

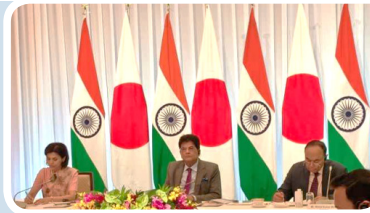


No diplomatic deal possible with Iran 'savages': Netanyahu

P11

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'India-Japan trade could reach \$50 bn by 2030'



P12

Lyon's Australia Spot Faces Fresh Pressure



Himalayan tsunami hits Nepal

**112 killed
760 missing**

Over 400 Kailash Mansarovar pilgrims and travellers have lost contact after raging waters tore through Nepal's Rasuwa dist

India joins rescue operations, dispatches 10 tonnes of aid, IAF deploys two aircraft with relief material.

Six Bihar districts are preparing for a possible rise in the Gandak river, a major transboundary Himalayan river flowing through Tibet, Nepal, and India.

Nepal thanks India for medical aid amid flood fury.

133 Indian tourists, 37 NRIs among missing

KATHMANDU

A flash flood that ripped through Nepal's northern Rasuwa district has rapidly become a cross-border emergency, leaving at least 100 people dead, cutting off over 400 pilgrims and travellers, and triggering a flood alert hundreds of kilometres downstream in Bihar.

The flooding washed away vehicles, goods, bridges and other infrastructure, while several hydropower projects were also damaged.

37 NRIs missing

As per the preliminary list compiled by the Nepal Tourism Board, 403 travellers, including 291 foreign nationals and 93 Nepali nationals, have been reported missing or unreachable.

The foreign nationals include 133 Indians and 37 NRIs. They were reportedly heading towards the Rasuwagadhi border checkpoint for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra when the Bhote Koshi River surged through the Nepal-China frontier region around 9 am. The list also includes travellers from the US, Malaysia, the UK, South Africa, Australia and the Netherlands, while the nationalities of some others are yet to be confirmed.

According to reports, over 300 people had been rescued by Wednesday afternoon. Officials have stressed that "reportedly missing" does not necessarily



Nepal PM urges nation to 'stand together'

Nepal's Prime Minister Balendra Shah urged the Himalayan nation to stand united after devastating flood on Wednesday killed at least 95 people. "Please be patient. The government takes full responsibility for your rescue, treatment, food and shelter. In times of such a disaster, we all need to stand together," Shah said in a statement, posted on social media. "I stand before you today with a heavy heart. The sudden and devastating flood in Rasuwa's Bhote Koshi River has left the entire nation shocked and grieving," Shah said.

ily mean the travellers have been swept away or harmed.

Kailash Mansarovar pilgrims missing

A large number of those out of contact are believed to be pilgrims travelling to Tibet for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.

Bashu Kumar Adhikari, managing director of Kathmandu-based Touch Kailash Travels & Tours, said 390 pilgrims,

including 93 Nepalis, were scheduled to cross the border on Wednesday. "Except for a few, we have not been able to establish contact with the pilgrims as of 3 pm," Adhikari said, as per local media.

Sagar Pandey, president of the Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal, said efforts were underway to contact the pilgrims and assess their condition.

Rescue ops under way

The death toll from the catastrophic flash floods along Nepal's Bhote Koshi and Trishuli river corridors has risen to 95, according to official updates.

The flooding, which originated in the Rasuwa border area and surged downstream, has affected several districts, including Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading and Chitwan.

Police said 93 people have also been injured. Four bodies were recovered from Bidur Municipality in Nuwakot and found near the Trishuli river, police said.

The Nepal Army, Armed Police Force and Nepal Police have been deployed for search-and-rescue operations. Fourteen helicopters, along with drones and sniffer dogs, are being used to locate missing people and assist those stranded in affected areas.

Bihar, UP on high alert

Patna: With the floodwaters moving through Nepal's river system and the possibility of increased discharge into the Gandak River, Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary has ordered vulnerable districts to inspect embankments, intensify night patrols and prepare rescue teams. The crisis has also placed Bihar on guard. The Indian government has issued an advisory after a sudden rise in the water level of Nepal's Trishuli river at Furke Khola, around 160 km from the Indian border, was reported amid suspected glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) activity near the Nepal-China border. The advisory said the flood wave is expected to move downstream into the Gandak river, with its intensity likely to reduce as it travels. Authorities in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh along the India-Nepal border have been asked to remain alert and closely monitor the situation. Authorities have also been advised to take necessary precautionary measures along the Gandak river. The gates of the Gandak barrage should be operated in a manner that allows the anticipated floodwater to pass through safely.

PM Modi expresses solidarity with Nepal

As Nepal deployed helicopters and security forces for rescue operations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to his Nepalese counterpart Balendra Shah, offered condolences over the loss of lives and said India was ready to provide all possible humanitarian assistance. "Spoke to Prime Minister Balendra Shah and conveyed condolences on the loss of lives due to the floods in Nepal. The people of India stand in solidarity with their sisters and brothers in Nepal at this difficult time," PM Modi posted on X. "Our teams are coordinating closely on rescue and relief efforts," he added.

