.

Upstream gas producers and processors such as ONGC and GAIL, which produce LPG from natural gas, have collectively been assigned a target of 6,460 tonnes per day.

"It is hereby ordered that all public sector, joint venture and private sector oil refining companies, and upstream oil companies shall develop, augment and at all times maintain adequate infrastructure for storage, evacuation and transport of Liquefied Petroleum

Gas (LPG) either by itself or through other entities viz railways or road tankers adequate for the specified quantities," the order said.

The framework also requires companies to implement technically and economically viable measures to maximise LPG output beyond their existing minimum producible quantities. These include technologies such as naphtha-to-LPG conversion and upgrades to gasoline-based fluid catalytic cracking units into petro-fluid catalytic cracking units.

India's exposure during Hormuz crisis

India consumed 33.2 million tonnes of LPG in the 2025-26 fiscal year (about 91,000 tonnes per day). Of this, 13.1 million tonnes a year was pro-

Plan in a nutshell

TOTAL OUTPUT
The 63,810 tonnes-per-day target covers roughly 70% of India's daily consumption and doubles previous domestic output.
PRIVATE REFINERS
Reliance Industries received the largest single quota of 18,000 tonnes a day for its domestic-market refinery in Jamnagar, while Nayara Energy was assigned 4,480 tonnes a day.
PUBLIC & UPSTREAM SECTOR
18 state-run refineries were given a combined target of 31,470 tonnes a day, with firms like ONGC and GAIL contributing via natural gas processing.
ACTIVATION
These mandatory production limits trigger automatically during active supply constraints and face formal reviews every six months.

duced locally (about 35,900 tonnes a day) while the remaining 21.3 million tonnes per annum (about 58,400 tonnes a day) was imported.

This high import dependence of over 64% left the country exposed when the start of the Iran war effectively shut the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow sealane through which India got 90% of its imports from nations like Saudi Arabia.

How did govt respond when global supply derailed

With supplies impacted, the government in March ordered refineries to divert streams used for petrochemicals production to maximise LPG output. It also initially stopped sales to industrial and commercial users and thereafter gradually scaled it up.

For domestic households, periodicity of booking a refill was increased, and they were encouraged to shift to piped natural gas, whose supplies were not so severely impacted due to the war.

Compensation for kin of 3 victims to be examined: CM

MADIKERI

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Sunday said the government will examine whether compensation could be provided under existing laws to the families of three persons who were killed in a firing incident in the forests of Hanur in Chamarajanagar district.

Speaking to reporters at Bhagamandala in Kodagu, he said local legislators had urged the government to provide compensation to the families of the deceased. "We will examine what compensation can be provided to them under the law."

As per forest officials, two bags containing wild animal meat and firearms were found near the deceased. The case has been entrusted for a judicial inquiry, and the facts will become clear once the inquiry report is submitted, Shivakumar said.

Cauvery water row

On the Cauvery water-sharing issue, the CM said the state's reservoirs had not yet reached full capacity and that the government faced the challenge of



protecting farmers while also adhering to the law. "Protecting the interests of our farmers is my foremost responsibility in the Cauvery issue. However, if we fail to follow the law, we could face a situation where control of the dams may have to be handed over to the Central government," he said.

Rules on public space usage

On concerns over the requirement to obtain permission for holding events on government land, he said there was no need for anyone to panic. "We are not introducing these rules to hurt anyone's sentiments. Ev-

ery organisation must follow the law. If an organisation submits an application seeking nod, the necessary approval and deployment of personnel will be provided as per the rules."

Skips Talacauvery visit

He visited the Bhagandeshwara Temple at Bhagamandala during his visit to Kodagu, while his wife alone proceeded to Talacauvery and offered prayers. The couple also attended the wedding ceremony of Mohammed Nalapad, son of MLA N A Haris, at a private resort near Mekeru on the outskirts of Madikeri.

Villagers protest, seek justice for 'poachers' killed

Chamarajanagar: Protests were held in Chamarajanagar and Mysuru on Sunday, seeking justice for the three alleged poachers gunned down by Forest personnel in an exchange of fire on August 15. Tension prevailed in Hanur in Chamarajanagar as villagers and family members of the deceased, who were killed in the exchange of fire with forest personnel in the Datti forest area, staged a massive protest. Expressing their anger against the Forest Department authorities, the locals blocked the road to Male Mahadeshwara Betta. The protesters demanded that the forest personnel who opened fire be brought to the spot and questioned, while police made efforts to control the situation and contain the growing anger among the families and villagers. They questioned the authority of the forest officials to kill the three men, saying even if they had entered the forest for hunting.

Looks like a cold-blooded murder: Bommai

Bengaluru: BJP MP and former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday termed the death of three suspected poachers in a forest firing incident in Chamarajanagar as an apparent "cold-blooded murder" and sought a SIT inquiry conducted under the supervision of a High Court judge. He told reporters that people living on the fringes of forests often depend on forest resources for their livelihood and alleged that merely entering a forest does not justify shooting them, particularly at close range. "Unfortunately, the people who are living on the edge of the forest, a lot of their livelihood depends on the forest also. Just because they have entered the forest, it is not necessary to shoot them. It is, at the out-set, it looks like a very cold-blooded murder. An FIR should be filed as a murder and an inquiry has to be done by a SIT under the supervision of a High Court judge," he added.



‘Not involved in corruption’: TMC ex-min found dead at party office

RAMPURHAT (WB)

Former Deputy Speaker of the West Bengal Assembly Ashis Banerjee was found hanging at a Trinamool Congress (TMC) party office in Birbhum district on Sunday morning.

A purported suicide note was recovered from the party office located near his residence in Hattala Para in Rampurhat. The exact circumstances leading to his death are yet to be ascertained, and the police are examining the contents of the purported suicide note and other circumstances surrounding the incident.

Banerjee's death comes months after the TMC lost power in West Bengal following its 15-year rule, with the BJP forming the government after the 2026 Assembly polls. The change in political fortunes has also seen several former TMC leaders and legislators face cor-

ruption-related investigations and arrests.

Banerjee, a veteran TMC leader, had represented Rampurhat in the State Assembly continuously from 2001 till 2026. He had served as the Deputy Speaker of the Assembly and held ministerial portfolios, including School Education and Agriculture, in the Mamata Banerjee government.

Banerjee 'claimed' in suicide note that he had never been involved in corruption and had never taken money in exchange for any work. He also wrote that although he could not always accept "wrongdoings" within the party, he had been unable to protest against them.

He had contested the 2026 Assembly polls from Rampurhat on the TMC ticket but lost to BJP's Dhruva Saha. After his electoral defeat, he was not seen to be particularly active in politics.



TMC's 'corrupt elements' threatened Banerjee: CM

Kolkata: Hours after Ashis Banerjee was found hanging at a TMC office, Chief Minister Suvenudh Adhikari on Sunday expressed apprehension that corrupt elements within the opposition party might have threatened him. He said the purported suicide note, written on the former MLA's letterhead and recovered from the party office, would be examined. "The handwritten suicide note that has been recovered on Ashish Banerjee's letterhead pad will be investigated. The handwriting will also be examined." Mourning his death, he said he had asked police to stand by the bereaved family and would probe whether Banerjee had been threatened.

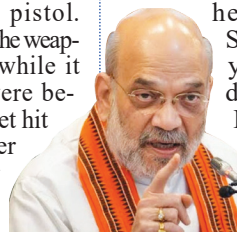
The handwritten suicide note that has been recovered on Ashish Banerjee's letterhead pad will be investigated. The handwriting will also be examined.

Suvenudh Adhikari, CM

Passenger's pistol fires at Varanasi airport, 2 hurt

Varanasi: A licensed pistol carried by an Air India Express passenger at Varanasi airport "accidentally" went off during security screening on Sunday, injuring a female security staffer and another person.

Both injured people were taken to a private hospital for treatment. As per a statement by DCP Gomti Zone, the passenger, Kamlesh Rai from Azamgarh, had arrived at Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport with his wife to board Air India Express flight IX1810 to Mumbai. Rai was carrying a licensed pistol. During the security check, the weapon accidentally fired while it and its ammunition were being inspected. The bullet hit a female security staffer in the leg and another person nearby.



Cong should apologise for insulting Vande Mataram on I-Day: HM

Jaipur: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday accused the Congress of insulting the national song 'Vande Mataram' and demanded that the party apologise to the people and to Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay who wrote the song.

Addressing a public meeting in Chittorgarh, he alleged that during the Independence Day event at the Congress headquarters, party leader Sonia Gandhi asked Vande Mataram to be stopped midway through the song.

Referring to the Independence Day celebrations held on Saturday, Shah said after 80 years of Independence, 'Vande Mataram' was sung at the Red Fort and all other places

Rijiju lists out 'dimagi Naxals' as Oppn trains guns on Modi

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Sunday hit out at opposition parties over their criticism of PM Modi's "Maoist mentality" remarks, insisting that the PM did not refer to opposition leaders as 'dimagi naxal'. In an X post, he said "only following are Dimagi Naxals: 1. Who support Maoists and reject Indian Constitution. 2. Who stand with separatists & support Article 370. 4. Who want to cut chicken neck to separate North-East from India."



where flag hoisting was held. "Thousands of people faced bullets and lathis and were jailed for singing 'Vande Mataram,'" Shah said, referring to the use of the revolutionary slogan during the freedom struggle.

PAN MASALA PROMOTION

FDA crackdown: B'wood A-listers under scanner

MUMBAI

Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued show-cause notices to actors Shah Rukh Khan, Ajay Devgn and Tiger Shroff over their advertisement for Vimal Elaichi.

The FDA said the advertisement may amount to "indirect or surrogate" promotion of prohibited pan masala and tobacco-related products.

According to the notice issued by the FDA's Greater Mumbai division on August 11, the use of the name "VIMAL Elaichi" in the advertisement appears to create an association with the Vimal Pan Masala brand. The department said this

could mislead consumers and indirectly promote a prohibited product.

The FDA described the notice as a "final warning" and said the advertisement appeared to be misleading and contrary to provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and related regulations.

Actors asked to stop promoting Vimal ad

The FDA has directed the three leading film-stars to immediately stop participating in or endorsing the Vimal Pan Masala/Elaichi advertisement.

They have also been asked to remove the promotional content from their official social media accounts, websites

and other digital platforms



under their control.

The actors have been told not to provide any further assistance in broadcasting, publishing or promoting the advertisement in any form. The FDA has also sought details of the checks carried out by the actors or their agencies before they agreed to the campaign.

15 days to respond

The actors have 15 days from the date they receive the notice to submit written explanations and supporting documents. They can also request a personal hearing, either themselves or through an authorised representative. The FDA warned that if no response is received within the deadline, or if the explanation is found unsatisfactory, further action could be taken without another notice. The action follows a prohibition order issued by the Maharashtra Food Safety Commissioner on July 13 under the Food Safety and Standards Act. The order is valid for one year and covers specified tobacco, nicotine and areca-nut-based prohibited food products.

QUICK READ



Bengaluru risks losing hundreds of crores without elected body

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
Bengaluru has gone nearly six years without an elected council, affecting decentralised governance and access to crucial Central grants. The city lost an estimated ₹964 crore under the 15th Finance Commission. Under the 16th Finance Commission, Bengaluru could receive around ₹7,058 crore between 2026-27 and 2030-31, but an elected body is required to claim the funds. If elections are not held in 2026-27, Bengaluru could lose an estimated ₹907 crore, researchers at Janaagraha said. Experts warned that the loss of Finance Commission grants could affect development works, especially as the city's corporations face financial constraints. The Supreme Court has directed the State to hold corporation elections before December 2026.

Laptop, smartphone use raises carpal tunnel risk

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
Prolonged laptop and smartphone use, repetitive wrist movements and poor wrist positioning are contributing to a rise in carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) among young adults, doctors in Bengaluru said. CTS occurs when the median nerve in the wrist becomes compressed, causing tingling, numbness and burning pain, particularly in the thumb, index and middle fingers. Doctors said youngsters, especially women working in the IT sector, are increasingly reporting symptoms. If left untreated, the condition can lead to severe pain, disturbed sleep, reduced grip strength, weakness and muscle wasting. Regular breaks, ergonomic workstations and maintaining a neutral wrist position can help prevent symptoms. Mild cases may respond to conservative treatment, while severe or persistent cases may require surgery.

Farmers yet to receive NICE project compensation: HDK

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy has urged the Karnataka government to act against alleged irregularities in the Bengaluru-Mysuru Infrastructure Corridor Project (BMICP), saying farmers who lost their land are yet to receive compensation even 23 years after acquisition.

In posts on X, Kumaraswamy said he had written to Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar detailing alleged violations by Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprises (NICE) of laws and the Framework Agreement governing the project.

He said the prolonged delay in compensating landowners had left many farmers distressed and demanded immediate government intervention.

Kumaraswamy also called for an end to what he termed NICE's unauthorised toll collection and urged the government to take over the NICE road project through legislation.

"Immediately stop NICE's unauthorised toll collection. Take over the NICE road

Chamarajanagar encounter: Ashoka demands judicial probe

Ashoka said an official probe cannot uncover the truth, alleging the government's Assistant Commissioner-led inquiry was meant to avoid scrutiny.

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R. Ashoka has demanded a judicial inquiry into the encounter in the Mariyamanagala forest area of the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary in Hanur taluk of Chamarajanagar district, in which three persons were killed.

Speaking to the media in Bengaluru, Ashoka said an inquiry by officials into the actions of other officials would not reveal the truth. He alleged that the State government had ordered an inquiry headed by an Assistant Commissioner to avoid allegations against the administration.

"Only a judicial inquiry can bring out the truth," Ashoka said, demanding that those involved in the incident be kept away from duty until the inquiry is completed.

He questioned whether firing was necessary and whether there was a need to shoot all three persons. He also raised questions over the Forest Department's version of the incident, saying the alleged weapons carried by the suspected



"Only a judicial inquiry can bring out the truth."
R Ashoka, Leader of Opposition

poachers and other evidence had not been disclosed.

Ashoka said the Forest Department claimed the four men were hunting wildlife and that three of them had fired at forest personnel. However, the farmers' organisation and families of the deceased had described the incident as a fake encounter, indicating conflicting versions.

He questioned why Forest Minister Ramalinga Reddy had not visited the spot and urged him to meet forest officials as well as those protesting against the encounter. Ashoka said the bodies were shifted to Mysuru before the police mahazar was conducted,

Chamarajanagar encounter

- **Location:** Mariyamanagala forest area, Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary
- **Taluk:** Hanur
- **District:** Chamarajanagar
- **Deaths:** 3
- **Demand:** Judicial inquiry
- **Further demand:** Remove officials involved from duty pending inquiry

ed, which he claimed raised further doubts.

He also demanded a CBI probe into the NICE project, alleging irregularities in land acquisition, toll collection and agreements. He said the government should take over NICE, compensate farmers and disclose details of those who allegedly received kickbacks.

Ashoka said the Opposition would raise the issue concerning Nagendra during the Assembly session and demand answers from the government.

Ashoka seeks CBI probe into NICE

Leader of the Opposition R. Ashoka has demanded a CBI probe into the NICE project, alleging irregularities in land acquisition, toll collection and agreements. He urged the State government to take over the project, compensate affected farmers and make public details of those allegedly involved in receiving kickbacks. Ashoka said the Opposition would raise the issue concerning former Minister B. Nagendra during the upcoming Assembly session and seek answers from the government.

He said the government must provide clarity on the project and alleged irregularities and ensure accountability.

'Massive medical education may leave doctors unemployed by 2030'

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

India's rapid expansion of medical education could lead to a situation where even doctors face unemployment by 2030, cardiologist and MP Dr. C.N. Manjunath said.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Karnataka Clinical Perfusionists Association at a private hotel in Bengaluru, Manjunath said the country has 825 medical colleges producing around 1.20 lakh doctors and 90,000 postgraduates every year.

He said India was emerging as the world's pharmaceutical production hub, with every fourth generic pill used globally being manufactured in the country. Medical equipment such as MRI and CT scanners and ventilators are also being produced domestically, he added.

Despite the growing number of doctors, Manjunath said there was still a shortage of medical professionals in semi-urban and rural areas because of inadequate recruitment. He also stressed the need to use artificial intelligence judiciously alongside human intelligence in healthcare.

"Even though millions of

Accountability, not existence, is issue: Priyank Kharge

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Home Minister Priyank Kharge said the debate over the RSS was not about its existence but about its legal identity, functioning, finances and accountability.

Kharge was responding to BJP national general secretary (Organisation) B.L. Santhosh, who had said the RSS did not need formal registration as it had functioned for decades with the trust of millions of people.

Kharge said no one was questioning the existence of the RSS. However, he sought clarity on under what law the organisation functioned and under what legal identity it operated. He questioned who legally constituted the organisation, who owned its assets and in whose name its bank accounts were maintained.

He also sought details of the framework under which donations were received and accounted for, besides audited accounts and statutory disclosures. A century-old organisation with a large national presence should be able to answer such basic questions, he said.

Kharge stressed that history could not substitute legal transparency and accountability. He said that in a constitutional democracy, greater influence should bring greater transparency.

"Existence is not the issue. Accountability is," Kharge said.



THE DEBATE

Issue raised: RSS registration and legal identity
Kharge's stand: Accountability and transparency
Santhosh's stand: Registration does not determine existence
Questions raised: Legal status, assets and bank accounts
Financial concerns: Donations, audited accounts and disclosures
RSS: Has functioned without formal registration, according to Santhosh

Kharge seeks transparency

Priyank Kharge said the RSS's existence was not in question, but sought clarity on its legal identity and accountability. He questioned its ownership of assets, bank accounts, donations and financial disclosures. Kharge argued that a large and influential organisation should maintain greater transparency in a constitutional democracy. His remarks came after B.L. Santhosh said the RSS did not require registration to establish its existence.