India rushes relief aid to flood-hit Nepal

India is sending relief material to flood-hit Nepal on Indian Air Force aircraft after massive flash floods swept through several northern districts of the neighbouring country on Wednesday, officials said. The emergency consignment will include medicines, rations and other essential supplies as part of the government's Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) efforts. The government is also preparing to deploy National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel to Nepal to assist with search-and-rescue and relief operations in the affected areas, officials said.

Embassy coordinating with Nepal

The Indian Embassy in Kathmandu is closely coordinating with the Nepal government for the rescue and relief of Indian nationals affected by the flash floods in the Himalayan country, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Wednesday. It also issued emergency numbers for assistance and information related to Indian nationals that have been affected by the flash floods. In an X post, it said people can contact **+977 985 131 6807** or **+977 970 910 7500**.

The Nepal Tourism Board has issued a toll free emergency number **1234** or hotline **1144** or tourist police **9851289445** for help.



The first batch of nine Dasara elephants arrived in Mysuru on Wednesday evening following the traditional Gajapayana ceremony at Veerana Hosahalli of Hunsur taluk. The jumbos will be formally welcomed into the Mysore Palace on Friday.

➤ | HAMPA NAGARAJU

Woman, 5 kids found dead in lake

VIJAYAPURA

The bodies of a middle-aged woman and her five minor children were reportedly found floating in the waters of the historic Bhootanala Lake on the outskirts of the city on Wednesday morning.

The deceased are Shobha Jalageri (45) and her children Vidya (16), Suvarna (14), Goudesh also called Mooga (10), Sanika (7) and Vikasa (5).

Shobha, who was the wife of Malakari Bheemaraya Jalageri, resident of Toravi vil-

lage in the taluk, and their children were reported to be missing since Monday, August 24. Shobha is suspected to have committed suicide by jumping into the Bhootanala Lake after a family fight.

The locals walking near the 322-acre lake on Wednesday morning noticed the bodies of the six people floating on the waters and, finding the matter to be suspicious, informed the police. The fire brigade staff members who arrived at the spot got the bodies out of the waters.

Got time off in B'luru? You can be a 'traffic cop' for a day

BENGALURU: The Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) has brought back its "Cop for the Day" initiative, allowing volunteers to act as citizen traffic cops for a day and get on-ground exposure to real traffic management during peak hours. The Bengaluru Traffic Police shared info on X, asking residents to gain firsthand experience of the challenges faced by traffic personnel, share their experiences, and offer suggestions for safer and

'Woman minister soon'

On women's representation in the Cabinet, he said, "We will have (woman minister). Definitely we'll have. The Congress is committed to the ideology (of woman's empowerment)." "There was a name which was being cleared. 'I think in the next couple of days a woman minister will be inducted.'"

ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

Goal: Residents experience peak-hour traffic challenges firsthand and share feedback.
Process: Selected applicants receive one hour of guidance from officers, followed by three hours managing traffic at a chosen junction.
Support: Promoted by leaders like Priyank Karge to build community-police collaboration.

smoother roads. Citizens can register via **BTP AStraM** app and become a cop for the day.

QUICK READ

6 dead after car falls in ditch in J&K's Poonch

Jammu
Six people including two women were killed and three others injured when a vehicle veered off the road and fell into a ditch in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, officials said. The accident took place in Sheldhar area of Surankote and condition of one of the injured, a child, was stated to be critical, they said. "An unfortunate accident occurred this evening, resulting in on-the-spot death of six persons and injuries to three others," Poonch DC Ashok Kumar Sharma said.

Cockroach, gutka: FSSAI notice to Marriott

New Delhi
The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued notices to two five-star hotels in New Delhi, JW Marriott, and Andaz, at Aerocity, following raids that uncovered severe food safety lapses and hygiene violations on Wednesday. In yet another safety crackdown, the food safety regulator in a post on X said: "FSSAI has issued notices to Juniper Hotels Pvt Ltd (Andaz, Aerocity, Delhi) and JW Marriott, Delhi following inspections.

LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh has rolled out a new welfare scheme offering free bus travel to elderly women across the state, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced on Wednesday, August 26.

The scheme, named 'Lokmata Ahilyabai Matrushakti Yatra', was formally launched by Adityanath at the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan in Lucknow, where he flagged off a fleet of special buses earmarked for the initiative and met several women who will benefit from it, an official statement said. Speaking at the launch, the

chief minister used the occasion to spotlight the state's broader women's safety infrastructure. He pointed to the network of Mission Shakti centres now operating across UP, along with AI-powered Safe City surveillance systems in every city and an integrated emergency response mechanism built around the 1090 and 112 helplines.

Adityanath struck a stern note on crimes against women, warning that anyone found violating a woman's safety, whether within the home or outside it, would face severe consequences. "If anyone breaches the



safety of a daughter, whether inside the house or outside, then consider it final that the person will have either jail or hell waiting for him," he said.