Vijayanagar footpaths remain encroached despite GBA drives

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Encroachments on Vijayanagar footpaths continue to force pedestrians onto busy roads despite ongoing civic anti-encroachment drives.

Footpaths along 5th Main in Vijayanagar, particularly near Veeresh Theatre and the bus stop, remain heavily encroached by eateries, vendors, parked vehicles and property owners.

Residents and pedestrians said the obstructions have significantly reduced walking space, forcing senior citizens, daily commuters and bus passengers to use the carriageway and exposing them to accident risks.

The footpath beside the BSNL compound wall is blocked by two eateries, while pushcarts and abandoned petty shops occupy additional space. Pedestrians also alleged that waste, including fallen tree branches, is dumped on the footpath.

A private hospital has constructed a ramp on part of the footpath and placed flower pots, further restricting pedestrian movement. Residents have urged Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) engineers to remove these obstructions.

A car detailing shop has also installed a wire-mesh fence across the footpath. Pedestrians alleged that workers clean vehicles on the footpath and customers park vehicles along the stretch, worsening the problem.

T. Ramu of the Vijayanagar Senior Citizens Forum urged civic authorities to act against the encroachments, saying pedestrians were being compelled to walk on the road. Residents said repeated encroachments undermine the impact of city-wide anti-encroachment drives and called for sustained monitoring after clearances.

K'taka only State to set up Urban Disaster Management Authority

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka is the only State to have constituted an Urban Disaster Management Authority (UDMA) following a 2025 legal provision aimed at strengthening disaster preparedness in major urban centres.

A Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, in its report on 'Disaster Management', said Karnataka had constituted a UDMA for the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). The report noted that UDMA's are intended to address the specific disaster-management needs of large urban agglomerations, many of which extend across more than one district.

The Disaster Management (Amendment) Act, 2025, requires State governments to establish UDMA's for State capitals and cities having municipal corporations, except Delhi and Chandigarh. The authorities are intended to enable more effective responses to disasters specific to urban areas.

The committee has recommended that the Ministry of Home Affairs issue advisories to all States and Union Terri-



tries that have not yet constituted UDMA's, asking them to do so within a defined timeframe.

The committee also recommended establishing a periodic compliance-monitoring mechanism to track the progress of UDMA's across the country. It stressed that developing a culture of prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response was essential to building a disaster-resilient nation.

URBAN DISASTER AUTHORITY

- Only State with UDMA: **Karnataka**
- Urban body covered: **BBMP**
- Legal provision: Disaster Management (Amendment) Act, 2025
- Purpose: City-specific disaster management
- Coverage: State capitals and municipal corporation cities
- Exceptions: Delhi and Chandigarh
- Recommendation: Time-bound constitution of UDMA's

Karnataka leads urban disaster preparedness

Karnataka has emerged as the only State to constitute an Urban Disaster Management Authority after the 2025 amendment to the Disaster Management Act. The authority has been established for BBMP to address city-specific disasters. A Parliamentary panel has urged the Centre to advise other States and Union Territories to establish UDMA's within a defined timeframe and called for technical guidance, standardised frameworks and regular compliance monitoring.

BJP attacks PUCC fee hike, calls it another burden on people

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The BJP has criticised the Karnataka government over the recent hike in Pollution Under Control Certificate (PUCC) charges, alleging that the Congress government was repeatedly increasing the financial burden on the common man.

In a statement, the BJP said the increase in emission-testing charges would directly affect two-wheeler owners, auto drivers, delivery workers

and daily commuters. It accused the Congress government, Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and Transport Minister Byrathi Suresh of failing to address financial mismanagement and instead raising charges on essential services.

The party pointed to earlier increases in milk prices, electricity tariffs, bus and metro fares, stamp duty and property registration charges, claiming that the latest PUCC fee hike was another burden on

working and middle-class families.

"Mandatory vehicle compliance should not become another opportunity to extract money from hardworking Kannadigas," the BJP said, accusing the government of using compliance requirements to collect additional revenue from vehicle owners.

The BJP also criticised the Congress' "guarantee" model, alleging that while the government had made several promises to people, it was si-

multaneously increasing costs through higher fees and charges.

Calling the PUCC increase "anti-people", the BJP demanded that the government immediately withdraw the revised charges.

The party said the pockets of Karnataka's working and middle-class families should not be treated as a source of easy revenue and urged the government to take measures to reduce the financial pressure on ordinary citizens.

No teachers, weak learning deepen Karnataka's dropout crisis

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka's school dropout crisis is deepening as teacher shortages, weak foundational learning and social pressures push more children out of education.

This academic year, the State identified 8,344 out-of-school children aged six to 14, up from 6,123 the previous year. The secondary-school dropout rate stood at 18.1% in 2025-26, nearly twice the national average of 9.5% and the highest among States, according to UDISE+ data.



Teacher shortages remain a major concern. Karnataka had 8,042 single-teacher schools in 2025-26, while 57,724 teaching posts were vacant in government schools as of December 2025. The govern-

ment has begun recruiting 15,000 permanent teachers and approved 51,000 guest teachers as a temporary measure.

In rural areas, children face additional barriers. Some

schools lack permanent teachers, classrooms, toilets and safe drinking water. Students in villages may also have to travel long distances to attend secondary school.

Learning difficulties, migration, poverty, child marriage, safety concerns and the need to work are among the factors contributing to dropouts. Experts said merely bringing children back to school would not solve the problem unless schools ensure meaningful learning and motivation to continue.

Education experts also stressed the need for individu-

alised intervention, stronger foundational literacy and numeracy programmes and better monitoring of guest teachers.

DROPOUT CRISIS

Out-of-school children	8,344
Previous year	6,123
Secondary dropout rate	18.1%
National average	9.5%
Single-teacher schools	8,042
Vacant teaching posts	57,724
Permanent teachers being recruited	15,000
Guest teachers approved	51,000

Quick Read

IEI Kalaburagi hosts special talk on Vastu

KALABURAGI
The Institution of Engineers India, Kalaburagi Local Centre, celebrated Independence Day with a special lecture on Vastu preserving ancient heritage. Held at Visvesvaraya Bhavan, the event featured Vastu Guru Er. Arunkumar Pattar as the keynote speaker. Er. Anand Kamalapurkar, Executive Engineer of KKRDB, graced the occasion as the chief guest. Speakers discussed traditional architectural science and its deep roots in Indian knowledge systems. Engineers, dignitaries, and local members attended the informative session, which highlighted cultural preservation alongside national progress and development themes.

Hubballi nursing home sealed over illegal deliveries

HUBBALLI
Dharwad District Medical Officer Dr. A.K. Ramachandran announced that strict legal action will be taken against Annapura Nursing Home. Authorities sealed the facility after investigations revealed it performed illegal deliveries for minor girls without informing concerned government departments. The crackdown follows media reports highlighting the unauthorized medical operations and child protection concerns. Officials confirmed that a thorough probe is currently underway to identify all individuals involved in concealing these unlawful procedures. Appropriate legal consequences will follow upon completion of the official inquiry.

Shivamogga police and locals rescue women from drowning

SHIVAMOGGA
Alert police personnel and quick-thinking locals successfully saved women from suicide in separate incidents across the Shivamogga district. In the first case, a Chitradurga resident called emergency response services stating his wife went to Kodli to end her life. ERV duty officers CPC Ashok Kumar and driver APC Amaresh Naik rushed to the Tunga-Bhadra river confluence and safely rescued her. In a separate incident near Chandragutti, local youths Sahil, Sonu, and Yasin Chikkamakoppa saved a mother and daughter who jumped into the Varada river. District police commended the officers and felicitated the brave youths for their life-saving interventions.

MOLAKALMURU MERGER CONTROVERSY

MLA Gopalakrishna sparks outrage over Molakalmuru merger

CHITRADURGA
Senior Congress MLA N.Y. Gopalakrishna has sparked a major political controversy by publicly suggesting that the Molakalmuru legislative segment should either be merged with neighboring Andhra Pradesh or combined with the Challakere constituency. The unexpected remarks came to light during an official site inspection of the local Ambedkar Bhavan. A video capturing the legislator's comments quickly went viral across social media platforms, drawing intense public attention and debate. During the inspection, the MLA expressed deep frustration regarding the perceived neglect and lack of develop-



MLA D. Ravi Shankar urges youth to follow Rayanna

MLA D. Ravi Shankar urged youth to emulate Sangolli Rayanna, honoring top-performing students at a community event.

HUNSUR
While birth and death are natural certainties of life, what truly matters is how a person contributes to society and the nation during their lifetime. This inspiring thought was shared by K.R. Nagar MLA D. Ravi Shankar, who urged talented young individuals to embrace the patriotism, ideals, and fierce fighting spirit of freedom fighter Krantiveer Sangolli Rayanna to achieve greatness. Speaking as the chief guest at the Krantiveer Sangolli Rayanna Jayanthotsava and Pratibha Puraskar event organized jointly by the Hunsur Taluk Kurubara Sangha and

the Kanaka Employees Union, the MLA encouraged students to place education above all else. He advised them never to settle for minor successes, but to pursue higher studies with clear goals, deep interest, and relentless hard work, assuring them that success will naturally follow with the guidance of good teachers. During his address, Ravi Shankar also expressed heartfelt gratitude to the local community members for their vital financial backing and love during his election campaign. He promised to continuously support community development and the educational advancement of their bright students.

As part of the celebrations, over 125 talented students from the Kuruba community who scored above 80% in the 2026 annual SSLC and II PUC exams, alongside high achievers in the 2026 NEET examinations, were honored with special awards and incentives. Former MLA H.P. Manjunath paid floral tributes to Sangolli Rayanna's portrait and encouraged students to bring pride to their families and teachers. Several prominent leaders, including Sri Shivanandpuri Mahaswamy of Kanaka Gurupeetha, were present alongside local officials and retired soldiers who received special felicitations for their service.

'Manuvadi mindset': Congress outraged over rally incident

KALABURAGI
Mallikarjun Neelura, Vice-President of the Congress District Committee (Scheduled Caste Section), has expressed fierce outrage over an incident in Uttarakhand where a public rally site was allegedly "purified" following a speech by AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge. Reports indicate that after Kharge departed from the Havalwani Ramlila Maidan, members of the BJP and RSS reportedly cleaned the area with water from the Ganga, an act that has been widely condemned as a targeted insult against the veteran leader. In a formal press release issued, Neelura described the act as a "despicable and unconstitutional" assault on the secular fabric of the nation. He expressed deep regret that



such an incident took place on Independence Day, noting that it serves as a painful reminder of the prejudice faced by marginalized communities. "The Manuvadi mindset behind this act has insulted not only Mallikarjun Kharge but the entire democratic and secular system of India," Neelura stated. The Congress leader further alleged that the central government continues to exhibit systemic indifference toward

Dalits, minorities, and backward classes, questioning whether these communities hold fair representation within the Union Cabinet. He argued that the incident is symptomatic of a broader culture of intolerance that threatens the security and future of oppressed communities. Neelura has called for swift and decisive justice, demanding that Union Home Minister Amit Shah resign if immediate legal action is not taken against those responsible for the "purification" ritual. He emphasized that the government has a fundamental duty to protect all citizens, regardless of their social background, and demanded that local authorities initiate strict proceedings against the perpetrators to prevent such shameful displays of discrimination in the future.

Prioritize music education in Govt Schools, says Patil

KOPPAL
Music serves as a universal language that resonates with every soul, a sentiment championed by Shambhulingana Gowda Patil Haligeri, state vice president of the State Primary School Teachers' Association, Bangalore. Speaking as the chief guest at a state-level annual general meeting and music program held in collaboration with Vijayanagar and Bellary districts, Patil emphasized the profound impact of music on the human psyche, stating, "There are no minds that are not defeated by music." Patil used the platform to advocate strongly for the integration of music education in government schools, highlighting its essential role in the holistic development of children. He urged the state government to take decisive action by appointing a sufficient number of qualified music teachers to ensure that every student has access to musical training. "I will always be with you in the fight for all the demands of music teachers," he assured the gathered educators, pledging his ongoing support for their professional advocacy.

Pediatric specialist honored for child healthcare

HUNSUR
Senior pediatric specialist Dr. Sujatalakshmi B.M. was warmly felicitated for her remarkable and selfless service in the field of child health. The special honor took place during the 80th Independence Day celebrations held at the D. Devaraja Aras Public Hospital in Hunsurnagar. The felicitation was jointly organized by the Taluk Farmers' Association, the Tobacco Growers' Association, members of the Arogya Raksha Samiti, and local citizens to celebrate her dedication to young patients. Accepting the honor, Dr. Sujatalakshmi expressed deep gratitude and stated that the medical profession is far more than a regular job. Instead, she described it as a sacred service directly tied to human lives and well-being, emphasizing that giving special care to children remains the utmost duty of every physician. She added that public recognition



Dr. Sujatalakshmi B.M., a senior pediatric specialist, was felicitated for her selfless child healthcare service during Independence Day celebrations at Hunsurnagar's Devaraja Aras Hospital.

inspires doctors to work with heightened responsibility and a stronger spirit of service. Several prominent medical officials and community leaders attended the event to praise her selfless contributions, noting that she has always served patients without

ever expecting any reward. Among those present were Taluk Health Officer Dr. Giridas, Administrative Medical Officer Shivshankar, and fellow doctors including Dr. Satish, Dr. Dayanand Babu, Dr. Sujatha, Dr. Banu, and Dr. Raghu. Hospital health committee members including Prabhakar, Zabiullah, H.Y. Krishna, Santosh, and Nagaraj—along with Tobacco Growers' Association representatives Undavadi Chandregowda and Modur Shivanne Gowda, also joined the celebration to honor her exceptional medical career and ongoing commitment to public healthcare.

Kundapur records highest seasonal rainfall at 26.8mm

UDUPI
Local authorities have released a preliminary assessment report confirming that the district has experienced no major structural damage, crop loss, or casualties following recent seasonal rainfall. The district administration continues to closely monitor weather patterns across all local taluks to ensure public safety. According to the official district report issued recently, emergency response units recorded zero incidents of human loss of life or injuries due to wind, rain, or lightning. Furthermore, officials confirmed that no livestock losses, household goods destruction, or house collapses have been reported anywhere in the region. Essential infrastructure remains fully intact, with zero disruptions reported regarding road connectivity, electrical power supplies, or local water bodies. Authorities also noted that no emergency evacuation centers or relief camps needed to be opened, as no villages

faced flood threats. Rainfall figures varied across the district, bringing much-needed moisture without causing destructive flooding. Kundapur recorded the highest rainfall at 26.8 millimeters, followed by Hebri with 16.4 millimeters and Byndoor receiving 8.2 millimeters. Additional rainfall measurements included 5.6 millimeters in Brahmavar and 4.3 millimeters in Udupi, while Karkala and Kaup reported no rainfall during this reporting period. Overall, the district averaged 8.7 millimeters of rainfall for the day. The District Magistrate's office stated that local disaster management teams remain fully prepared to handle any sudden weather shifts. Citizens have been advised to stay updated through official channels as the monsoon season progresses across the coastal region. Authorities reassured the public that swift response mechanisms are actively in place to address any emergencies should weather conditions intensify over the coming days.

Matoshree Dakshayini Avvaji receives Akkamahadevi award

KALABURAGI
Matoshree Dr. Dakshayini Avvaji, President of the Shanabasaveshwar Vidya Vardak Sangha and Chancellor of Sharnbasva University, has been honored with the prestigious Akkamahadevi Ratna Award. The Maharashtra State Unit of the All India Veerashaiva Lingayat Mahasabha presented this distinction in recognition of her outstanding contributions to women empowerment, education, social service, and visionary leadership. The colorful presentation ceremony took place at the Yashwantrao Chavan Centre in Mumbai. Jagadguru Dr. Chandrasekhar Mahaswami of the Kashi Peeta officially handed over the award to Matoshree Dr. Avvaji. A prominent gathering of political leaders, spiritual figures, and dignitaries from both Karnataka and Maharashtra attended the grand event to celebrate her lifelong dedication to societal growth.

Hunsur celebrates 80th Independence Day

HUNSUR
The historic 80th Independence Day was celebrated with great patriotic fervor and meaningful events at the Muneshwara Kavalu Maidan in Hunsur. The grand celebration, organized by the Taluk National Festival Celebration Committee, brought together local leaders, officials, students, and citizens to honor the nation's freedom and heritage. Deputy Divisional Officer in-charge Manjunath Ramu officially hoisted the national flag amidst a cheering crowd. Following the flag hoisting, a majestic guard of honor and parade salute was presented by local police personnel alongside enthusiastic school and college students. An attractive cultural procession followed, winding through the area as

dignitaries, including local members of legislative assembly and tahsildars, paid their respectful tributes to the flag. Addressing the gathering, Tahsildar Manjunath delivered an inspiring message emphasizing civic responsibility. He stated that as the nation marks eighty years of freedom, every citizen must earnestly uphold the core values enshrined in the Constitution. He reminded attendees to honor the heavy sacrifices made by countless freedom fighters and urged everyone to unite in contributing toward the continuous progress and development of the country. Local MLA G.T. Harish Gowda also addressed the audience, highlighting India's rich diversity across various castes, religions, and traditions. He noted that the archi-

tefacts of the nation laid the foundation for a great democratic India by working to eliminate inequality under the guidance of the Constitution. Emphasizing the nation's demographic strength, he stressed that the energy and power of the youth are immense assets in building a stronger future for India. The memorable event witnessed the presence of several prominent figures and community leaders. Among the attendees were Town Planning Authority Chairman H.P. Amarnath, Municipal Commissioner Manasa, Education Officer Ravi M., Circle Inspector Madevappa, Inspector Tajuddin, and former Municipal Council members Krishnaraja Gupta and Harish Satish, alongside many other local officials and residents.