He also flagged the deployment of women beat officers across the state as a first-of-its-kind measure, claiming it may be the first such initiative anywhere in

Budget provision for scheme

A provision of Rs 100 crore has been made in the First Supplementary Budget for 2026-27 to compensate UPSRTC for implementing the initiative. The reimbursement will ensure that the transport corporation is compensated for the free travel provided to eligible passengers.

What passengers should know

Eligible women are likely to be required to produce a valid government-issued age proof or identity document while travelling. The state government is expected to release detailed guidelines on eligibility, verification, applicable bus services and the implementation timeline.

the country. "This has happened for the first time in

Uttar Pradesh, and perhaps in the country," he said.

Quick Read

Madabal agriculture society election on September 9

CH NEWS, Magadi
The election for the Board of Directors of the Madabal Vividhoddeshna Prathamika Krishi Grameena Sahakara Sangha will be held on September 9, the election officer K.T. Umesh has announced. Voting will take place at the society premises from 10 am to 3 pm. The election will decide the directors for the society's next five-year administrative term. Candidates can submit their nominations on September 1 from 11 am to 3 pm. The nomination papers will be scrutinised on September 2 from 12.30 pm. Voting will be held on September 9 from 10 am to 3 pm. Counting of votes and declaration of results will be conducted after polling, according to the election schedule.

Two youths fight at bus stand in Channapatna

CH NEWS, Channapatna
Two youths allegedly engaged in a physical fight in front of passengers at a bus stand in Channapatna, creating panic among people present at the spot. According to reports, the incident occurred when the two youths, allegedly under the influence of alcohol, got into an argument. The quarrel soon escalated into a fight, with both reportedly assaulting each other in full view of passengers. The incident caused concern among commuters at the bus stand. Passengers reportedly watched as the youths continued fighting before the situation was brought under control. Further details regarding the reason for the dispute and any police action were not immediately available.

Paramedical student dies by suicide in Hassan

CH NEWS, Hassan
A 21-year-old paramedical student allegedly died by suicide after leaving behind a death note in Hassan. The incident has shocked the student's family and acquaintances. According to preliminary information, the student was pursuing a paramedical course in Hassan. Police have initiated an investigation and are examining the circumstances surrounding the death. The contents of the death note are also being verified as part of the investigation. Further details regarding the incident and the reason behind the extreme step have not yet been disclosed. Police are continuing their inquiry and gathering information from the student's family and other concerned persons.

RESIDENTS FEAR RADIATION

Karwar residents oppose Kadra water supply

CH NEWS, Karwar
A proposal to supply drinking water from the Kadra reservoir to residents of Karwar under the Jal Jeevan Mission has triggered opposition, with local groups raising concerns about the safety of the water. The Kadra reservoir water is used by the Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant for reactor cooling. Residents and organisations, including Sanatana Swarajya Sangha, have alleged that water used by the plant eventually flows back into the Kadra reservoir. They fear that supplying the water for drinking could pose a ra-

KRS dam inflow rises sharply to 9,438 cusecs

The increase brought relief amid expectations of continued rainfall in the catchment areas

CH NEWS, Mandya
The inflow into the Krishnaraja Sagar (KRS) reservoir in Mandya district has increased significantly following good rainfall in the Cauvery basin over the past two days, raising hopes of further improvement in the reservoir's storage. The KRS reservoir, located in Srirangapatna taluk, recorded an inflow of 9,438 cusecs on Wednesday. The increase has brought relief amid expectations of continued rainfall in the Cauvery catchment areas. The reservoir has a maximum storage level of 124.80 feet and currently holds water up to 108.63 feet. Its storage stands at 30.367 TMC, while the outflow from the dam is currently 4,478 cusecs. Officials and residents are closely watching the water



levels as rainfall continues in the catchment areas. If the inflow remains high in the coming days, the reservoir could witness a substantial rise in its storage. The improved inflow is also expected to benefit farmers and communities dependent on the Cauvery river system. Increased water availability could support irrigation requirements and improve prospects for water supply in the region. The rise in KRS inflow has

KRS water levels rising

- Current Status: KRS reservoir water level stands at 108.63 feet against a maximum of 124.80 feet.
- Storage and Outflow: Current storage is 30.367 TMC with an outflow of 4,478 cusecs.
- Agricultural Boost: Continuous catchment rainfall and improved inflows benefit regional irrigation and water supply.
- Basin Management: Rising levels offer better flexibility for Cauvery water-sharing between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

level in the coming days, providing significant relief to the region.

Crop insurance registration deadline extended to August 31

CH NEWS, Magadi
The deadline for farmers to enrol under the Karnataka Crop Insurance Scheme linked to the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana for the 2026-27 kharif season has been extended to August 31, Agriculture Department Director Vijayasavanur has said. The earlier deadline for crop insurance registration was August 14. However, delayed sowing in Bengaluru Rural district due to inadequate rainfall prompted the Karnataka government to request an extension. Following the request, the Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department extended the registration deadline to August 31. The extension applies to paddy, maize and horse gram grown under irrigation or rain-fed conditions, as applicable. The Agriculture Department has urged eligible farmers to make use of the extended deadline and complete their crop insurance registration without delay.

Housing officials accused of using goons to evict poor families

CH NEWS, Devanahalli
Tension prevailed at Mudnanahalli village in Yelahanka taluk on Wednesday after officials of the Rajiv Gandhi Housing Corporation and contractors allegedly attempted to remove houses belonging to poor families who have reportedly been living on government land for several years. According to residents, officials arrived with a JCB to demolish houses in Survey No. 1, where several families have been residing for decades. The residents strongly opposed the eviction, claiming that they had applied for 94C rights over the land and had been living there for a long time. The disputed Survey No. 1 reportedly covers 29 acres, of which around 13.5 acres has been allotted to the Rajiv Gandhi Housing Corporation for a housing project. Officials and contractors are reportedly planning to construct G+3 residential buildings on the allotted land. Residents alleged that instead of arriving with police personnel after issuing proper notices, officials brought local troublemakers to force families to vacate their houses. They further alleged that poor and Dalit families were being selectively targeted while several other houses existed on the government land. The situation became tense when some residents threatened to harm themselves if their houses were demolished. They reportedly held bottles containing diesel and poison while protesting the proposed eviction. Following strong opposition from residents, officials temporarily stopped the demolition exercise. Rajiv Gandhi Housing Corporation official Hanuman Reddy denied the allegation that the officials had brought goons. He said the land had been officially allotted to the corporation and that it was their responsibility to protect it. Responding to the allegation about the presence of local troublemakers, Reddy said those accompanying the officials were workers and not rowdies. He also said residents could approach the

Protest halts demolition for housing project

Residents halted a demolition drive for a Rajiv Gandhi Housing Corporation project on Survey No. 1, alleging selective targeting of poor families and intimidation. Officials suspended the operation after protesters threatened self-harm, though housing authorities defended their legal right to the land.

tahsildar regarding their claims over the land. The residents have urged the government and taluk administration to intervene, verify their claims and ensure that no family is forcibly evicted without following due procedure. They have also sought a permanent solution to the dispute and protection for families who have lived in the area for years.

Rigveda Upakarma Ceremony



Devotees participate in the collective Rigveda Upakarma ceremony held at the Ayyappa Swamy Temple in Mandya.

Brahma Kumaris tie Rakhi, share sweets with officials

CH NEWS, Chikkaballapur
Sisters from Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya tied rakhis to district officials and shared sweets as part of Raksha Bandhan celebrations. The Brahma Kumaris sisters organise the programme every year by visiting various government offices across the district and tying rakhis to officials. The initiative conveys the message of love, brotherhood and mutual respect. Raksha Bandhan is considered a festival that strengthens the bond between brothers and sisters.

Chamarajanagar SP warns action over fake news

CH NEWS, Chamarajanagar
Chamarajanagar district police have adopted a strict approach towards fake news and provocative posts circulating on social media, Superintendent of Police Mutturaj said on Wednesday. Speaking in Hanur about the August 15 shooting incident reported in the Holemuradatti and Karikallu Gudda areas of the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, Mutturaj said several claims and heated discussions related to the incident were being circulated online. He said the police were continuously monitoring social media platforms and would take legal action against those spreading false information or making provocative statements. The SP said police had taken note of discussions taking place in groups, including a WhatsApp group reportedly named "Tiger of Justice". Authorities are also aware of audio messages circulating in some groups alleging that the Karnataka government was ignoring Tamil people. Mutturaj warned that messages deliberately intended to create hatred between communities or disturb law and order would be treated seriously. Police would verify such content and initiate ac-

SP discussed the August 15 shooting incident within the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary

tion against those responsible, he said. Meanwhile, a special team has been formed to trace Govinda alias Govindaraju, who is reportedly an accused in a case and has been absconding since the case was registered. Police have intensified efforts to locate and arrest him, after which further action will be taken, the SP said. The shooting incident has already been handed over to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for investigation in four cases following an order from Director General of Police M.A. Saleem. Mutturaj said investigators handling the cases would hand over all documents and information collected so far to CID officials. The police appealed to people not to believe or circulate unverified information on social media. Authorities said maintaining peace and preventing communal tension remained a priority and warned that deliberate attempts to spread misinformation or provoke hostility would invite legal action.

MLA gifts cows, ₹50,000 aid to 106 couples

CH NEWS, Chikkaballapura
Mass marriages usually involve gifts such as clothes, jewellery and household items for newlyweds. However, a mass wedding held in Bagepalli in Chikkaballapura district stood out for its unique gifts, with 106 newly married couples receiving a cow each. The 23rd annual mass marriage programme was organised by the S.N. Charitable Trust near the Gadidam Lakshmi Venkataramanaswamy Temple in Bagepalli taluk. A total of 106 couples entered married life through the ceremony. Bagepalli MLA S.N. Subbareddy gifted a cow to each newlywed couple. The initiative was aimed at helping the newly married couples become financially independent. The organisers said the cows could provide an additional source of income through dairy farming and help families strengthen their livelihoods. Along with the cows, the MLA also announced financial assistance of ₹50,000 for each couple. As part of the programme, the Sri Lakshmi Venkateshwara Kalyanotsava was also organised by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams. A large number of people attended the religious programmes and blessed the newly married couples.