Merit over caste: Calls for Surve's Rajyotsava award

KOPPAL
The Vishwabandhu Basavanna Educational and Cultural Charitable Trust recently hosted a symposium at the Government Employees' Hall to celebrate the multifaceted career of senior journalist Ramesh Surve. During the event, community leaders and intellectuals unanimously urged the government to honor the 70-year-old veteran with the prestigious Rajyotsava Award, emphasizing that his contributions should be recognized solely on merit

rather than caste. Speakers at the symposium lauded Surve's decades of selfless service, highlighting his significant impact on journalism, literature, theatre, and cultural programming. Devendrappa Balootagi, President of the Pomegranate Growers Association, praised Surve for dedicating his life to encouraging others and organizing platforms for millions, noting that his work in Bangalore has brought immense pride to the Koppal region. Former Urban Development

Authority President Mahantesh Patil Mainalli expressed surprise and admiration for Surve's continued active engagement in public life despite his advanced age. He argued that the state should ensure no injustice is done to the veteran journalist simply because he has built his career while based in Bangalore. Adding to this sentiment, Dr. Vithalrao Gaikwad, a retired professor and Central Sahitya Akademi awardee, stated that Surve's extensive body of work deserves formal recognition from

both the government and state universities. The symposium featured insights from various experts, including Karnataka Janapada Akademi member Dr. Jeevansabha Valikara, Film Academy member Savitri Muzumadaar, and children's writer Dr. Rajendra Gadada, who detailed Surve's significant contributions to their respective fields. Nataka Academy member Killedera also pledged to advocate for formal recognition of Surve's lifelong commitment to the theatre.



Quick Read

Bajrang Dal workers attacked during cow theft chase in Shivamogga

SHIVAMOGGA
A tense situation unfolded in Hartalu village of Hosanagar taluk after thieves targeted a Bajrang Dal worker's cowshed, stealing livestock overnight. When activists chased the suspects' vehicle, the thieves rammed their car and launched a brutal assault using deadly weapons. Activist Chandrashekhar sustained serious injuries and was admitted to Meggan Hospital in Shivamogga, while companions Kiran and Abhilash also suffered minor injuries. BJP leaders strongly condemned the incident, blaming the state government's policies for emboldening illegal smugglers, and warned of widespread district-wide protests if authorities fail to arrest the culprits immediately.

M'luru BJP Leader Complains Against Sonia Over Vande Mataram

MANGALURU
BJP leader Vikas Puttur filed a formal police complaint at the Urwa police station demanding legal action against senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi. He accused her of insulting the national song Vande Mataram by allegedly instructing party workers to stop its rendition halfway during the Independence Day flag hoisting ceremony at the AICC headquarters in New Delhi. Puttur warned that the party will approach the Karnataka High Court if local authorities fail to register an FIR. Meanwhile, Mangaluru City Police Commissioner Sudhir Kumar Reddy confirmed that no FIR has been registered yet regarding the complaint.

Durgadevi institution in Gadag celebrates Independence Day

GADAG
Shri Durgadevi Educational Institution in Gangapurpet celebrated the 80th Independence Day with great patriotic fervor through a traditional flag-hoisting ceremony. The event witnessed the presence of prominent community figures, including Halumatha Mahasabha Honorary President Nagaraj Menasagi and Education Committee President Venkatesh Imarapur. School authorities, teachers such as head teacher Manjula Hidkimath staff members, and parents gathered to honor the nation's freedom fighters. Participants shared festive greetings, emphasizing the importance of instilling strong national values, discipline, and education in young students to build a prosperous and united future.

Rajputs vow to march on Belgaum for new board

GADAG
Rajput leaders from across Karnataka gathered in Betageri to demand the creation of an official Rajput Development Authority. Meeting at the Sri Venkateshwara Kalyana Mantapa under district President Ganesh Singh Byali, representatives resolved to stage a protest march and submit a petition at Suvarna Soudha in Belgaum. Organizers plan to announce the specific date for the symbolic sit-in and petition delivery soon. Leaders urged members from every district and taluk to mobilize in large numbers to ensure the demonstration's success. During the gathering, speakers stressed the importance of gathering official demographic data. Local units were instructed to collect population records proving the community's educational and economic backwardness. Attendees also agreed that putting pressure on local MLAs and in-charge ministers is essential to push the government toward formal approval. Several prominent community figures addressed the crowd, including B.P. Savanoor, Nagendra Singh, Gajendra Singh, Uday Singh, Anand Singh, Ajit Singh, Narayan Singh, Lakshman Singh, Prakash Singh, Indrajit Singh, and Rajeshwari Subhedar. Mahadev Prasad updated the assembly on an ongoing digital registration drive tracking Rajput residents statewide. Delegates traveled from various regions, including Dharwad, Haveri, Kalaburgi, Shahapur, Shiggaon, Bhagyanagar, Lingasagar, Kalaghatagi, Misrikoti, Bagalkot, Koppal, Kampli, Tavaragera, and Ilakalla.

Dr. Beldale reflects on Vajpayee's visionary leadership

Bidar South MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale and party members commemorated former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's legacy.

BIDAR

The life and legacy of Bharat Ratna and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee were commemorated with deep respect at the office of Bidar South MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale. The solemn event honored Vajpayee as a towering parliamentary figure, a visionary leader, and an unparalleled orator whose contributions to nation-building remain a guiding light for India. MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale led the tributes by offering floral garlands to Vajpayee's portrait, taking the opportunity to reflect on the former Prime Minister's steadfast commitment to national interest. "Atal Bihari Vajpayee was a leader who left an indelible mark on Indian politics through his simplicity, integrity, and profound eloquence," Dr. Beldale stated. He noted that Vajpayee's tenure as Prime Minister was defined by landmark advancements in infrastructure, national security, and economic growth, all of which significantly elevated India's global stature.



Beyond his political achievements, Dr. Beldale highlighted Vajpayee's enduring legacy as a poet and humanist. He remarked that Vajpayee's speeches and writings consistently reflected a deep-seated patriotism and a compassionate view of humanity. The MLA further emphasized that Vajpayee's respect for democratic values and his ability to engage respectfully with political opponents despite deep ideological differences serve as a vital model for the current generation of political leaders. During the commemorative address, Dr. Beldale urged the youth of the nation to embody Vajpayee's spirit of discipline, patriotism, and service. He concluded by asserting that the late leader is for every citizen to work faithfully toward the development and progress of the country.

The event saw the presence of numerous party seniors and dedicated workers, including former BJP District President Baburao Madakatti, Prashanth Bemalkhedda, Santosh Jagadale, Basavaraj Sindhol Tanda, Srinivas Sindhola, Shivakumar Kolare, Vishal Atiwala, Amar Kapalapuri, Santosh, and Veeresh Bamani. Media coordinator Nagesh Sidda organized the event, which brought together party supporters to honor the statesman's lasting impact on the nation.

Belgaum faces drought: Minister Jarkiholi promises relief

BELAGAVI

Farmers in several villages of Karnataka are going through a very tough time right now. While some parts of the district are receiving good rain, other areas are suffering from a serious lack of water. Because of this dry weather, crops have started drying up and dying in the fields, causing deep worry among local growers who depend entirely on their harvest to earn a living. To understand the ground reality, District In-charge Minister Satish Jarkiholi personally visited multiple villages across the Yaragatti and Ramadurga taluks. During his visit, local farmers gathered around him with withered plant samples in their hands. They showed him damaged yields of cowpea, groundnut, maize, uddu, cotton, and onions. The growers explained how the sudden lack of rainfall has stunted plant growth and ruined months of hard work. After walking through several farms and listening closely to the grievances of the locals, the minister assured them that the government stands firmly with them in this crisis. He officially declared an interim drought based on preliminary findings. According to early estimates, crops spread across 65000 hectares have already suffered severe damage due to the dry spell. The minister spoke directly with local agricultural officers and district officials



during his inspection. He noted that although ninety-five percent of the sowing work was completed earlier, the ongoing dry weather has created a serious emergency. He promised to take this urgent matter straight to the Chief Minister. Another detailed survey will be conducted in ten days to check if the situation worsens. Furthermore, officials confirmed that drinking water supplies are stable for now, but precautionary steps are already underway. Authorities plan to use water tankers and rent private tube wells if needed to prevent shortages. Officials also urged farmers not to panic or sell their cattle, promising that adequate fodder will be supplied. The government plans to hold emergency meetings to decide on releasing water from the local reservoir while keeping future drinking water needs in mind.

12 Year Hari Jatra Mahotsava begins in Gadag

GADAG

The grand Hari Jatra Mahotsava of Sri Dhyamaya and Sri Durgamma Devis is set to begin on August 18 and run through August 28. Because this sacred festival happens only once every twelve years, local devotees are preparing for a massive and memorable celebration. Festivities kick off with the installation of the divine idols at the Sri Dhyamaya Katte temple in Okkalageri Oni. Following this tradition, daily spiritual discourses led by Pujya Shivsharane Sri Neelamma Aatevaru Asundi will take place each evening from six to seven o'clock through August 25. Opening night features a major public assembly at seven o'clock, blessed by the presence of Pujyashri Abhinava Jagadguru Budheeshwara Mahaswamy. Trust Committee Chairman Kotrappa Kamatar will preside over the event alongside Fair Committee Working Chairman Fakirappa Hebasura. Dr. Sidhavaera Swamy will deliver a special lecture for attendees. A broad group of leaders and community figures will join as chief guests, including former MLA D. R. Patil, Congress women leader Neelamma Bolanavara, and Editor Manjunath Abbigeri. Local representatives such as former urban authority chairman Srikanth Khata-vate, Ishwarasa Meharwade, and Ganiga Samaj President Basavaraj Bingi will also attend. Additional guests feature former municipal president Suresh Kattimani, community leaders Lakshmi Sid-dammanahalli, Madhusa Meharwade, Shakuntala Akki, Lakshmi Kaki, Ramanna Phaladdoddy, and Hubballi lawyer Jyoti Desai. To close out the opening day, vibrant cultural performances by the Savita Puja Kunita troupe from Mandya and Mysore will start at half-past eight. The temple committee invites all local residents and visitors to join these rare festivities.

chairman Srikanth Khata-vate, Ishwarasa Meharwade, and Ganiga Samaj President Basavaraj Bingi will also attend. Additional guests feature former municipal president Suresh Kattimani, community leaders Lakshmi Sid-dammanahalli, Madhusa Meharwade, Shakuntala Akki, Lakshmi Kaki, Ramanna Phaladdoddy, and Hubballi lawyer Jyoti Desai. To close out the opening day, vibrant cultural performances by the Savita Puja Kunita troupe from Mandya and Mysore will start at half-past eight. The temple committee invites all local residents and visitors to join these rare festivities.

Dharwad strike blocked, police stop job rally

DHARWAD

Plans by many jobless youths to march for work in Dharwad hit a wall. Local authorities officially blocked the upcoming protest planned for August 18, pointing to past trouble to justify the strict shutdown. The group known as AXA had asked local officials for the green light to gather near the Michigan Compound. Leaders hoped to voice deep frustrations over a lack of open jobs. Instead, police officials firmly slammed the door on the public gathering. Hubballi-Dharwad Police Commissioner N. Shashikumar led the decision to halt the event. Officers noted that past demonstrations turned chaotic, raising serious worries about public safety and local order. The tension between young job seekers and local police is far from fresh. Last September, a massive wave of frustrated citizens flooded the streets. That large protest caught the statewide spotlight, pushing officials to make quick promises. Yet, many felt those words fell

Police authorities in Dharwad blocked an August 18 youth job protest, citing public safety concerns and past chaos, leaving job seekers searching for alternatives.

flat, leading to calls for renewed action. Months ago, the court offered a narrow compromise. Judges allowed a small, peaceful gathering capped at one hundred people at Nehru Maidan. However, organizers bypassed that specific spot, seeking a larger venue instead. Because those conditions were broken, local police felt justified in saying no to this new rally. Officials remain firm that maintaining peace comes first. While young job seekers want their voices heard, authorities fear history might repeat itself. For now, the August 18 protest is officially canceled, leaving hopeful workers searching for new ways to make their struggles known across the state.

From rural Divagi to Karwar Medical College: A district-wide success



KARWAR

Demonstrating its commitment to public health, Uttara Kannada district has officially applied for malaria elimination certification. The district has maintained a remarkable record, reporting zero local malaria cases since 2014 and keeping imported cases to a minimal level. To evaluate this achievement, a high-level National Malaria Elimination Assessment Team recently concluded a rigorous three-day inspection of the district's healthcare and surveillance infrastructure. The assessment team featured prominent experts, including Dr. Taraka Saurabha, a consultant with the World Health Organization; Dr. Ganesh Kamalakara Vernekar, a State Programme Officer from Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu; Andhra Pradesh District Medical Officer Dr. Krantikumar; and Puducherry Medical Officer Dr. Aishwarya Perumal. During their visit, the experts conducted comprehensive site visits across a wide range of facilities. Their itinerary included inspections of the Karwar Medical College,

the Indian Naval Service's Patanjali facility, various private hospitals and laboratories, the Urban Primary Health Centre in Karwar, and community health centers in Ankola and Shirali. The team also visited Divagi village, the site of the district's last recorded local malaria case to review vector control measures and directly interview ASHA workers and local residents about their experiences and awareness. At the conclusion of the inspection, the national team expressed strong appreciation for the district's robust health management. They specifically commended the leadership of District Health Officer Dr. Sanjay Doddamani and District Malaria Officer Dr. Ramesh Rao for maintaining an effective monitoring framework. The experts also lauded the dedication of the grassroots workforce, including ASHA workers, primary healthcare officers, and community health staff, whose consistent efforts have been instrumental in keeping the district malaria-free for over a decade. The assessment report will now be processed to determine the district's final certification status.

SECURING LIVELIHOODS IN RONA

VBG-RAM-G Job Card Mela launched in Rona taluk

RONA

Local leaders recently launched a special month-long job card campaign across 22 village councils in Rona Taluk. Running from August 15th to September 15th, this fresh initiative aims to secure steady work opportunities for rural families right at their doorsteps. Officials unveiled the official program brochure during a kickoff event, urging every local worker to ensure no qualified household gets left behind. During the launch, senior executive officers emphasized that the job card serves as a vital key to guaranteed employment. Instead of making villagers travel to government offices, staff members will walk directly through the neighborhoods. Workers will collect required documents, answer questions, and register households on the spot. Officials noted that bringing guidance straight to the people prevents confusion and saves precious time. The campaign specifically targets families currently lacking employment cards while also updating existing cardholders on fresh local work options. By spreading clear information locally, leaders hope to curb the trend of villagers migrating to distant cities in search of daily labor. Multiple local departments, including village council teams and community support staff, are joining forces to guarantee smooth teamwork throughout the entire month. Officials stressed that extensive public announcements will take place across every village council. Staff members received clear instructions to



identify residents who need work the most and help them complete their registration smoothly. Through dedicated door-to-door visits and close coordination, the local government hopes to strengthen village economies and provide secure livelihoods for everyone. Leaders remain confident that this community-focused effort will uplift numerous households and bring lasting stability to the region.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CAMPAIGN
Door-to-Door Outreach: Staff members have been instructed to personally visit villages, sparing residents from having to travel to government offices. Teams will identify families lacking job cards, collect necessary documents, and process registrations on the spot.
Awareness and Information: Beyond registering new applicants, teams will educate families already holding job cards about ongoing employment opportunities available under the scheme locally.
Inter-Departmental Coordination: Field staff from VBG-RAM-G, Gram Panchayats, and the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) are directed to work in close coordination to maximize reach and publicity at the grassroots level.
Curbing Migration: By providing accessible local employment options through structured planning and targeted identification, the campaign aims to significantly reduce the necessity for rural workers to migrate out of their villages in search of daily labor.

identify residents who need work the most and help them complete their registration smoothly. Through dedicated door-to-door visits and close coordination, the local government hopes to strengthen village economies and provide secure livelihoods for everyone. Leaders remain confident that this community-focused effort will uplift numerous households and bring lasting stability to the region.



QUICK READ



Navy sailor, family found dead

Mumbai
A 30-year-old Indian Navy sailor, his wife and their two children were found dead at their home in Navy Nagar, Colaba, on August 15. Police found Puranmal Shambhulal Mehra hanging, while his wife Oma, 28, and their three-year-old son and two-month-old daughter were found dead on a bed. Police suspect suicide and possible poisoning but said the exact cause of death will be confirmed after post-mortem examinations. No suicide note was found. An accidental death report has been registered. The Indian Navy said it is assisting police with the investigation.

Heavy rainfall set so hit north TN

Tamil nadu
Heavy rain is forecast in Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram, Villupuram and Tiruvannamalai from August 17 to 19. The Nilgiris may also receive heavy rain on August 19. Lightning and gusty winds of 40–50 kmph are expected in parts of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal. Fishermen have been advised against venturing into the sea. Chinnakalar recorded 9 cm and Marakanam received 8 cm of rain. Chennai may see light to moderate rain with thunderstorms on Sunday.

Doctor, Nurse arrested Over Forced Abortion

Gadag
Police have arrested seven people, including a doctor and a nurse, for allegedly raping a woman and forcing her to undergo an illegal abortion.
The accused include Sikandar Bepari, Shabbir Ahmed Langoti, Pradeep Navalekar, Bharat Koravar, Sandeep Navalekar, RMP doctor Nagaraj Kamatar and staff nurse Rekha Shirahatti. Police said Sikandar and Bharat allegedly raped the woman separately. After she became pregnant, the accused allegedly arranged an illegal abortion, all seven have been produced before a court. Police are searching for others who may have assisted in the alleged crime.