Officials revive Gadag school after student exodus

Malingaraya Pujar, CH NEWS
Education officials and teachers have revived a government higher primary school in Kenchalapur block of Lakshmeshwar town after declining enrolment forced it to remain locked for several days. The 33-year-old school had witnessed a sharp fall in student numbers, raising fears among residents that it could eventually shut down. Officials stepped in after locals raised concerns over its closure. The school had 26 students last year, but enrolment dropped to just 11 this year. Four students obtained trans-



fer certificates in June, while seven more left in July and joined other schools. The present class-wise strength was particularly worrying, with no students in Classes 1 and 2. Class 3 had three students, Class 4 had one, Class 5 had three, Class 6 had three and Class 7 had one. Local residents and community leaders said the school

was important for children from poor families and daily-wage households. They blamed inadequate facilities and teacher shortages for pushing parents towards private schools. They urged the Education Department to take immediate steps to protect the institution and prevent permanent closure. Responding to the concerns, the Block Education Officer, principal and teachers visited homes across Kenchalapur. During the door-to-door campaign, they explained the benefits available in government schools, including free textbooks, uniforms, midday meals and education.

Technology gets tribal languages speaking again

CH NEWS, Mysuru
A three-day National Conclave on Tribal Languages and Museums was held in Mysuru from August 24 to 26, focusing on documenting, preserving and reviving endangered tribal languages through technology and community participation. Organised by the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the conclave brought together experts and representatives to discuss ways to strengthen tribal museums and museums dedicated to tribal freedom

fighters. The programme also highlighted the importance of preserving traditional knowledge and ensuring inclusive development. Several digital initiatives were unveiled during the event. Tribal language primers prepared for Karnataka were released, while the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysuru, signed a memorandum of understanding. A chatbot was also introduced to provide information on tribal languages.



Wild animal menace: MLA seeks fencing, quick compensation

WILD ANIMAL MOVEMENT, INCLUDING BOARS, DEER, BLACKBUCK, AND MONKEYS, HAS RECENTLY INCREASED IN THESE AREAS

CH NEWS, BIDAR

Bidar South MLA Dr Shailendra Beldale has urged Forest Minister Ramalinga Reddy to take immediate steps to control the increasing movement of wild animals in villages across the constituency and ensure speedy compensation for farmers whose crops and livestock have been damaged.

The MLA submitted a memorandum to the Forest Minister during his visit to Bidar. He said several stretches of the Amalapur-Mannalli road and the road from the entrance of Bellur village towards Kamthana pass through dense forest areas. The movement of wild boars, deer, blackbuck, monkeys and other wild animals has increased in these areas in recent days.

Beldale said the Forest Department to construct strong and suitable wire fencing on both sides of forest stretches along the Amalapur-Mannalli and Bellur-Kamthana roads.

The MLA also asked forest officials to conduct field in-



spections and identify locations where animal movement is frequent. Regular patrolling, warning systems and other preventive measures should be introduced to ensure public safety and smooth traffic movement. Proper fencing, he said, would help prevent wild animals from entering roads while also supporting their protection.

Beldale further pointed out that wild animals have been entering agricultural fields in several villages of Bidar South, damaging standing

crops and causing financial losses to farmers. Livestock have also reportedly been affected, creating concern among rural communities.

He urged the Forest Department to speed up the process of assessing damage and release government compensation to farmers and livestock owners who have already suffered losses. The MLA stressed that the issue should be treated as a priority in the interest of both farmers and the public.

Humnabad MLA Siddu Pa-

“The situation becomes particularly dangerous at night when wild animals suddenly cross the roads. This has created fear among motorists and local residents and increased the risk of accidents.”

- Dr Shailendra Beldale, MLA

Bidar MLA urges action on wildlife menace

MLA Beldale has directed forest officials to install fencing, boost patrolling, and identify animal movement zones to protect motorists and prevent wildlife from entering Bidar South roads. He also urged swift compensation for crop and livestock losses.

til, Bidar Mandal president Gurunath Rajgire, Suresh Mashetti, Chandrayya Swamy, Sanjukumar Koli, Santosh Reddy and others were present.

Ramalinga Reddy takes dig at BJP Padayatra

CH NEWS, BIDAR

Karnataka Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy on Wednesday took a sarcastic swipe at the BJP's proposed padayatra, saying that walking would also help improve the health of those participating in it.

Reacting to the BJP's planned foot march, Reddy said the party leaders and workers could benefit physically from walking. His remarks came amid political activity surrounding the proposed padayatra and growing exchanges between the ruling Congress and the BJP.

The minister's comments were seen as a criticism of the BJP's political programme, which the opposition party is using to highlight issues concerning the state government. Reddy, however, dismissed the political significance of the march and made a reference to its possible health benefits.



The minister's comments criticized the BJP's political programme, which highlights state government issues.

The BJP and Congress have frequently traded accusations over various state and public issues, with leaders from both parties using rallies, protests and padayatras to mobilise supporters and put pressure on their opponents.

Reddy's remarks are likely to add another political dimension to the ongoing confrontation between the two parties. BJP leaders have been preparing their organisational activities and public programmes across Karnataka, while Congress leaders have defended the state government's decisions and policies.

The minister said walking is generally beneficial for health, turning the BJP's proposed political programme into an opportunity for a sarcastic comment. His statement has drawn attention as political parties intensify their activities in the state.

The BJP has yet to respond in detail to Reddy's remarks. The exchange reflects the continuing political rivalry between the ruling Congress and opposition BJP, with both sides seeking to strengthen their support base through public programmes and campaigns.

Quick Read

Study Abroad programme to be held on September 6

CH NEWS, Mangaluru
The Karnataka Vocational Education Development Corporation, under the state Department of Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood, will organise a "Study Abroad-2026" programme in Bengaluru on September 6. The event will be held from 9:30 am at Gayatri Vihar, Palace Grounds, near Gayatri Grand, Gate No. 4. More than 75 universities from over 10 countries are expected to participate in the programme. The event aims to provide students with information on overseas higher education opportunities, admission procedures, student visa requirements and scholarship options under one platform. Eligible students interested in participating can register by September 5 through the official website mentioned in the department's notification. For more information, students can contact 080-29522222. The District Skill Development Officer has urged interested candidates to make use of the opportunity.

Loan assistance scheme applications invited in Udupi

CH NEWS, Udupi
The Karnataka Minorities Development Corporation has invited online applications for loan assistance schemes for eligible minority community members in the state. The schemes cover activities including silk reeling enterprises, overseas education loans, self-employment, business activities, direct loans, Santwana scheme, Sikh community economic empowerment and Ganga Kalyana schemes. Applications can be submitted online through the corporation's website. Eligible applicants aged between 18 and 55 years can apply with the required documents. The last date for submitting applications is September 17. For more information, applicants can contact the District Manager's office of the Karnataka Minorities Development Corporation at Maulana Azad Bhavan, Alevoor Road, Shivalli village, Manipal. They may also contact the district and taluk minority information centres in Udupi, Karkala and Kundapura.

Hampi area sees crackdown on unauthorised homestays

CH NEWS, VIJAYANAGARA

Authorities have launched a surprise operation against unauthorised homestays operating in the Hampi heritage area, taking action to regulate accommodation facilities in and around the UNESCO World Heritage site.

Officials conducted inspections at homestays suspected of operating without the required permissions and registrations. The action was aimed at identifying establishments functioning in violation of tourism and other regulatory norms.

Hampi attracts a large number of domestic and international tourists throughout the year. With the growth in tourism, the number of private accommodation facilities in villages surrounding the heritage zone has also increased. Officials have been monitoring such establishments to ensure that tourism-related activities comply with applicable rules.

During the operation, officials reportedly checked documents and registration details of accommodation facilities. Establishments found operating without necessary approvals were warned and action was initiated as per the rules. Authorities have indicated that inspections will continue in the Hampi region.

The crackdown is also intended to ensure the safety and convenience of tourists visiting the historic site. Officials are expected to verify whether accommodation providers are meeting prescribed standards relating to registration, safety and other requirements.

Hampi is one of Karnataka's major tourist destina-

Hampi crackdown on homestays

Strict Checks: Officials inspect documents and registrations of private accommodations near Hampi.

Rule Enforcement: Unauthorised establishments face warnings and legal action under regulations.

Tourist Safety: The ongoing drive aims to ensure visitor security and service standards.

Future Action: Authorities plan to intensify monitoring across the heritage zone.

tions and is known for its historic monuments, temples, stone structures and archaeological remains. The heritage zone receives visitors from across India and abroad, making regulation of tourism-related commercial activities particularly important.

Officials have reportedly urged owners of homestays and other accommodation facilities to obtain the necessary permissions before conducting business. Those continuing to operate without required approvals could face action under relevant regulations.

The surprise inspections have sent a message to operators that unauthorised commercial accommodation will not be allowed to function unchecked in the heritage region. Authorities are expected to intensify monitoring in the coming days to identify other establishments that may be operating without valid documents.

The operation comes as part of efforts to maintain orderly tourism development in the Hampi area while protecting the interests of visitors and preserving the heritage character of the region.

Marigold crop brings hope amid drought

CH NEWS, BAGALKOT

Amid inadequate monsoon rains and growing drought concerns, a farmer in Bagalkot district has demonstrated how alternative crops and efficient water management can help sustain farm income. Govindappa Balaganavar of Kishori village in Mudhol taluk has cultivated marigold on about 2.5 acres despite limited water availability. By carefully managing available water, he has raised a healthy crop, with the field now covered in bright yellow flowers. The harvested flowers are being supplied to markets, where marigold enjoys steady demand. Balaganavar expects an income of around Rs 50,000 to Rs 90,000 per acre, depending on market prices and production. His initiative highlights the importance of choosing suitable crops, efficient irrigation and market-oriented farming during difficult weather conditions.