Three CJP questions rejected in Lok Sabha

Three sets of questions on youth protests and NEET issues were rejected in Lok Sabha under Rule 41(2), raising concerns over parliamentary accountability

NEW DELHI

Three sets of questions on the Cockroach Janta Party-led youth protests were disallowed during Parliament’s Monsoon Session, citing admissibility rules, CJP spokesperson Saurav Das said.
The questions were submitted by DMK MP Matheswaran V S and sought information on NEET-UG 2026 fee refunds, paper leaks, student welfare, education reforms, protest-related issues and the government’s response to protesting students.
Das criticised the decision, saying the questions were rejected under Rule 41(2) of the



Lok Sabha Rules, including clauses covering clarity, opinions, court matters and issues before parliamentary committees.
Matheswaran confirmed that the questions were disallowed and said he received



the information through the Lok Sabha members’ portal.
“If these questions cannot be asked in Parliament, where is the Government accountable?”
Saurav Das, CJP

Mamata condoles Asish Banerjee’s death

KOLKATA

Trinamool Congress leader and former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed grief over the death of party leader and former Deputy Speaker Asish Banerjee. The five-time MLA from Rampurhat was found hanging at a party office in Birbhum.
Mamata described Banerjee as a dedicated public servant who worked for the development of Rampurhat and maintained a close connection with people in his constituency. She said he had devoted his life to public service and teaching.
ANY QUOTES
She also said the veteran leader had faced repeated allegations and pressure in his final days. Mamata claimed that Banerjee was falsely accused of corruption and repeatedly maligned despite his work for the people.

Mamata mourned the veteran leader, highlighting his public service and alleging that he faced false accusations, criticism and intense pressure before his death

The death has triggered a political controversy, with TMC leaders, including Abhishek Banerjee, accusing the BJP and some media outlets of conducting smear campaigns against party leaders. The allegations have added to the political debate surrounding Banerjee’s death.
Mamata said the circumstances had made the tragedy more painful, particularly because of the mental and emotional strain Banerjee appeared to have faced. She recalled his long political career and contributions as an MLA and former Deputy Speaker.

BJP slams Congress Over Vande Mataram controversy

KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Sunday demanded an apology from the Congress over an alleged incident involving the singing of the full version of “Vande Mataram” at the party’s Independence Day event.
Adhikari alleged that Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi objected to the full song being sung at the party headquarters. He called the alleged incident an insult to nationalism and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, who wrote the national song.
The Congress, however, denied that there was any attempt to stop the full version of “Vande Mataram”. The party said Gandhi was only asking for a chair for Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge while the song was being played.
The controversy also drew

criticism from Sumitro Chatterjee, a BJP MLA and direct descendant of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. He alleged that there was discomfort and repeated attempts to stop the full song. He described the incident as a painful reminder of a historical mistake and sought an apology from Gandhi.
Union Home Minister Amit Shah also criticised the Congress over the controversy and demanded an apology to the people and Bankim Chandra. He said the national song was closely linked with India’s freedom movement and national identity.
The dispute has now turned into a political confrontation between the BJP and Congress, with both sides defending their positions over what happened during the Independence Day programme. The Congress maintains that there was no attempt to disrespect or stop the national song.

Modi pays tribute to Vajpayee

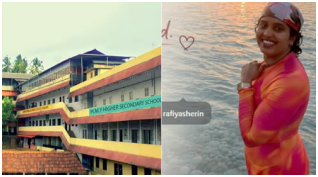
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday paid tribute to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his death anniversary, remembering him as an exceptional statesman who devoted his life to serving the nation.
Modi said Vajpayee had a remarkable vision and his words and efforts continued to inspire generations. He also highlighted Vajpayee’s leadership and contribution to strengthening the country.
Vajpayee, one of India’s prominent political leaders, was the first leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party to become Prime Minister. Known for his oratory and statesmanship, he served as Prime Minister in three terms, including a full five-year term from 1999 to 2004.
Born on December 25, 1924, in Gwalior, Vajpayee remained an influential figure in Indian politics for decades. His political career was marked by his role in shaping the BJP and his approach to national governance.

KERALA SCHOOL HOSTS DONOR CAMP FOR ALUMNI

MALAPPURAM

A higher secondary school in Manjeri, Malappuram, is hosting a stem cell donor registration camp to help its former student, Rafiya Sherin, who is battling severe aplastic anaemia. The 30-year-old, now living in the UK, needs a stem cell transplant after being diagnosed with the rare blood disorder.
Rafiya’s friends and relatives organised the camp at HMY Higher Secondary School, where she studied and served as school leader. They hope to find a matching donor, as such matches are often more likely among people with similar ethnic back-



grounds. Around 1,500 people from across Kerala have already registered online to attend the camp.
The camp is being organised with support from the DKMS Foundation, a global organisation working to help patients with blood disorders. Representatives will collect cheek-swab samples from participants. The samples will be tested to identify a suitable stem cell match.
Rafiya’s close relatives, in-

cluding her siblings, have already provided samples for testing. If a matching donor is found, further procedures will be carried out with the donor’s consent to collect stem cells from the blood.
The organisers said the camp could help not only Rafiya but also other patients waiting for suitable donors. The large response reflects the community’s support for the former student and highlights the importance of donor registration for people suffering from serious blood-related disorders. Finding a suitable match can take time, making wider participation important for patients who urgently need transplants.

MP Seeks Probe After Nanded Attack

NEW DELHI

Shiromani Akali Dal MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal on Sunday sought a National Investigation Agency probe into the alleged attack on party chief Sukhbir Singh Badal at a gurdwara in Nanded, Maharashtra.
Harsimrat displayed the weapon allegedly used in the attack and showed photographs of Sukhbir’s stitched forearm.
She said the attacker aimed at his chest with a sharp weapon, but Sukhbir raised his hand to protect himself, causing the blade to pierce his arm. Calling it the second attempt on her husband’s life, Harsimrat alleged that the earlier attacker in Punjab was out on bail. She accused the AAP-ruled Punjab government of failing to properly pursue that case.
Harsimrat said she had written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah seeking an NIA investigation, alleging that a wider conspiracy was behind the attack. She demanded strict action against everyone involved, including police officers or politicians, if found responsible.

Bhutan holds quake drill with Nepal

KATHMANDU/THIMPHU

Bhutan conducted a full-scale earthquake preparedness exercise in its capital with technical support from Nepal, testing how authorities and emergency teams would respond to a major disaster.
The exercise simulated a magnitude 7.5 earthquake in Thimphu, creating a mass-casualty situation with damaged buildings, blocked roads and disrupted power supplies. The drill was designed to test emergency decision-making, communication and coordination among agencies.
Bhutanese authorities created a scenario involving the country’s largest referral hospital and two primary healthcare centres. The exercise examined how hospitals would manage large

numbers of injured people while emergency responders worked to rescue victims and provide medical assistance.
Nepal’s earthquake experts provided technical support during the simulation. Their participation helped Bhutan assess its existing disaster response systems and identify areas that may need improvement before a real earthquake occurs.
The exercise also exposed gaps in emergency equipment and resource mobilisation. Authorities used the drill to assess how quickly essential resources could be arranged and how different agencies could work together during a crisis. The simulation highlighted the importance of preparedness, communication and coordinated action in reducing the impact of major earthquakes.

Teachers rally against mega DSC allegations

VIJAYAWADA

Around 5,000 newly recruited teachers held a rally in VijayaBOX POINTERS 6
wada on Sunday to reject allegations of irregularities in Andhra Pradesh’s Mega DSC-2025 recruitment for 16,347 teaching posts.
Teachers from the erstwhile West Godavari, Krishna and Prakasam districts marched from Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium to Ambedkar Smriti Vanam.
They said the allegations were hurting their self-respect and demanded that the YSR Congress Party stop what they called a baseless campaign against the recruitment process.
The teachers said they were selected on merit after completing the recruitment process and working hard for the posts. Similar protests by recruited teachers have also been held in Kurnool, Tirupati and other districts. At Ambedkar Smriti Vanam, the protesters submitted a repre-

sentation at the Ambedkar statue.
The recruitment has faced allegations concerning the examination, merit lists, certificate verification, horizontal reservation and sports quota. The YSRCP has demanded a Central Bureau of Investigation probe and the resignation of Education Minister Nara Lokesh. As many as 335 cases have been filed in courts over different aspects of the recruitment, including 69 related to the sports quota, while three cases are before the Supreme Court.
The School Education Department has rejected the allegations, saying the recruitment followed a technology-driven and rule-based process. It said several complaints were related to individual grievances and differences over the revised horizontal reservation method. Meanwhile, the controversy continues as recruited teachers defend the process and opposition parties seek further investigation.

Maharashtra records 29 quakes in 16 days

MUMBAI

Maharashtra has recorded 29 small earthquakes between July 30 and August 14, with Nashik accounting for most of the tremors, according to data reviewed by The Indian Express.
Of the 29 tremors, 24 were recorded in and around Nashik, four in Palghar and one in Nagpur. The earthquakes ranged from magnitude 2 to 4.3 and occurred at depths of about 5 to 8 km. The strongest tremor, measuring 4.3, was recorded in Nashik on August 8 at a depth of 5 km.
Nashik saw repeated activity on several days. Six tremors were recorded there on August 6, while four each were reported on August 8 and August 10. Experts have described the pattern as

an “earthquake swarm”, in which several small earthquakes occur in the same area over a short period.
Professor Deepankar Choudhury, an earthquake specialist at IIT Bombay, said the rise in small earthquakes was noticeable but not unusual. He explained that earthquake swarms can continue for days, weeks or even months and generally involve shallow tremors.
According to Choudhury, the current activity in Nashik and Palghar is linked to “hydro-seismicity”, a phenomenon often seen during and after the monsoon in parts of the Deccan Plateau. Water entering cracks and fractures in rocks can increase pressure underground and trigger small earthquakes.
Experts said the recent

Earthquakes rattle Maharashtra

- 29 tremors recorded across Maharashtra
- 24 tremors were in Nashik
- Strongest quake measured 4.3 magnitude
- Nashik recorded six tremors on August 6
- Experts call it an earthquake swarm
- Monsoon water may increase underground pressure

tremors fit the pattern of a local earthquake swarm. While the activity has caused concern among residents, specialists noted that such clusters of small earthquakes are not uncommon and can occur naturally under changing underground conditions.

FSSAI CRACKS DOWN ON LABELS

FSSAI action makes six firms change labels

NEW DELHI

Food regulator FSSAI said six food companies have taken corrective action after receiving notices for misleading labels, claims and trademarks. The companies packaged or removed claims, packaging and products to meet food safety rules and protect consumers from inaccurate information.
Livyor Ventures Pvt Ltd withdrew the claims “vegan” and “healthy” from its Livyor Roasted Edamame Beans packaging. The company said the claims were printed unintentionally be-

cause of a lack of awareness about regulatory requirements. It apologised and said it was revising its labels. It is also destroying old packaging carrying the disputed claims.
FSSAI said Honest Innovations for You Pvt Ltd and Heliostone Specialties Pvt Ltd changed their misleading trademarks. Rajasthan Agro and General Industries removed misleading claims and stopped using the product-related material mentioned in the notice. Iota Nanotechnology Pvt Ltd removed misleading claims from its label and stopped

producing non-standardised water.
Panchamurtha Industries Pvt Ltd removed its electrolyte drink from its website after the regulator’s notice. FSSAI said these steps followed action against food business operators for violations of food safety laws. The regulator has recently increased checks on companies making claims about food and beverage products, including energy drinks and alcoholic beverages.
FSSAI said the corrective measures were aimed at ensuring that food labels and product information follow

established rules.
The regulator’s action also highlights the need for companies to check their packaging and marketing claims carefully before products reach consumers. The companies’ responses are expected to improve compliance and reduce the risk of misleading information on food products in the market.



AT A GLANCE

- 6 food companies took corrective action.
- FSSAI issued notices for misleading claims.
- Livyor removed “vegan & healthy” from its label.
- Two companies changed misleading trademarks.
- Iota Nanotechnology stopped non-standardised water production.
- Panchamurtha delisted its electrolyte drink.

QUICK READ



Worm-infested laddus make two students ill

Madhya Pradesh
Two schoolchildren fell ill after allegedly eating worm-infested laddus distributed during an Independence Day event at a school in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. An eight-year-old girl spotted worms in her sweet, prompting villagers to stop distribution. Police and Food Department officials seized the remaining laddus and collected samples for testing. The shop supplying the sweets was sealed, and authorities launched an investigation. The incident occurred at a middle school in Songuradia village, where the laddus were distributed during Independence Day celebrations.

CJP Volunteer's Father Dies After Assault

Kolkata
A CJP volunteer's father, Sk Muhammad Mafik, died at Burdwan Medical College and Hospital after an alleged assault in West Bengal's Bankura district. His son, Shaik Abdul Hafeez, accused BJP workers of attacking them. CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke demanded arrests, while BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari said three people had been held. The alleged assault followed Hafeez's concerns about the condition of a government primary school during the CJP's 'School Thik Karo' campaign.

Six Held in Tripura Minor Rape Case

AGARTALA
Tripura Police arrested two men and detained four minors for allegedly gang-raping a girl aged above 16 in Gomati district, officials said on Sunday. Police said the incident took place on August 1 when the girl was returning home alone after her two friends had left. The accused allegedly forced her into a forest area, where she was sexually assaulted. The girl's family filed a complaint on August 14, following which police registered a case and took action against the suspects, he two adult accused were sent to judicial custody for 14 days, while the four minors, aged between 16 and 17, were sent to a juvenile home. Police said the investigation is underway to establish the full circumstances of the incident.

Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has suspended the licence of Parle Agro after finding expired stocks of Frooti, Appy and Apple Fizz at a godown in Chembur.

The FDA seized expired products worth ₹99,970 from the Velocity Express Warehouse near Chembur Naka during its ongoing food safety inspection drive. The action is part of a wider campaign targeting food businesses across the state.



Udhayanidhi denies remark over Trisha's controversy

Udhayanidhi Stalin denied making any objectionable remark about actor Trisha, saying his comment during a farmers' protest was only about Cauvery water

CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Leader of Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin has denied making any double-meaning remark about actor Trisha, recalling his brief arrest and questioning over the controversy.

Speaking at a DMK event, Udhayanidhi said he had only remarked that "water should flow in the Cauvery" while addressing a farmers' protest in Thanjavur. He maintained that he neither named Trisha nor made any objectionable reference to her.

The remark triggered



"I only said that water should flow into the Cauvery. Nothing else crossed my mind."

- Udhayanidhi Stalin, LoP

controversy after it was interpreted as a reference to the actor. Udhayanidhi re-

called that on August 2, Tamil Nadu Police arrived at his Chennai residence and took him to Thanjavur for questioning.

He said he initially believed the police had come because of his criticism of the government during the protest.

Udhayanidhi said he had called the Chief Minister a "dummy Chief Minister" and criticised the government over its handling of farmers' issues.

He again rejected the allegation about the Trisha remark, saying, "I only said that water should flow into the Cauvery. Nothing

else crossed my mind."

Udhayanidhi also criticised the Vijay-led TVK government, accusing it of arresting people over minor issues and calling its functioning authoritarian. He further mocked the party's MLAs and claimed that many people were unfamiliar with their names and ministerial portfolios.

The controversy remains a political flashpoint in Tamil Nadu, with Udhayanidhi continuing to defend his statement while attacking the ruling TVK government over what he described as excessive use of police action.

Telangana Plans ₹200-Crore E-Auto Scheme

TELANGANA

Telangana government has proposed a ₹200-crore scheme to convert 18,766 diesel and petrol autorickshaws in the Core Urban Region Economy into electric vehicles.

Owners can receive assistance of up to ₹1.50 lakh for retrofitting with approved kits or purchasing electric autos.

The scheme aims to reduce fuel costs and emissions.

DEAD LIZARD IN CAKE LEAVES 11 ILL IN MAHARASHTRA

PALGHAR

Eleven people, including seven children, fell ill after eating a birthday cake that allegedly contained a dead lizard at a celebration in Nalasopara, Maharashtra, police said on Sunday.

The incident took place on Saturday evening in the Takipada area, where residents had gathered to celebrate the birthday of a 25-year-old woman. After eating the cake, several children complained of a burning sensation in their chests and began vomiting.

Police said the children later reported finding a dead lizard inside the cake. Seven children were hospitalised, with three reported to be in

India to host BRICS meeting

NEW DELHI

India will host meetings of the BRICS Environment Working Group in New Delhi on August 17 and 18, with senior officials and environment ministers expected to discuss ways to improve cooperation on climate and environmental issues.

The meetings will be held at Bharat Mandapam under India's BRICS chairship theme, "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability". On August 17, senior officials will meet to discuss the priorities of the Environment Working Group and the Contact Group on Climate Change and Sustainable Development. The 12th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting will be held on August 18 and will be chaired by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav.

The Environment Working Group was formed in 2015 at the first BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting in Moscow. It works to address common environmental concerns, share experiences and promote practical solutions among member countries. The Contact Group on Climate Change and Sustainable Development was set up in 2024 to strengthen cooperation on climate-related matters.

India has selected four key areas for discussions during its 2026 BRICS chairship. These are promoting sustainable lifestyles, afforestation and forest fire management, circular economy and adaptation to climate change.

India will host BRICS environment meetings in New Delhi, bringing senior officials and ministers together to strengthen cooperation on climate change and sustainable development

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Aug 18: BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting.
- Chair: Bhupender Yadav.
- Focus: Climate change and sustainability.
- Key areas: Forests, circular economy, climate adaptation.
- Goal: Stronger environmental cooperation.

The meetings will also focus on disaster resilience and sustainable development.

The environment ministry said India has already started discussions through virtual meetings, technical sessions, webinars and dialogues held between March and July. These included talks on resource efficiency, circular economy, carbon markets, land degradation, desertification, drought and wildfire management.