MLA Srinivas Mane distributes materials to govt schools

CH NEWS, HANGAL

MLA Srinivas Mane distributed various educational and essential materials worth Rs 2.34 lakh to the Government Higher Primary Girls' School and Government Higher Primary Boys' School in Belgolpet village of the taluk under his 50%-50% initiative.

The programme aims to improve basic infrastructure and facilities in government schools with contributions from the MLA and the community. As part of the initiative, various materials required by students and schools were provided to the two institutions.

Speaking on the occasion,

Block Congress president Basanagouda Patil said MLA Srinivas Mane has been extending support to government schools through the 50%-50% programme without depending solely on government grants. He said the initiative has attracted attention across the state and is helping schools provide better facilities and quality education to students.

According to programme organisers, more than 135 government schools have so far benefited from the initiative, with facilities worth around Rs 4 crore provided. The materials distributed under the programme include laptops, speakers, plastic chairs, office storage units, library glass cup-



boards, fans, smart LED TVs, whiteboards and computer tables, among other essential items.

The initiative is intended to address infrastructure and facility requirements in government schools and create a better learning environment for children. Support from individuals and the community is being used along with the MLA's contribution to meet the needs identified by schools.

Speaking at the programme, Basanagouda Patil appreciated the efforts of the MLA and said improving facilities in government schools would encourage more children to access quality education. He noted that providing basic equipment and

celebrated in the coastal region for generations and has significant cultural as well as religious importance. Special prayers and novenas are held for several days leading up to the festival, while churches conduct various religious programmes on September 8.

The delegation pointed out that the state government has in recent years treated the occasion as a restricted holiday, with the benefit largely limited to teachers. They argued that the festival is celebrated widely across the coastal districts and should therefore be recognised with a public holiday.

The representatives requested that the government de-

Coastal Christian Community seeks holiday for Monti Fest

Members of the Catholic community in the coastal region have urged the Karnataka government to declare September 8 a public holiday on the occasion of Monti Fest, also known as the harvest festival or Thene Habba.

A delegation led by Legislative Council member Ivan D'Souza met Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and Udupi district in-charge Minister Rizwan Arshad and submitted a memorandum seeking the holiday. The delegation included representatives of Catholic Sabha from the Mangaluru and Udupi regions.

According to the delegation, September 8 is celebrated by Christian families across the coastal region as the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The festival is also associated with the traditional harvest celebration, during which newly harvested crops are offered during religious ceremonies and families come together for prayers and a shared meal.

The community representatives said the festival has been

Jain inscriptions found in Karkala

- **Historic Discovery:** New inscriptions have been uncovered at Mala Kote Basadi in Karkala.
- **Research Value:** Experts will study the text to understand ancient Jain practices and social life.
- **Primary Sources:** Such findings help historians reconstruct regional administration and community history.
- **Cultural Legacy:** The find adds to Karnataka's rich heritage of Jain monuments and inscriptions.

5 RARE JAIN INSCRIPTIONS FOUND AT MALA KOTE BASADI

CH NEWS, KARKALA

Five rare Jain inscriptions have been discovered at the historic Mala Kote Basadi in Karkala taluk, providing potentially valuable evidence for the study of Jain heritage and the cultural history of coastal Karnataka.

Researcher Shrutesh Acharya identified the inscriptions during a study of the basadi. He examined the inscriptions and documented details relating to their script, language and historical significance. Further research is expected to establish their exact period and provide a clearer understanding of the information recorded in them.

Karkala has long been an important centre of Jainism and is known for its basadis, Jain monuments and historical sites. The region has a rich Jain heritage, with inscriptions and architectural remains providing evidence of the influence of Jain communities and rulers over several centuries.

The newly discovered inscriptions at Mala Kote Basadi could offer insights into the religious practices, social life and patronage associated with Jain institutions in the region. Researchers are expected to study the text and other features of the inscriptions in greater detail before drawing conclusions about their historical importance.



The discovery is significant because inscriptions are important primary sources for reconstructing the history of a region. Apart from religious information, they can contain details about donations, administration, local communities, patrons and the development of religious in-

stitutions.

Karnataka has a rich tradition of Jain inscriptions, particularly in regions such as Karkala and Shravanabelagola. Several inscriptions found in these areas have helped historians understand the growth of Jainism and the evolution of Kannada

language and culture.

The five inscriptions found at Mala Kote Basadi therefore add to the growing body of historical evidence from Karkala. Scholars and heritage experts have stressed the importance of scientifically documenting and preserving such inscriptions so

that their contents can be studied by future generations.

The discovery by Shrutesh Acharya is expected to encourage further research into the history of Mala Kote Basadi and the wider Jain heritage of Karkala and coastal Karnataka.

India should become world's top silk producer

THIS CENTRE FULFILLS THE REQUIREMENTS OF SILK FARMERS ACROSS CHITRADURGA, BALLARI, AND DAVANAGERE DISTRICTS.

CH NEWS, CHITRADURGA

India should strive to overtake China and become the world's leading silk producer through greater technological research, innovation and the hard work of farmers and scientists, MP Govinda M. Karajola said.