The upcoming meetings are expected to build on these discussions and help BRICS countries work together on environmental challenges and find practical ways to support a greener future for all together.

ODISHA GIVES MISHRA TEMPORARY POLICE CHARGE

BHUBANESWAR

Odisha has given additional charge of Director General of Police (DGP) to senior IPS officer Vinaytosh Mishra as the state faces a delay in appointing a full-time police chief. Mishra will take charge on August 16, a day after incumbent DGP YB Khurania retires.

Mishra, a 1993-batch IPS officer, is currently serving as Director General of the Crime Branch and Criminal Investigation Department. He will lead the state police until a permanent DGP is appointed. Mishra, who is from Bihar, is also due to retire in Novem-

ber, leaving him with less than three months of service.

The temporary arrangement comes as the Supreme Court considers a Public Interest Litigation challenging Odisha's process for selecting its next DGP. The petition alleges that the state did not follow the procedure set by the Supreme Court in its landmark Prakash Singh versus Union of India judgment on police reforms and DGP appointments.

The Union Public Service Commission was expected to meet on Thursday to prepare a panel of three officers for the post. However, the meeting was deferred after the Su-

preme Court was informed about the ongoing case. The UPSC has assured the court that it will not hold the meeting before August 18, when the matter is scheduled for consideration.

Senior advocate P Chidambaram, appearing for the petitioner, told a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant that an officer had been promoted and was being included in the panel sent to the UPSC.

A state officer said the government hopes the Supreme Court will issue directions, allowing selection process to move forward and a DGP to be appointed.

Vande Bharat prepares for its global ride

NEW DELHI

BITES Limited is exploring the export of Vande Bharat trains to overseas markets by developing a version based on the standard-gauge railway platform. The move could help India offer its semi-high-speed train technology to countries that use standard-gauge tracks.

BITES CMD Rahul Mithal said the company has started discussions with Indian Railways to develop a standard-gauge prototype. He said talks have also begun with some countries that have shown interest in the trains. The company expects work on the first prototype to gain pace in the coming months.

Vande Bharat trains currently operate on India's broad-gauge railway network, where the distance between the two rails is 1,676 mm. Standard gauge, widely used in many countries, has a rail distance of 1,435 mm. Adapting the train to this gauge could make it easier to offer the technology in overseas rail markets.

Since its launch in 2019, Vande Bharat services have carried more than 9 crore passengers. At present, 81 pairs of Chair Car Vande Bharat services are operating across the Indian Railways network.

Congress leader, son killed in Nadia attack

KOLKATA

Congress leader Anisur Rahman and his 24-year-old son Abu Sufian were shot at and hacked to death by unidentified attackers near their home in Nadia district on Saturday evening.

The incident took place near the Bethuadahari railway crossing, around 200 metres from their residence, while the two were travelling in a car.

Rahman was a member of the Pradesh Congress Committee and General Secretary of the Nadia District Congress Committee. His son Sufian was studying law and, according to relatives, planned to travel to London for higher studies.

The attack left their car badly damaged, with bullet marks on the windscreen, smashed windows and damage to the bonnet.

The bodies were taken to Nakashipara hospital for post-mortem examinations. A relative said Rahman had worked for people for many years and suspected political enmity behind the attack. The family also stressed that Sufian was not involved in politics and demanded justice for both



victims.

Police have arrested Fatema Bibi, head of Harnagar Gram Panchayat, and another Trinamool Congress worker in connection with the case.

The arrests followed allegations by Rahman's family that Bibi was linked to the killings. Police are examining CCTV footage from the area to identify and trace the attackers.

Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari said the police had informed him that jailed accused Jabbar Shiekh was responsible for the murders and that his wife, a TMC panchayat head, had been arrested. Panchayat Minister Dilip Ghosh and TMC MLA Kunal Ghosh condemned the killings and called for an investigation.

Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury demanded an impartial probe and strict punishment for those responsible while the investigation remains underway.

UP plans 10,000 youths for cow protection

LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government plans to train around 10,000 Go Mitras across villages to involve young people, especially Gen Z, in its cow protection programme. The initiative aims to expand cow protection beyond shelter management and connect it with animal care, natural farming, rural livelihoods and employment.

The Uttar Pradesh Go Sava



critical condition and admitted to the intensive care unit. The condition of the other children was said to be stable.

A team from Tuljaj Police visited the hospital and seized cake samples for testing. Officials said the exact cause of the illness had not yet been confirmed. The Food and Drug Administration was alerted and later inspected the bakery from where the cake

had been purchased.

The FDA subsequently raided the bakery and cancelled its licence, according to officials aware of the action. Authorities are investigating how the cake was prepared and supplied. The cake samples will be tested to determine whether contamination caused the illness, while officials continue to examine the bakery's food safety practices.

EXPIRED STOCKS FOUND

FDA SUSPENDS PARLE AGRO'S LICENCE

MUMBAI



As of August 13, the FDA had inspected 109 hotels, restaurants and dhabas, issuing 49 improvement notices and suspending four food-business licences. The department has also been checking baker-

ies, online food platforms and other food outlets for safety and hygiene violations.

The agency recently found several hygiene problems at food establishments. At Bollywood Cafe

At a glance

- Expired Frooti, Appy found.
- ₹99,970 worth stock seized.
- Parle Agro licence suspended.
- 109 food outlets inspected.
- 49 improvement notices issued.

in Film City, Goregaon East, officials reported dirty cooking utensils, fly infestation, wastewater and food residue in the kitchen. During inspections of quick-commerce food delivery outlets, officials also found cockroaches, expired

chicken, rotten vegetables, rodent droppings and food packets stored directly on dirty floors.

The inspections are being carried out under Maharashtra FDA chief Tukaram Mundhe as part of efforts to improve food safety standards.

The department is continuing checks across restaurants, hotels, dhabas, bakeries and other food businesses. The action against Parle Agro comes as authorities step up monitoring to prevent expired and unsafe food products from reaching consumers.

NTA to reconduct UGC-NET exams

NEW DELHI

The National Testing Agency (NTA) will reconduct the UGC-NET examinations for English, Sociology and Commerce following complaints about errors in the question papers, a senior NTA official said.

The decision was taken after the agency received several complaints from candidates regarding mistakes in the question papers. Following the complaints, the NTA formed a committee to examine the reported errors and review the papers.

The committee looked into the concerns raised about the examinations before the agen-

cy decided to hold the tests again for the three subjects.

The UGC-NET is conducted to determine the eligibility of candidates for assistant professor positions and the award of Junior Research Fellowship in Indian universities and colleges.

The NTA is expected to announce further details about the schedule and other arrangements for the re-examination. Candidates who appeared for the affected subjects will have to follow the agency's official instructions regarding the new examination. The decision to reconduct the exams come after concerns over the accuracy of the question papers.



QUICK READ

India boosts Seychelles coast guard readiness

Victoria

India has handed over specialised calibrated tools, repaired electronic units and safety equipment to Seychelles, strengthening defence and maritime co-operation. Three repaired Dornier electronic units, 18 sets of aircraft tools, 50 safety helmets and sea-manship ropes were provided to the Seychelles Defence Force. The equipment was repaired or calibrated at Indian naval facilities free of cost. The tools will support faster repairs and in-house testing of Dornier aircraft used for maritime surveillance, casualty evacuation and search-and-rescue operations. The safety gear will also improve Coast Guard personnel safety and operational readiness. Earlier, India handed over five boats to strengthen sea-manship skills.

Iran works continuously to counter cyber attacks

Tehran

Iran is facing continuous cyberattacks amid ongoing conflicts, Information and Communications Technology Minister Sattar Hashemi said on Sunday. He said Iranian teams were working around the clock to protect the country's digital systems and services. Hashemi said the attacks were becoming increasingly complex, but Iran's previous experience had helped authorities respond effectively and prevent major disruptions. Meanwhile, Iran and Oman have agreed on shipping routes through the Strait of Hormuz, although technical discussions on a broader arrangement remain underway. Officials said a proposed framework aims to ensure safe vessel passage while protecting the sovereignty and rights of both countries.

12 killed, 10 injured in polish bus crash

Budapest

At least 12 people were killed and 10 others injured after a Polish passenger bus overturned on a motorway in eastern Hungary early Sunday, authorities said. The bus reportedly ran off the road and tipped into a ditch near Mezokeresztes while travelling towards Nyiregyhaza. Emergency services rushed to the accident site and attended to the injured passengers. Hungarian Prime Minister Peter Magyar confirmed the deaths in a Facebook post. Police said investigations were underway to determine the exact cause of the crash. The incident occurred during the early hours, when the bus was travelling along the motorway between Mezokeresztes and Mezőnyárály.

S. Korea fires warning shots after border incursion

SEOUL

South Korea's military fired warning shots after North Korean soldiers crossed the military demarcation line between the two countries, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said on Sunday, prompting the soldiers to return to the North. The incident occurred recently along the Eastern Front, although South Korean authorities did not disclose the exact date. The Joint Chiefs of Staff said the warning shots were fired in accordance with established operational procedures after North Korean forces crossed the

Pact raises Pak investment hopes

WHILE FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON DEFENCE AND SECURITY, THE COUNTRY INCREASINGLY HOPES THE AGREEMENT WILL ALSO BRING ECONOMIC BENEFITS

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan is witnessing renewed optimism over the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, with expectations that the pact could attract foreign investment, increase Saudi financial assistance, provide oil on deferred payments and create more employment opportunities for Pakistanis in Gulf countries, according to a report.

The agreement, involving Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, came into force on August 7. Under the pact, an armed attack against any one of the three countries will be regarded as an attack against all three. While the agreement is primarily focused on defence and security, hopes in Pakistan have increasingly expanded towards potential economic benefits.

These expectations have been compared with the enthusiasm surrounding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, launched in 2015 and widely described at the time as a potential game



changer for Pakistan's economy. However, more than a decade later, the country continues to face debt pressures, weak exports, low productivity and recurring balance-of-payments problems.

An opinion article in Pakistan's Dawn argued that the country has repeatedly placed hopes in external partnerships to overcome its economic difficulties.

It suggested that while strategic agreements and foreign investment can provide support, they cannot replace domestic reforms needed to address structural weaknesses.

The report noted that Pakistan remains dependent on IMF programmes, financial

What's Makkah Pact

The Makkah Pact, officially known as the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement (MJDA), is a trilateral collective defense pact signed on August 7, 2026, in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, by Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan. The agreement states that an armed attack against any one of the three member nations will be regarded as an attack against all of them.

deposits, loan rollovers and assistance from friendly countries, including China and Saudi Arabia. This dependence has strengthened the perception that external support is essential for economic stability.

The latest defence pact could improve Pakistan's strategic position and deepen

Trilateral deal sparks economic hopes

- **Defense agreement:** Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey implemented a trilateral defense pact on August 7, establishing a collective-defense clause where an attack on one is considered an attack on all three.
- **Economic expectations:** Public and political discussions in Pakistan have drawn parallels to the initial optimism surrounding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
- **Persistent economic challenges:** Analysts caution that the agreement should not replace domestic reforms, as Pakistan continues to struggle with heavy debt, weak exports, low productivity, and balance-of-payments issues.
- **Reliance on external aid:** The country remains heavily dependent on IMF programs, loan rollovers, and financial support from friendly nations such as China and Saudi Arabia.
- **Strategic outlook:** While the defense pact strengthens regional ties and Pakistan's strategic standing, experts emphasize that sustainable growth requires domestic institutional reforms rather than external partnerships alone.

ties with important regional partners. However, the analysis cautioned against viewing it as a substitute for economic reforms, stronger institutions and sustainable domestic growth.

It argued that long-term prosperity would require improvements in governance,

productivity, exports, political stability, peace, rule of law and democratic institutions. The report concluded that Pakistan's future economic transformation will ultimately depend on what it achieves domestically rather than on expectations of external rescue.

Israeli airstrike kills senior Hezbollah commander

JERUSALEM

An Israeli airstrike killed a senior Hezbollah commander in southern Lebanon, the Israeli military said on Sunday, as tensions continued to rise despite a ceasefire reached in 2024. Lebanese state media reported that at least four people were killed and five others injured in the strike.

The Israeli military identified the commander as Abu Hassan Alaa, a senior figure in Hezbollah's Badr regional division. It said he was killed late Saturday in an airstrike on Deir al-Zahrani. Israel described the operation as a response to an earlier Hezbollah drone attack targeting Israeli troops in southern Lebanon, which injured three soldiers.

Lebanon's National News Agency reported that Israeli warplanes struck a two-storey building in Deir al-Zahrani. The attack came after another deadly Israeli operation in the southern village of Ansar, where seven people were re-

portedly killed in heavy airstrikes on Saturday.

The Israeli military also said it had killed Ali Samir Al-Haj Hassan, described as a battalion commander in Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force. According to the IDF, he was targeted at a Hezbollah headquarters in Ansar after an attack against Israeli forces operating in what Israel calls a security zone.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) stressed the importance of maintaining an international presence in southern Lebanon. UNIFIL spokesperson Kandice Ardiel said peacekeepers continue to support implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which she described as a foundation for stability in the region.

Ardiel said UNIFIL was also supporting efforts to strengthen the Lebanese army and expand state authority across southern Lebanon amid continuing security concerns.

TEHRAN

Iran has executed a man convicted of deliberately running over police officers during protests in January, the country's judiciary said on Sunday.

The Supreme Court had upheld the death sentence before it was carried out early on Sunday.

According to the judiciary, the man was convicted in connection with an incident during the protests in which a vehicle was used to strike police personnel. Authorities treated the case as a serious security offence and pursued the death penalty through the courts.

The execution comes amid continued scrutiny of Iran's handling of protests and cases involving demonstrators and security forces. Iranian authorities have repeatedly said that attacks against police and other security personnel would be dealt with firmly

under the country's laws.

The Supreme Court's decision to uphold the sentence cleared the way for the execution. The judiciary said the punishment was subsequently carried out, bringing the legal proceedings to an end.

Iran has faced international criticism over its use of capital punishment, particularly in cases linked to political unrest and protests. Rights groups have frequently called for greater transparency in judicial proceedings and urged authorities to ensure defendants receive fair trials.

The January protests and the government's response have remained a sensitive issue inside Iran. Authorities have maintained that maintaining public order and protecting security personnel are essential, while critics have raised concerns over the severity of punishments imposed in protest-related cases.

The latest execution is ex-

Formal legal phrasing

- This revision maintains a formal, authoritative register suited for legal reporting, investigative journalism, or official documentation.
- Replacing "serious security offence" with "grave security breach" and "pursued" with "aggressively sought" heightens the legal weight and dramatic tension of the sentence.
- Best used in news articles, documentary scripts, or formal reports detailing judicial or legal proceedings.

pected to draw renewed attention to Iran's judicial response to unrest and its continued use of the death penalty in cases involving alleged violence against security forces.

KHUZDAR REMAINS UNDER LOCKDOWN AMID TENSIONS

QUETTA

Khuzdar in Pakistan's Balochistan province continued to remain under lockdown on Sunday amid heightened security concerns and tensions in the region. Authorities have maintained restrictions as the situation remains closely monitored.

The ongoing lockdown has affected normal activity in the city, with residents facing difficulties in movement and access to daily services. Security measures have been strengthened in sensitive areas as authorities seek to prevent any further escalation.



Khuzdar is located in central Balochistan and has witnessed security-related incidents in the past. The latest restrictions have added to concerns among residents and businesses, who are waiting for normal conditions to return.

Officials are continuing to assess the situation while security personnel remain deployed in the area. The restrictions are expected to remain in place

until authorities determine that conditions have improved sufficiently.

The continued lockdown highlights the security challenges facing parts of Balochistan, where tensions and incidents have periodically disrupted civilian life. Local residents have called for stability and a return to normal movement and economic activity.

Authorities have not indicated when the restrictions will be fully lifted. The situation in Khuzdar remains under close watch as security agencies continue their operations and monitor developments across the district.

Spanish F-18 shoots down drone over Romania

BUCHAREST

A Spanish F-18 fighter jet shot down an unidentified drone after it entered Romanian airspace, Romania's Defence Ministry said on Sunday, highlighting continuing security concerns along the country's border.

The Spanish aircraft was operating as part of NATO's enhanced air-policing mission in Romania when it was deployed to respond to the airspace violation. The fighter intercepted the drone after authorities detected its presence over Romanian territory.

The incident comes amid heightened vigilance across NATO's eastern flank, particularly in countries bordering Ukraine. Romania has repeatedly reported incidents involving drones and debris linked to the war in neighbouring Ukraine, prompting in-

creased air-defence measures and allied patrols.

The Spanish F-18 is among allied aircraft supporting Romania's air-policing activities. NATO members have increased cooperation in the region to strengthen surveillance and protect the airspace of member states.

Romanian authorities are expected to investigate the origin and circumstances surrounding the drone's entry into national airspace. Officials have continued to monitor the situation closely as military activity in the wider region creates potential risks of airspace violations.

The incident underscores the importance of NATO's air-policing operations in eastern Europe, where allied aircraft remain on standby to respond rapidly to unidentified or potentially hostile aerial objects.

Nepali Cong rift deepens over Deuba leadership

KATHMANDU

The internal conflict within Nepal's Nepali Congress has intensified after a dissident faction backed former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to lead preparations for the party's 15th General Convention, raising concerns about a possible formal split.

The faction, which did not participate in the controversial Special General Convention held in January, decided during a three-day national gathering from August 14 to 16 to organise the next General Convention under Deuba's leadership. The January convention had elected Gagan Thapa as party president, replacing Deuba.

The leadership change was expected to help the Nepali Congress regain public support after a youth-led uprising last year. However, the party suffered a major electoral setback, with the relatively new Rastriya Swatantra Party winning nearly a two-thirds majority in the March 5 elections. The poor result has increased criticism of the Thapa-led leadership.

The dispute has also entered the legal arena. Nepal's Supreme Court in April recognised the Thapa faction as the official Nepali Congress and upheld the Election Commission's recognition of its committee. The Deuba faction challenged the decision, and the Supreme Court registered its review petition on July 22, reopening questions over the party's leadership dispute.

The dissident gathering decided that regular activities would be coordinated by its coordinator under Deuba's direction. Former party General Secretary Shashank Koirala was chosen to coordinate the faction's future programmes. Deuba attended both the opening and closing sessions after returning to Nepal following five months abroad.

The gathering also called for dialogue with democratic and national forces to address the country's political challenges. It supported constitutional amendments through dialogue and established procedures.

The faction further backed the protection of Nepal's Hindu, Buddhist, Kirat and indigenous traditions while supporting religious tolerance, social harmony and freedom of religion.

IN THE COURT OF THE 1st ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFC AT DODDABALLAPURA

Crl Misc No. 12/2026

PETITIONERS: Sri.M.Nagarajiah, S/o Late Mutthahanumaiah, Aged about 56 years, R/1st, Thaneeranahalli Village, Doddabalevanagala Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk Bengaluru rural District

VIS RESPONDENT: The Tahasildar, Doddaballapura Taluk, Doddaballapura

PAPER PUBLICATION

The petitioners have filed this petition for grant of death certificate of father of the petitioners by name Sri. MUTTHAHANUMAIAH S/o Late ERANAGAIHAH, who died on 06.05.2001, at Thaneeranahalli Village, Doddabalevanagala Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bangalore Rural District.

Whom so ever if any person who are related or interested or dispute date of death of Sri. Mutthahanumaiah may hereby appear in the above said court in person or through pleader duly instructed and able to answer all material question raising in the petition on the day of 16.09.2026 at 11 AM in said court. Take notice that in default of your appearance on the date before mentioned, it will be heard and determined ex parte.

Given under my hand and seal of the court on this the 12th day of August 2026.

By order of the Court

Chief Ministerial Officer, 1st Addl., Civil Judge and JMFC at Doddaballapura

Advocate for petitioners: Sri.Suresh Kumar.N Advocate Prakaruthi Law Associates, Doddaballapura

IN THE COURT OF THE 1 ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE & J.M.F.C AT DODDABALLAPURA

C. MISC.NO.423/2026

BETWEEN:- 1. Smt. MUNIVANMA, M. Ny S/o Late. Munishamma, Aged about 75 years. R/1st: Tapasahalli Village, Thubagere Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District - 561203. 2. Smt. AKKAYAMMA, W/o Late Marivanna @ Marivappa, Aged about 66 years, R/1st: Tapasahalli Village, Thubagere Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District - 561203. 3. Smt. JAYAMMA, D/o Late. Munishamma, Aged about 53 years. R/1st: Kuntanahalli Village, Aralumallige Post, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District - 561203. 4. Smt. BHAGYAMMA, W/o Patelappa, D/o Late. Munishamma, Aged about 71 years, R/1st: #48, Kuntanahalli Village, Aralumallige Post, Doddaballapura Taluk Bengaluru Rural District - 561203.

...PETITIONERS

AND The Tahsildar, Doddaballapura Taluk Office, Doddaballapura - 561 203 **...RESPONDENT**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas the petitioners has filed the above petition under section 13(3) of the Registration of Birth and Deaths Act 1969 for seeking direction of the respondent authority to issue death certificate of MUNISHAMAPPA S/o late kempamma, who was died on 10/08/1970 in his native house at Tapasahalli Village, Thubagere Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District and the Hon'ble court has posted for the above petition on 21/09/2026 for hearing of the petition. If any persons desire to oppose the said petition or claim or interest shall appear before the Hon'ble court in person or by pleader duly interested at 11.00AM failing which the said petition will be disposed on enquiry.

Given Under my hand seal of this Court today i.e., on 14-08-2026.

By Order of the Court

Shiresthedhar Addl. Civil Judge & J.M.F.C Court, Doddaballapura

Amanrath M, Advocate, Sree. Gururaghavendra Law Chamber, Ground Floor, 6th Floor, 6th Cross, Opp. Court Complex, Doddaballapura.

IN THE COURT OF THE 1st ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE & J.M.F.C AT DODDABALLAPURA

C. MISC.NO.422/2026

BETWEEN:- 1. Smt. MUNIVANMA, D/o Late Byanna, W/o Ramaiah, Aged about 74 years, R/1st: #12, Nagadasanahalli Village, Rajanukunte Post, Bengaluru North Taluk, Bengaluru North District - 560 064. **... PETITIONERS**

AND: The Tahsildar, Doddaballapura Taluk Office, Doddaballapura. **... RESPONDENT**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas the petitioner has filed the above petition under section 13(3) of the Registration of Birth and Deaths Act 1969 for seeking direction of the respondent authority to issue death certificate of BYANNA S/o late Kempamma, who was died on 01/10/1975 in her native house at Tapasahalli Village, Thubagere Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District and the Hon'ble court has posted for the above petition on 21/09/2026 for hearing of the petition. If any persons's desire to oppose the said petition or claim or interest shall appear before the Hon'ble court in person or by pleader duly interested at 11.00AM failing which the said petition will be disposed on enquiry.

Given Under my hand seal of this Court today i.e., on 14/08/2026.

By Order of the Court

Shiresthedhar Pr. Civil Judge & JMFC Doddaballapur

Amanrath M, Advocate, Sree. Gururaghavendra Law Chamber, Ground Floor, 6th Floor, 6th Cross, Crop Court Complex, Doddaballapura

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QUICK READ

German firms cut US investment to 3-year low

BERLIN

German companies slashed investments in the United States to a three-year low in the first half of 2026, as Trump administration policies fed uncertainty between the transatlantic trading partners. First-half direct investments plunged by nearly two-thirds year-on-year to €4.3 billion (\$5 billion), the lowest level since 2023, according to calculations by the German Economic Institute. Compared with the same period in 2024, that represents a drop of nearly 80%, said the report, which is based on data from Germany's central bank. This continues the downward trend that has been evident since the start of Donald Trump's second term in January 2025.

Europe heatwaves expose insurance gap as biz losses mount

LONDON

For more than a century, cafes in the Italian city of Padua have welcomed customers for an early evening drink, or aperitivo, encouraging them to sit outside and socialise before dinner. As Europe bakes under its fifth heatwave of the year, the traditional 6-7 p.m. slot has all but disappeared as people seek air-conditioning indoors, cutting sales for many hospitality businesses. Adding to the pressure, extreme heat often falls outside traditional business interruption insurance, exposing a growing protection gap for companies across Europe.

DRI BUSTS MAJOR ARECA NUT IMPORT RACKET

NEW DELHI

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has dismantled a major network allegedly involved in illegally importing South-East Asian areca nuts into India by falsely declaring them as Bangladeshi-origin goods to fraudulently avail concessional duty benefits under the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA), the Ministry of Finance said on Sunday.

The investigation has so far revealed a potential revenue loss of more than Rs 2,500 crore, while nine persons have been arrested in connection with the case. The import of areca nuts into India attracts a Basic Customs Duty (BCD) of 100 per cent. However, eligible imports originating from Bangladesh can receive full customs duty exemption under the SAFTA agreement, subject to compliance with the prescribed Rules of Origin criteria.

According to the DRI, intelligence gathered during a month-long operation revealed



that certain syndicates were exploiting the SAFTA provisions on a large scale. The syndicates were allegedly sourcing areca nuts from Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and other South-East Asian countries, but mis-declaring their country of origin as Bangladesh when importing them into India.

Following the intelligence inputs, the DRI conducted simultaneous searches at multiple premises linked to importers, Customs Brokers and Importer Exporter Code (IEC) holders in Kolkata and Visakhapatnam.

Rising Crude Oil May Test Market Mood

MUMBAI

Indian stock markets are expected to remain sensitive to geopolitical developments, crude oil prices and global monetary policy this week, with the Strait of Hormuz and US-Iran tensions likely to influence investor sentiment.

The focus comes after the Sensex fell 489.92 points, or 0.62%, while the Nifty declined 204.65 points, or 0.83%, last week, ending a two-week winning streak.

Analysts said Brent crude prices and developments around the Strait of Hormuz will re-

main important market drivers. Rising crude prices could increase volatility and weigh on investor sentiment.

Investors will also watch the minutes of the US Federal Reserve's July meeting, scheduled for release on August 19. The minutes could provide clues about the Fed's future interest-rate policy and influence foreign investment flows into emerging markets such as India.

Foreign institutional investor activity will remain another key factor for Dalal Street. Analysts also expect investors to track Chinese economic data for signals on global growth.

FinMin pushes PPI shift from WPI

This strategic shift aims to eliminate wholesale price inflation metrics within a five-year timeline

NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has asked all ministries and departments to adopt the Producer Price Index (PPI) instead of the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) for rate escalation and adjustment clauses in future government procurement contracts.

The move follows the Commerce Ministry's decision to begin releasing monthly PPI data for goods and services from June, providing a measure intended to better capture price movements at the producer level. The transition is also in line with international practices and recommendations of the International Monetary Fund.

In an office memorandum, the Department of Expenditure encouraged ministries



and departments to use PPI in future contracts once the index becomes available. The ministry said the availability of both Output PPI and Input PPI would provide a clearer picture of changes in producer prices, including how input costs are reflected in finished output prices.

The government has also introduced a revised WPI series with 2022-23 as its base year, replacing the earlier 2011-12 base year. Alongside it, new indices covering output producer prices, trial input producer prices and services have been released.

The revised WPI will continue to be published for five years from the release of the new series, allowing users time to shift toward PPI. It will be discontinued after that transition period.

PPI transition

The government will keep the revised WPI series available for five years, giving ministries and other users time to move toward PPI during the transition period. The first Service PPI basket covers seven sectors, while more services are expected to be added as reliable data becomes available in subsequent phases.

Why the shift matters

Fairer adjustments: Price escalation clauses help share inflation impacts (like fuel, labor, and materials) between the state and contractors during project execution.

Global standards: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and advanced economies recommend PPI as a more accurate reflection of true producer-level cost changes.

Better data tracking: The new system tracks both Input PPI (raw material expenses) and Output PPI (finished product costs), revealing how supplier expenses pass down to final prices.

Structure of new PPI data

Goods (Output PPI): Manufactured items hold the highest weight at 69.93%, followed by agriculture, forestry, and fishing at 22.16%, electricity at 4.49%, and mining at 3.42%.

Services PPI: Phase one covers seven specific service sectors, including banking, railways, telecom, and insurance, with more sectors to follow.

Transition period: WPI and the new PPI series will run in parallel for five years to ensure a smooth policy transition before WPI is completely retired.

Pak digital payments boom fails to break cash dependence

NEW DELHI

Pakistan's rapid growth in digital payments has failed to translate into a meaningful reduction in the country's reliance on cash, highlighting a widening gap between how money is transferred and how it is ultimately spent, a report has said.

Despite a surge in mobile banking usage, digital merchant adoption and government-led efforts to promote cashless transactions, currency in circulation (CIC) reached a record Rs 11.94 trillion in fiscal year 2025-26. This represents a 94 per cent increase from Rs 6.14 trillion in FY2020, underscoring the persistent role of cash in everyday economic activity.

The trend presents a paradox for policymakers. While digital payment infrastructure has expanded rapidly, much



of the money flowing through bank accounts, mobile wallets and instant-payment systems is eventually withdrawn and converted into cash before being spent.

Analysts describe this phenomenon as a "cash-conversion" cycle rather than a true transition toward a cashless economy.

Pakistan has witnessed strong growth in digital financial transactions over the past six years.

Mobile banking transaction values have increased sharply, digital merchant networks have expanded, and initiatives

such as the government's Cashless Pakistan programme have encouraged greater use of electronic payments.

However, these gains have largely been concentrated in the movement of money rather than in end-use spending.

Central bank data show that while the nominal value of cash circulating in the economy has nearly doubled since FY2020, some indicators suggest a gradual decline in cash intensity over the longer term. Currency as a share of broad money supply has fallen from 30.1 per cent in FY2020 to 25.7 per cent in FY2026, the report stated.

When adjusted for inflation, the picture changes further. In real terms, the purchasing power represented by cash in circulation declined by around 12.5 per cent over the period, the report noted.

X will make govt content takedown pleas more transparent: Musk

WASHINGTON

Elon Musk has announced that social media platform X will make government requests to remove or restrict content more visible to users, as part of a broader effort to increase transparency around content moderation, recommendation algorithms and official intervention in online speech.

In a post on social media platform X, Musk said that any censorship required by governments is now clearly visible, signalling the platform's intention to provide users with greater insight into actions taken at the request of government authorities.

"Any censorship required by governments is now clearly visible," Musk mentioned. Under the proposed changes, X users will be able to see when governments seek the

removal of posts or request restrictions on accounts.

The platform also plans to disclose details about the agencies making such requests and, where available, the legal grounds or justification cited for the action. The move is part of Musk's wider push to make the platform's moderation and content-distribution systems more transparent.

Since acquiring X, formerly known as Twitter, Musk has repeatedly argued that users should have greater visibility into how online content is moderated and ranked.

According to a report by Crypto Briefing, X has complied with between 83 per cent and 98.8 per cent of gov-

ernment takedown requests under Musk's ownership, depending on the reporting period.

The report said this compliance rate exceeds that of the platform's previous management. X has also been working to provide greater transparency around its recommendation systems.

The company has supported efforts to open-source parts of its recommendation technology, enabling researchers and users to scrutinise how content-ranking mechanisms operate and how posts are promoted or suppressed.



DRI BUSTS MAJOR ARECA NUT IMPORT RACKET

NEW DELHI

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has dismantled a major network allegedly involved in illegally importing South-East Asian areca nuts into India by falsely declaring them as Bangladeshi-origin goods to fraudulently avail concessional duty benefits under the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA), the Ministry of Finance said on Sunday.

The investigation has so far revealed a potential revenue loss of more than Rs 2,500 crore, while nine persons have been arrested in connection with the case. The import of areca nuts into India attracts a Basic Customs Duty (BCD) of 100 per cent. However, eligible imports originating from Bangladesh can receive full customs duty exemption under the SAFTA agreement, subject to compliance with the prescribed Rules of Origin criteria.

According to the DRI, intelligence gathered during a month-long operation revealed



that certain syndicates were exploiting the SAFTA provisions on a large scale. The syndicates were allegedly sourcing areca nuts from Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and other South-East Asian countries, but mis-declaring their country of origin as Bangladesh when importing them into India.

Following the intelligence inputs, the DRI conducted simultaneous searches at multiple premises linked to importers, Customs Brokers and Importer Exporter Code (IEC) holders in Kolkata and Visakhapatnam.

RBI closes special NRI deposit window by Aug 31

NEW DELHI

After witnessing an encouraging response and the resultant forex inflows, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced to prematurely end its swap facility for Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank), or FCNR(B), deposits.

The swap facility will now be available only for FCNR(B) deposits mobilised till August 31, 2026, the RBI said.

"Based on the encouraging response to the Swap Facility for FCNR(B) deposits and the resultant forex inflows, it has been decided that the Swap facility for FCNR(B) deposits will be available only for deposits mobilized till August 31, 2026. The Swaps under this facility i.e. FCNR(B) deposits may be availed with RBI till September 11, 2026," the Central Bank said in a statement.

Earlier this month, the RBI said its concessional foreign exchange swap fa-

cility had attracted \$40.816 billion in overseas currency inflows since June when it was launched. Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) deposits accounted for the bulk of the mobilisation, according to data received from authorised dealer banks.

Total inflows under the facility stood at \$40.816 billion as of July 31. FCNR (B) deposits contributed \$36.725 billion to the total, while Overseas Foreign Currency Borrowings (OFCBs) accounted for \$2.575 billion. External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs) brought in a further \$1.516 billion.

The swap facility has seen avid interest and attracted steady forex inflows since June 8, 2026, the RBI said in a statement. According to latest reports, India may receive FCNR (B) deposits in the range of \$65-70 billion by the end of the RBI scheme on September 30, and, overall, \$80-\$85 billion.

Forex reserves soar to \$707 billion mark

MUMBAI

India's foreign exchange reserves rose sharply by \$14.136 billion during the week ended August 7, crossing the \$707 billion mark, driven by a significant increase in foreign currency assets and gold reserves, according to data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

In rupee terms, the country's reserves expanded by Rs 1.19 lakh crore during the reporting week to Rs 67.32 lakh crore, underscoring the strength of India's external sector position.

The rise was led by an increase in foreign currency assets (FCAs), which constitute the largest share of the country's forex reserves. FCAs climbed by \$9.946 billion to \$574.625 billion during the week.

Gold reserves also witnessed a substantial increase, rising by \$3.995 billion to \$108.738 billion. The value of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund increased by \$79 million to \$18.745 billion.

Top 5 firms lose Rs 1 lakh cr in market value

MUMBAI

Five of India's 10 most-valued companies together saw more than Rs 1 trillion (Rs 1 lakh crore) wiped off their market capitalisation last week as weakness in domestic equities weighed on investor sentiment, with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) emerging as the biggest laggard.

The broader market remained under pressure during the week, with the Sensex falling 489.92 points, or 0.62 per cent, while the Nifty declined 204.65 points, or 0.83 per cent.

Among the top-10 valued firms, TCS recorded the sharpest erosion in market value. The IT major's market capitalisation fell by Rs 34,263.28 crore to Rs 8.53 lakh crore. Reliance Industries, the country's most-valued company, also witnessed a substantial decline, with its valuation dropping by Rs 31,869.13 crore to Rs 17.70 lakh crore.

State Bank of India suffered the third-largest loss

among the top firms, with its market capitalisation shrinking by Rs 25,891.88 crore to Rs 9.86 lakh crore.

HDFC Bank's valuation fell by Rs 7,165.37 crore to Rs 11.21 lakh crore, while ICICI Bank lost Rs 2,792.65 crore in market value, ending the week with a valuation of Rs 10.18 lakh crore.

Despite the overall weakness, five companies in the top-10 pack managed to add a combined Rs 55,149.45 crore to their market capitalisation. Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) led the gainers, with its market valuation rising by Rs 26,438.49 crore to Rs 5.23 lakh crore. Bharti Airtel also posted strong gains, adding Rs 20,592.13 crore to take its valuation to Rs 12.43 lakh crore.

Bajaj Finance's market capitalisation increased by Rs 3,548.79 crore to Rs 6.77 lakh crore, while Larsen & Toubro added Rs 2,490.66 crore, pushing its valuation to Rs 5.59 lakh crore. Hindustan Unilever's market value rose by Rs 2,079.38 crore to Rs 4.91 lakh crore.

CYBERSECURITY & AI HACKATHON

CYBER KUSHTI to test human judgment in cybersecurity

NEW DELHI

The National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), has launched CYBER KUSHTI 2026, a cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence (AI) hackathon designed to test human judgment in security assessments.

The competition has been introduced as the track of the National Conference on Cyber Security, Digital Forensics and Intelligence (NCCDFI 2026). It is being organised in collaboration with the Information



Sharing and Analysis Center (ISAC Foundation) under the National Security Database, with CERT-In serving as the knowledge partner.

Registration opened on August 15 and will remain open until September 10. Participa-

tion is free, with the competition open to students and independent researchers competing in teams of three.

Unlike conventional cybersecurity contests that focus on vulnerability hunting or Capture The Flag challenges, CYBER KUSHTI 2026 will assess participants on how they evaluate, verify and prioritize security risks. Organisers said the format responds to the need for professionals who can distinguish genuine threats from false positives generated by automated tools.

All teams will receive a Security Assessment Package. It will contain AI-generated find-

ings, source code, application logs, architecture documents, static analysis reports, dependency scans and secrets scans.

The package will intentionally include genuine, false and duplicated findings, while leaving out real vulnerabilities. Teams must identify these shortcomings and produce a prioritized security assessment.

Participants will have to explain and defend their decisions, making analytical reasoning central to the competition. The initiative highlights the importance of human oversight as AI-powered cybersecurity tools become common.

CHALLENGE OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY

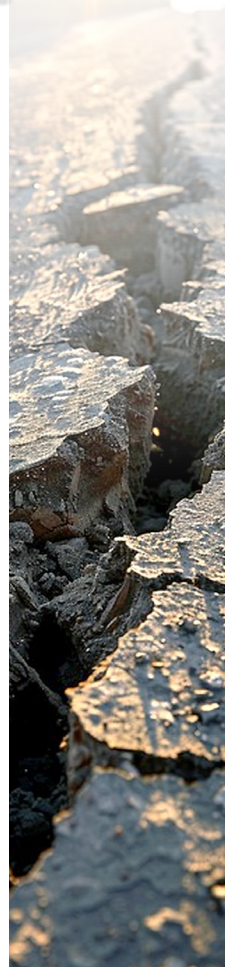
- Registration opened on August 15 and closes on September 10.
- Participation is free of cost.
- Students and independent researchers can participate in teams of three.
- The challenge includes AI-generated, genuine, false and duplicated findings.
- Teams must evaluate, prioritize and defend their cybersecurity decisionst.

Open any news app on a given week and there is a good chance you'll find a headline about an earthquake somewhere; Turkey, Japan, Afghanistan, Indonesia, California, Nepal. Social media timelines fill up with shaky phone-camera footage of buildings swaying and streets cracking. The natural conclusion many people draw is simple: the planet is shaking more than it used to. Climate change, fracking, dam-building, deforestation pick your favourite culprit must be waking up the Earth's fault lines. It's a compelling narrative. It's also, according to the scientists who actually measure this for a living, largely a mirage. The seismological data tell a more nuanced and, frankly, more interesting story. Large earthquakes the kind that cause real destruction have not become more frequent over the last century when you control for how we count them. What has changed dramatically is our ability to detect, locate, and instantly broadcast every tremor happening anywhere on Earth, no matter how small or remote. At the same time, a set of very real human activities and demographic shifts have made earthquakes more consequential, more visible, and in a narrow but important set of cases, more numerous. Untangling the two; perception versus reality is essential if we want to understand what's genuinely changing about our relationship with a shaking planet.



The U.S. Geological Survey, which runs the National Earthquake Information Center and tracks seismicity across the planet, is unambiguous on this point. Their long-running public guidance states plainly that a temporary rise or fall in recorded seismicity is part of the normal statistical noise of earthquake activity, and that neither trend signals an imminent big one. Crucially, USGS notes that its earthquake catalog shows more events in recent years not because the Earth is producing more earthquakes, but because there are simply more seismic instruments capable of detecting and precisely locating them.

Today, the National Earthquake Information Center locates roughly 20,000 earthquakes globally every year around 55 a day. Decades ago, that number would have been a fraction of that, not because the ground was calmer, but because nobody had the instruments to notice. For the earthquakes that actually matter magnitude 7.0 and above, the threshold at which serious damage and casualties typically begin the global average has held remarkably steady at roughly 15 to 20 events a year across the entire span of modern instrumental monitoring. Magnitude 8.0-plus great earthquakes average about one per year, a figure that has not meaningfully shifted since reliable global records began. Geophysicists who study the long-term catalog describe the pattern as normal year-to-year statistical variation around a stable mean, not a trend. This isn't a new question either. Every few years, a cluster of dramatic quakes Nepal in 2015, Turkey and Syria in 2023, a run of Pacific Ring of Fire events reignites the same public anxiety, and every time, the instrumental record shows the same thing: a busy stretch, not a structural shift in how often the Earth ruptures.



If the data are this consistent, why does the feeling of so many earthquakes lately keep coming back? Several converging forces explain it, and none of them require the tectonic plates to be doing anything unusual.

1. The global seismic network has exploded in size. The number of seismograph stations operating worldwide has grown enormously since the mid-20th century. The Global Seismographic Network alone a joint USGS, National Science Foundation, and university-run system now comprises more than 150 broadband stations feeding data in real time, supplemented by roughly 1,800 additional stations across more than 90 countries reporting into USGS systems. Sixty years ago, a magnitude 4.5 earthquake in a remote mountain range or under the ocean floor might never have been recorded with any precision, if at all. Today it's logged, located, and magnitude-classified within minutes. We are not seeing more earthquakes; we are seeing almost all of them for the first time in human history.

2. Instrumentation itself has improved. It isn't just that there are more seismometers; the ones we have are far more sensitive and precise than their predecessors. The moment magnitude scale, which replaced the old Richter scale for large events, does a better job capturing the true energy of major earthquakes, particularly the very large ones the Richter scale historically underestimated. Better instruments plus better math means a more complete and more granular catalog which mechanically produces more counted events even with the same underlying seismic reality.

3. News and social media have collapsed the distance between happened and everyone knows. A century ago, a magnitude 6.5 earthquake in a sparsely populated part of Central Asia might have taken weeks to become known outside the region, if it registered at all beyond a scientific journal entry. Today, phone footage of the same event is on your timeline within the hour, shared, reshared, and amplified by algorithmic feeds that reward the dramatic and the immediate. Geophysicists studying public perception have pointed out that improved monitoring combined with instant news coverage makes earthquake activity feel far more frequent than the underlying data support. The Earth hasn't changed its behaviour; our exposure to every one of its movements has changed completely.

4. Human psychology loves a pattern, even a false one. When several significant earthquakes cluster in a short window as happened, for instance, with Nepal, Chile, and Afghanistan all producing major quakes within a six-month span in 2015 our brains are wired to read that clustering as the start of a trend rather than as the statistically unremarkable coincidence it usually is. This is a well-documented cognitive bias: humans are pattern-seeking creatures, and random processes like earthquake occurrence naturally produce clusters and gaps that look meaningful even when they aren't. Step back to the full, decades-long dataset, and those clusters wash out into noise around a flat average.

5. Longer, more complete historical baselines change the picture retroactively. If you naively plot the number of known earthquakes from 1900 to today, the line climbs sharply — but that's an artefact of recordkeeping, not seismology. For roughly the first half of the twentieth century, small and moderate earthquakes across most of the planet simply went unrecorded because the monitoring network didn't exist yet. Comparing known quakes in 1920 to known quakes in 2026 is comparing two fundamentally different measurement systems, not two different Earths.

It's worth addressing directly, since the theory circulates widely: does climate change cause earthquakes? The honest scientific answer is that there is no established mechanism linking global warming to an increase in tectonic earthquake frequency. Earthquakes are driven by the movement of tectonic plates deep within the Earth's crust and mantle processes operating on geological timescales and driven by heat from the planet's core, entirely decoupled from the atmospheric and oceanic warming driving climate change. Where a connection has been studied seriously, it's around much narrower, indirect effects for instance, the theoretical possibility that rapid loss of ice mass in some glaciated regions could very slightly alter crustal stress through a process called isostatic rebound, or that changing groundwater and reservoir levels could interact with fault stress in already-primed areas. These remain niche, actively debated research areas relevant to specific locations, not evidence of a global climate-earthquake link, and no credible seismological body treats climate change as a driver of the earthquakes making global headlines.

Anatolian fault system, the San Andreas these are not becoming more seismically active than they've been for millennia. But more people than ever now live, work, and build directly on top of them.

That reframes the right questions for journalists, policymakers, and the public to be asking. Instead of why are earthquakes increasing, the more useful and more answerable questions are: Are our building codes adequate for the seismic hazard actually present in our cities? Are early-warning systems reaching the people who need seconds of notice to take cover? Are induced-seismicity risks from specific industrial activities—drilling, injection wells, large dams being properly regulated in the regions where they demonstrably do raise local earthquake rates? And are we investing in the retrofitting of older buildings in high-risk zones before the next major rupture arrives, rather than after?



What This Means for How We Talk About Risk

None of this is an argument for complacency quite the opposite. The fact that global earthquake frequency is stable doesn't make earthquakes less dangerous; it means the danger was always there, baked into the tectonic architecture of specific regions, and what's changing is our exposure to it. The Pacific Ring of Fire, the Himalayan collision zone, the

None of this means every earthquake is increasing claim is pure illusion. There are specific, well-documented, and genuinely human-driven exceptions worth taking seriously.

Induced seismicity is real, local, and measurable. The clearest example comes from the central United States. Between 1973 and 2008, the central and eastern U.S. averaged about 25 earthquakes of magnitude 3.0 or larger per year a low, stable baseline. Starting in 2009, that number jumped sharply: at least 58 such earthquakes occurred annually, and from 2013 onward the region saw at least 100 a year, peaking at over 1,000 in a single year in 2015. USGS scientists attribute this specific, regional spike primarily to wastewater injection linked to oil and gas extraction not to any broader planetary shift, but to a concrete, identifiable human industrial practice al-

The unsettling truth is not that the Earth has become more volatile. It's that we've built a civilization of nearly nine billion people, disproportionately concentrated in seismically hazardous zones, layered on top of a planet that has been shaking at roughly the same rate for as long as we've been able to measure it and now, thanks to a global network of sensitive instruments and an always-on media environment, we finally get to watch every

tering underground stress conditions in a specific geography. Notably, once regulators in states like Oklahoma tightened restrictions on injection wells, the rate of these induced earthquakes declined substantially in subsequent years, which is itself strong evidence that human activity, not deep tectonic change, was driving the spike. Similar induced-seismicity patterns, at smaller scales, have been documented near large reservoir dams (through a phenomenon called reservoir-induced seismicity), around certain mining and geothermal operations, and in a handful of other fracking-intensive regions worldwide. These are genuine cases where human activity measurably increases local earthquake frequency—they're just geographically narrow and mechanistically distinct from global seismicity is rising.

After shock sequences dis-



tort short-term counts. A single major earthquake can trigger hundreds or thousands of aftershocks over the following weeks and months, some large enough to make headlines on their own. A big quake in one region can therefore make the news feel saturated with earthquakes for an extended stretch, even though it's really one seismic event and its statistically expected decay tail, not a wave of unrelated new activity.

phenomena. Seismologists have documented cases where a major rupture on one fault segment measurably increases stress on a neighbouring segment, slightly raising the short-term probability of a subsequent quake nearby. Researchers have also flagged specific regions of concern for example, current research on the Cascadia Subduction Zone in the Pacific Northwest suggests tectonic stress along its southern portion has reached its highest level in roughly a thousand years, feeding legitimate concern about a future megathrust event. These are real, scientifically grounded regional risk signals — but they describe specific fault systems building toward specific future events, not a general global uptick already underway.

Even setting frequency aside, there's a very real reason earthquakes seem more destructive and more newsworthy than in past generations: exposure. The world's population has more than tripled since the mid-twentieth century, and a growing share of that population lives in dense, rapidly built urban centres many of them sitting directly atop active fault zones or in regions of high seismic hazard, from Istanbul to Kathmandu to Jakarta to the seismically active belts of India's own Himalayan foothills and northeastern states.

A magnitude 6.5 earthquake striking a sparsely populated area does comparatively little damage and barely registers globally. The same magnitude striking a dense, poorly regulated urban settlement with inadequate building codes can level thousands of structures and kill tens of thousands of people. As cities grow taller, denser, and more populous in seismically active zones — often with construction standards that lag behind the pace of growth — the human and economic toll of any given earthquake magnitude rises, even if the underlying rate of earthquakes doesn't.

This is a crucial distinction for policymakers: the right response to quakes feel worse isn't necessarily more seismological research into frequency, but stricter enforcement of earthquake-resistant construction codes, better early-warning systems, and smarter urban planning in known hazard zones.

The unsettling truth is not that the Earth has become more volatile. It's that we've built a civilization of nearly nine billion people, disproportionately concentrated in seismically hazardous zones, layered on top of a planet that has been shaking at roughly the same rate for as long as we've been able to measure it and now, thanks to a global network of sensitive instruments and an always-on media environment, we finally get to watch every tremor happen in real time. The Earth isn't sending us more warnings than it used to. We've simply, for the first time in history, built the infrastructure to hear all of them.

Understanding that distinction matters. Panic over a phantom global trend distracts from the far more solvable, far more urgent work of preparing the cities and structures that already sit in harm's way; work that doesn't require the planet to be doing anything new at all.





Karnataka aims to become leading sporting state: DCM

BENGALURU

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister and Sports Minister Dr G Parameshwara said the government is taking several measures to strengthen sports and make the state one of India's leading sporting states.

Speaking at a felicitation programme organised by the Karnataka State Basketball Association at Karnataka Olympic Bhavan, he congratulated junior and youth basketball teams for their achievements in national championships. He said the government has introduced direct recruitment for medal-winning sportspersons and provided reservation in government jobs. While 2% reservation was initially provided in police recruitment, it was later increased to 3%. The government is also working to fill 72,000 vacant posts, with sportspersons eligible for 2% reservation.

Parameshwara said athletes who participated in the Commonwealth Games were given ₹5 lakh each as incentives, while medal winners would receive ₹15 lakh.

The government is focusing on sports infrastructure, including plans for a Sports City on around 60 acres near Devanahalli. A comprehensive plan has also been prepared to upgrade Bengaluru's Kanteerava Stadium at an estimated cost of ₹5,000 crore. The upgraded facility could help Karnataka host national and international competitions. Five acres of land has also been allotted



A comprehensive ₹5,000 crore blueprint has been developed for the modernization of Bengaluru's Kanteerava Stadium.



Stressed that government support must be matched by dedication, discipline and hard work from athletes. Karnataka has also arranged opportunities for sportspersons to undergo advanced training abroad.

- G Parameshwara, DCM

for basketball development.

Parameshwara said Karnataka has performed strongly in basketball and swimming, with the state remaining national swimming champions for 33 years.

He said the government would provide all-round support through training, infrastructure, employment opportunities and financial incentives.

He also praised Karnataka Olympic Association president Dr K. Govindaraju for his sustained efforts to develop basketball and sports infrastructure in the state. The programme was attended by M. N. Anucheth, Commissioner of the Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports, and other officials.



RONIN FC 3 brings global MMA action to Bengaluru

BENGALURU

Bengaluru hosted a major international combat sports event on Independence Day as RONIN FC 3 – The Legacy Awakens brought together 146 athletes from India, Nepal, Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan at Koramangala Indoor Stadium.

Organised by Sinhoi Advisory Services Pvt. Ltd. in association with the All India Mixed Martial Arts Federation, the third edition featured 13 MMA bouts, including six preliminary contests and seven professional fights. A capacity crowd attended the event, highlighting Bengaluru's growing appeal as a destination for international combat sports.

The event also celebrated India's traditional martial arts through a 45-minute Kalaripayattu showcase by Agastham Kalari. The performance was integrated into the main programme and showcased the movement, discipline and cultural heritage of the traditional martial art. Organisers said the presentation was aimed at connecting India's martial traditions with the modern global MMA landscape.

The event's build-up began on August 14 with India's first fight-week face-off at The Quad by BLR at Kempegowda International Airport's Terminal 1. Fighters took part in official weigh-ins and head-to-head sessions ahead of the main card.

The August 15 fight night featured athletes from across India alongside international competitors. Shusmita of Nepal defeated Shalu Sharma, while Ashish Rawat overcame Manoj Ramjali. Dipanjali of Kolkata defeated Kerala's Lija, and Mumbai's Rohit secured victory over Delhi's Pankaj Mehra.

RONIN FC co-founder and promoter Arun Kumar Krishnan said staging the event on Independence Day carried special significance. He said the promotion aimed to give Indian fighters an opportunity to compete alongside international athletes while creating a lasting platform for MMA in India.

The event was broadcast in partnership with Locker Room and reportedly reached more than 5.7 million people. SCAR, Aster Hospitals, CSR Global and The Quad by BLR supported the event as partners.

Messi Misses third penalty as Miami lose to Nashville

NASHVILLE

Lionel Messi missed his third consecutive penalty as Inter Miami suffered a 3-1 defeat against Nashville SC in Major League Soccer, extending their losing run to three matches.

Messi had an early opportunity to put Miami ahead when the visitors were awarded a penalty in the third minute.

However, Nashville goalkeeper Brian Schwake saved his effort. The miss marked the first time Messi has failed to convert penalties in three successive attempts.

Nashville took the lead in the 17th minute through Andy Najar. Miami appeared to have equalised through Telasco Segovia, but the goal was ruled out following a VAR review for encroachment.

Miami eventually found the net, but former MLS MVP Hany Mukhtar turned the game in Nashville's favour with two goals.

Maguire urges Rashford to stay at Manchester United

MANCHESTER

Manchester United defender Harry Maguire has backed Marcus Rashford to remain at Old Trafford, describing the England forward as a major threat and an important asset for the club ahead of the new Premier League season.

Rashford returned to action for United during their 4-2 pre-season defeat against AC Milan in Wroclaw, making his first appearance for the club since December 2024. With the transfer window remaining open until September 1, uncertainty continues over his future at United.



Maguire admitted he does not know what decision Rashford will make but said he and his teammates would welcome his stay. The defender praised Rashford's ability and said his pace and attacking qualities could strengthen United. Rashford impressed after coming on against Milan and created problems for the opposition defence.

"I've played with Marcus for numerous years," Maguire said, adding that training and playing alongside the forward would benefit the team. He believes Rashford can make a significant contribution if he remains at the club.

Maguire also acknowledged that United need to improve their intensity after the defeat to Milan. He said the team wants to play higher up the pitch, press more aggressively and maintain pressure for longer periods. Although United created opportunities through high regains, he felt they failed to sustain their pressure consistently.

Duo relish home advantage at Championships

NEW DELHI

Indian badminton stars Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty are eagerly looking forward to competing at their first BWF World Championships on home soil, with the men's doubles pair hoping to use strong crowd support as an advantage in their campaign.

The World Championships will be held at the Indira Gandhi Arena in New Delhi from August 17 to 23, marking the tournament's return to India after 17 years. Fifth seeds Satwik and Chirag have

received a first-round bye and will face the winners of the opening-round match between Scotland's Alexander Dunn and Adam Pringle and Thailand's Chaloepon Charoenkitamorn and Worrapol Thongsa-Nga. Chirag said playing a World Championship in India was a rare privilege and an opportunity the pair wanted to enjoy fully. He added that the home crowd could provide an extra advantage as they aim to progress as far as possible in the tournament. The duo, among India's strongest medal hopes, said they were not treating the expectations as additional pressure.

Antonsen targets elusive World Championships gold

NEW DELHI

Denmark's Anders Antonsen will begin his BWF World Championships campaign in New Delhi on Monday with the biggest prize still missing from his collection — a world title. The world No. 4 has won three bronze medals and one silver at the championships but remains determined to complete his medal set with gold.

The 28-year-old believes winning the title would be a dream achievement, but he knows the men's singles competition is more open and demanding than ever. Antonsen said the depth of talent means every contender will need to produce their best badminton throughout the tournament.

His confidence has been boosted by his Thailand Open triumph earlier this year. The victory was particularly significant because it was a title he had never won before. Antonsen described the success as the highlight of his season so far and said it provided evidence that his best level remains within reach. The Dane also pointed to the unpredictable nature of the current men's singles



field. Unlike previous years, when one or two players were considered clear favourites, several competitors from different countries now have realistic chances of winning major tournaments. Antonsen believes this growing competitiveness has made the category more exciting for both players and fans.

Antonsen said he does not feel additional pressure because of the expectations surrounding him following Viktor Axelsen's departure from international badminton. He stressed that the only pressure he feels comes from his own ambition and high stan-

dards. The Dane also warned that players cannot afford slow starts at the World Championships. With the quality of the field so high, even the opening rounds require complete focus and intensity. Antonsen said competitors must be ready from their first match rather than treating the early stages as preparation.

With his Thailand Open success providing confidence and four previous World Championships medals already secured, Antonsen will now attempt to take the final step and claim the gold that has so far eluded him.

Tirante stuns Djokovic in Cincinnati open shock

CINCINNATI

Argentina's Thiago Agustin Tirante produced the biggest upset of his career by defeating Novak Djokovic in the second round of the Cincinnati Open. The world No. 50 recovered from losing the opening set to beat the fifth-ranked Serbian 4-6, 6-4, 6-4.

Djokovic started strongly and controlled the opening set, winning it 6-2. However, the 39-year-old struggled physically as the match progressed in hot and humid conditions. He required medical attention during the second set and appeared increasingly affected by the difficult weather.

Tirante took advantage of Djokovic's difficulties and remained composed during the crucial stages.

The Argentine secured a decisive break at 4-4 in the third set before serving out the match to complete a memorable victory. The contest lasted two hours and 44 minutes.

The result marked Tirante's biggest victory of his career and sent him into the

third round, where he will face Spain's Martin Landaluce. Landaluce defeated Italy's Matteo Arnaldi in three sets to advance.

For Djokovic, the defeat came in his first competitive appearance since his Wimbledon semifinal loss. The three-time Cincinnati champion had been hoping to build momentum ahead of the US Open, where he will seek a record-extending 25th Grand Slam singles title.

The early exit also marked an unusual setback for Djokovic at Cincinnati, where he has enjoyed considerable success over the years. Tirante's victory, meanwhile, represents a major breakthrough and could provide significant confidence as he continues his campaign in the Masters 1000 event.



Dhull, Joon fifties power Central Delhi Kings win

NEW DELHI

Yash Dhull and Siddharth Joon struck impressive half-centuries as Central Delhi Kings registered a dominant victory over North Delhi Strikers in the Delhi Premier League on Sunday.

Dhull anchored the Central Delhi innings with a composed batting display, while Joon provided strong support with an attacking fifty. Their partnership helped the Kings build a commanding total and put North Delhi under considerable pressure.

Central Delhi's batters maintained control throughout their innings, finding boundaries regularly and ensuring the team finished strongly. Dhull displayed patience and timing, while Joon accelerated the scoring rate with aggressive strokes.

Chasing the challenging target, North Delhi Strikers struggled to maintain momentum against Central Delhi's disciplined bowling attack. The Strikers lost wickets at regular inter-



vals and failed to establish the partnerships required to stay in contention. The Central Delhi bowlers complemented the efforts of their top-order batters with an effective performance. Their disciplined line and length restricted North Delhi's scoring opportunities and ensured the Kings remained firmly in control. The victory underlined Central Delhi Kings' strength with both bat and ball. Dhull's innings provided the foundation, while Joon's contribution added further impetus and helped the side post a formidable total. For North Delhi Strikers, the defeat highlighted shortcomings in both their batting and their ability to respond under pressure. Despite attempts to rebuild the innings, they were unable to match the intensity of the Central Delhi performance.

Smith admits Australia were outplayed

DARWIN

Australia batter Steve Smith admitted his team was comprehensively outplayed by Bangladesh after suffering a historic nine-wicket defeat in the opening Test at Marrara Oval on Sunday.

Bangladesh bowled Australia out for 198 in the first innings before scoring 426. Australia fought back in the second innings, with Cameron Green hitting a determined 104, but were dismissed for 284. Bangladesh needed only 57 runs for victory and completed the chase in 14.2 overs. Mominul Haque remained unbeaten on 30, while Shadman Islam finished not out on 25. The win was Bangladesh's first Test victory on Australian soil.

Smith said Bangladesh bowled with discipline from the opening morning, while Australia's batters failed to maintain the same standards.

He also rued the lack of partnerships, saying several Australian batters got starts but could not convert them into substantial scores. Green's century provided resistance, but he

Smith also regretted missing partnerships, noting that multiple Australian batters wasted promising starts instead of scoring big.

received little support from the other end.

Bangladesh's Mehidy Hasan Miraz was instrumental in Australia's collapse, claiming 5-52 in the second innings. Hasan Mahmud also impressed, finishing with match figures of 9-111.

Smith said Australia needed a lead of at least 200 runs to remain

competitive and acknowledged that his side failed to build the advantage required on a good batting surface. The defeat was only Australia's second Test loss to Bangladesh, following their defeat in Dhaka in 2017. Bangladesh now lead the two-match series 1-0 and cannot lose the series.

Smith, however, backed Australia to recover, describing the defeat as a temporary setback. He praised Bangladesh for their performance across all four days and said Australia would need to improve significantly in the second Test at Great Barrier Reef Arena in Mackay next week.

Key Performers

■ Match Result: Bangladesh defeated Australia by 10 wickets to secure their first-ever Test victory on Australian soil.

■ Series Status: Bangladesh leads the two-match series 1-0 and cannot lose the series.

■ Hasan Mahmud: Finished with match figures of 9-111.

■ Mehidy Hasan Miraz: Claimed 5-52 in Australia's second innings.

■ Cameron Green: Scored a determined 104 for Australia.

First Innings	Australia:198	Bangladesh: 426
Second Innings	Australia: 284 (Cameron Green scored 104)	Mehidy Hasan Miraz took 5-52), Bangladesh: 57/0 in 14.2 overs (Mominul Haque 30*, Shadman Islam 25*)

Stones targets Champions League glory with Inter

MILAN

John Stones has outlined his Champions League ambitions with Inter Milan after making an impressive impact on his club debut by scoring the winning goal.

The England defender marked his first appearance for the Italian side in memorable fashion, finding the net to help Inter secure victory. Stones said the successful debut had given him confidence as he begins a new chapter of his career in Serie A.

The former Manchester City defender is now setting his sights on European success with Inter. He believes the club has the quality and ambition to compete at the highest level and is eager to contribute to a strong Champions League campaign.

His immediate focus, however, remains on settling into his new surroundings and building a strong understanding with his teammates. Stones' move to Inter represents a significant new challenge after spend-



ing several years competing at the top of English football.

His experience in domestic and European competitions is expected to provide valuable depth to Inter's defence as the club prepares for another demanding season.

Scoring the winner on his debut has given Stones an ideal start, but the defender knows that maintaining consistency will be crucial. He will now look to establish himself as an important member of the Inter squad while helping the club compete for major honours.

The Champions League remains one of the biggest targets for Stones and Inter this season.

Mary Kom to Glasgow, women boxers rise



NEW DELHI

India's women boxers have emerged as a powerful force in international boxing, with their recent success at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games highlighting the steady growth of the sport. The journey from Mary Kom's trailblazing achievements to the latest generation of champions reflects improved training, stronger grassroots programmes and greater opportunities for women athletes.

Mary Kom played a defining role in changing perceptions about women's boxing in India. Her Olympic bronze, world titles and sustained success inspired a generation of young boxers to take up the sport. Her achievements helped demonstrate that Indian women could compete successfully at the highest level

and encouraged greater investment in women's boxing.

The progress has continued with better access to elite coaching, sports science, nutrition and international exposure. Grassroots programmes have also helped identify promising talent from different parts of the country. Young boxers are increasingly receiving structured training at an early stage, allowing them to develop their skills and compete against stronger international opponents. At the Glasgow Commonwealth Games, Indian women boxers once again demonstrated their growing strength by producing impressive performances and contributing to the country's medal tally. Their success reflects years of preparation and the increasing depth within India's women's boxing programme.

Japan completes surfing sweep with four titles

CHENNAI

Japan continued its dominance at the World Surf League Shore Temple Classic QS 2000 and Pro Junior events, sweeping all four titles at Mamallapuram beach.

After cloudy conditions initially greeted competitors, the contest intensified as surfers battled challenging waves and strong competition. Japanese athletes produced impressive performances across the categories, underlining the country's growing strength in international surfing.

Ikeda emerged victorious in the Open women's category, leading Japan's successful campaign at the event. The Japanese contingent maintained its control across the remaining categories, completing a clean sweep of the top honours. The performances reflected the consistency and technical ability of Japan's surfers, who adapted well to the conditions at Mamallapuram. Their success also highlighted the depth of talent available within the country's surfing programme. The Shore Temple Classic brought together surfers competing in both the QS 2000 and Pro Junior events, providing valuable opportunities for emerging athletes to gain international experience. With the competition intensifying through the rounds, the Japanese surfers remained composed and effective when it mattered most. Japan's four-title sweep was the standout feature of the event and further strengthened its reputation in competitive surfing. The performances at Mamallapuram also provided an important boost to the country's young surfers as they continue to develop on the international circuit.



Sindhu carries Japan open confidence into Worlds

NEW DELHI

PV Sindhu will begin her campaign at the BWF World Championships 2026 in New Delhi on Monday, carrying the confidence of her recent Japan Open triumph and the motivation of competing before a home crowd. The former world champion is aiming to win another World Championships medal after a seven-year gap.

Sindhu, who won the world title in 2019, has five World Championships medals, including gold, two silver and two bronze. She said her Japan Open victory had given her a major confidence boost ahead of the prestigious tournament. Playing in India has also added excitement as she hopes to benefit from strong support from the home crowd.

The Indian star stressed the importance of taking the tournament one match at a time rather than thinking too far ahead. She said her recent performances have helped her regain confidence and that she hopes to maintain the same momentum



Hosting the World Championships in India makes the occasion particularly memorable. With the home crowd expected to provide strong support, she will look to make the most of the opportunity and challenge the world's leading players.

- PV Sindhu, Badminton world champion

Playing in India is extra exciting for her, as she hopes to feed off the energetic home crowd.

throughout the competition. Sindhu also expressed her desire to win a medal on home soil.

Reflecting on her journey, Sindhu recalled watching the World Championships in India as a young girl. She said she once attended matches from morning to evening, watching some of the world's leading players without fully understanding the significance of the event. Nearly 17 years later, she is returning as one of India's most successful badminton players.

Sindhu said The 2019 champion hopes her Japan Open success can translate into another deep run and potentially a medal at the Indira Gandhi Stadium.

Diamondbacks starters stifle Braves before finale

ATLANTA

The Arizona Diamondbacks will look to complete a three-game sweep of the Atlanta Braves on Sunday, with their starting pitchers having dominated the series so far. Arizona won the opener 2-0 cruising to a 10-3 victory.

Diamondbacks starters have

combined for 13 innings in the series, allowing just two runs and no walks while striking out 12 batters. Michael Soroka will take the mound for Arizona in the finale, facing Atlanta right-hander Bryce Elder.

Soroka, who has an 8-3 record and a 2.92 ERA, recently returned from the injured list after missing nearly two months

with a glute strain. He pitched 4 1/3 scoreless innings against Colorado in his comeback, allowing three hits and striking out four. The right-hander also has a strong record against his former team. He defeated Atlanta 2-1 on April 4 after allowing one run in five innings. In two career starts against the Braves, Soroka is 1-0 with a 3.00 ERA.

Amit Bhatia-Led consortium buys Liverpool minority stake

LIVERPOOL

Liverpool Football Club has entered into a definitive agreement to sell a minority equity stake to a consortium led and managed by British-Indian businessman Amit Bhatia, marking a significant investment in one of England's most prominent football clubs.

Bhatia, 46, is the son-in-law of Indian steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal and leads 1892 Holdings, an investment group involved in sports and other sectors. The consortium includes K5 Sports, K5 Global Fund, where Amazon founder Jeff Bezos is the lead investor, and EE Capital, the family office of Elaine and Facebook co-founder Eduardo Saverin.

The investment will see Bhatia and his partners acquire a minority interest in Liverpool while working alongside Fenway Sports Group (FSG), the club's existing ownership group. The agreement does not involve a change in control of Liverpool, with FSG continuing to oversee the club.



Bhatia expressed pride in the investment and said the consortium was pleased to partner with FSG. He highlighted Liverpool's global stature and the opportunity to contribute to the club's future while respecting its established identity and traditions.

The agreement brings together investors with experience across sports, technology, finance and global business.

Bhatia has previously been involved in sports investments and is expected to play a role in the consortium's involvement with

Liverpool. Liverpool remains one of the most successful and globally recognised clubs in English football, with a large international following and a strong commercial presence. The arrival of new minority investors is expected to strengthen the club's broader investment base while allowing FSG to retain control.

The deal also highlights the growing involvement of international investors in English football, with prominent business figures increasingly seeking opportunities in the Premier League.

India must be proactive against spin: Mathews

COLOMBO

Former Sri Lanka captain Angelo Mathews has advised India to adopt a proactive approach against spin as Shubman Gill's side prepares for a challenging assignment in Sri Lanka. Mathews believes India will face a strong spinning attack and must be prepared to counter it effectively.

India recently fine-tuned its skills against spin during a three-day warm-up match against Sri Lanka Cricket XI. However, Mathews feels the senior Sri Lankan team presents a significantly tougher challenge, with experienced and dangerous spinners capable of putting pressure on In-

dia's batting lineup. According to Mathews, Indian batters should avoid becoming overly defensive and instead look for scoring opportunities from the beginning. Rotating the strike, using the crease effectively and maintaining positive intent could help India prevent Sri Lanka's spinners from settling into a rhythm.

India's preparations have included considerable focus on playing spin, particularly in conditions where the ball can grip and turn. The visitors

are expected to rely on their experienced batters to handle the challenge while adapting quickly to the conditions. The upcoming matches will test India's ability to maintain control against Sri Lanka's spin options. While India has several technically accomplished batters, negotiating a quality spin attack in helpful conditions could prove crucial to the outcome of the series. Mathews' comments underline the importance of preparation and adaptability for India.

With Sri Lanka expected to use spin as a major weapon, India will need patience, positive intent and smart shot selection to stay ahead.