Speaking after inaugurating an interaction between silk farmers and scientists under the "Nanna Reshme Nanna Hemme" campaign, organised jointly by the Central Silk Board and the Department of Sericulture, Karajola said China currently leads global silk production while India ranks second. Karnataka, he noted, is the leading silk-producing State in the country.

He said the Sericulture Research Extension Centre at Maragatta in Chitradurga taluk, which began functioning in 1982, had been upgraded as a Regional Sericulture Research Centre. The centre



serves the requirements of silk farmers in Chitradurga, Ballari and Davanagere districts. The regional centre was shifted from Kodathi near Sarjapur in Bengaluru to Maragatta and upgraded to strengthen research activities.

He stressed that agriculture remains the foundation of the economy and urged farmers not to sell agricultural land for real estate development. He said farmers should focus on improving productivity

“The centre would coordinate technical activities of 10 sub-units and three research extension centres in northern Karnataka located at Ranebennur, Koppal and Bidar. Two southern Karnataka units at Maddur and Madiwala will also come under its jurisdiction, along with four extension centres in Maharashtra and one in Madhya Pradesh.

- Govinda M. Karajola, MP

and contributing to food security for the country's large population.

Karajola also highlighted various Central government schemes benefiting farmers. He said 1,42,767 farmers in Chitradurga district had received Rs 713.72 crore directly under the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme. Under the crop insurance scheme, farmers had received Rs 722 crore in compensation for crop losses.

He said 17,306 agricultural machines worth Rs 47.72

Farming welfare in Chitradurga

- Central schemes have significantly aided Chitradurga farmers.
- PM-Kisan provided Rs 713.72 crore to 1,42,767 beneficiaries.
- Crop insurance delivered Rs 722 crore in loss compensation.
- Thousands gained machinery, drip irrigation, and Mudra loans.

crore had been distributed and 53,301 drip irrigation units had been provided with Rs 94 crore in assistance. More than 2.65 lakh people had received loans under the PM Mudra scheme, while around 180 silk farmers received equipment during 2025-26.

Hundreds of BJP, Congress workers join JDS

Other political figures joining him include former Bajrang Dal convener Tudukooru Manju and Youth Congress vice-president Manju

CH NEWS, CHIKKAMAGALURU

In a significant political development in Chikkamagaluru district, more than 200 active workers from the BJP and Congress are set to join the Janata Dal (Secular) in Bengaluru on Wednesday.

The mass induction involves party leaders and workers from Chikkamagaluru and Mudigere taluks. The move is expected to strengthen the JDS organisation in the Malnad region and create a fresh challenge for both the BJP and Congress ahead of future political contests.

The defection is being led by Vijay Kumar, a prominent BJP leader who had sought the party ticket during the 2023 Assembly elections. Several other political figures are expected to join him, including former Bajrang Dal district convener Tudukooru Manju and Youth Congress district vice-president Manju.

Key office-bearers of the BJP Yuva Morcha mandal and



JDS WELCOMES DEFECTORS

- BJP leader Vijay Kumar leads a multi-party defection to JDS.
- Figures from BJP, Congress, and Bajrang Dal join the party.
- Over 200 workers shift allegiance in Chikkamagaluru and Mudigere.
- Ceremony takes place in Bengaluru under senior JDS leaders.

more than 200 active workers associated with both the BJP and Congress are also expected to join the regional party. The development has generated considerable interest among political circles in Chikkamagaluru and Mudigere.

The formal joining ceremony will be held at the JDS central office in Bengaluru. Former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, JDS youth leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy and Legislative Council member S.L. Bhojgowda are expected to be present. The new entrants will formally join the party by accepting the JDS shawl in the presence of senior leaders.

Hundreds of workers from Chikkamagaluru are expected to travel to Bengaluru to participate in the programme. The sudden movement of leaders and workers from

both the BJP and Congress camps has created a buzz in Malnad politics.

JDS workers have welcomed the development, viewing the induction of leaders and grassroots workers as an opportunity to expand the party's organisational network in the region. The move could also influence local political equations in Chikkamagaluru and Mudigere in the coming months.

Quick Read

Mangaluru court sentences man for acid attack

CH NEWS, Mangaluru

A court in Mangaluru has sentenced a man to 10 years in prison for carrying out an acid attack on his sister-in-law. The court found him guilty following the trial and investigation into the case. The investigation was conducted by police officers, including Kusumadhara, who was serving as the Police Inspector of the Puttur Women's Police Station at the time. The accused was convicted based on evidence presented before the court.

The sentence marks the conclusion of legal proceedings in the case, in which the woman suffered injuries in the acid attack. The court imposed the 10-year prison term on the accused after considering the circumstances and evidence placed before it. Police officials involved in the investigation were also acknowledged during the proceedings.

MP Chowta seeks CM's support for Mangaluru rail network

CH NEWS, MANGALURU

Dakshina Kannada MP Captain Brijesh Chowta has written to Former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah seeking the Karnataka government's support for including the Mangaluru railway network under the Mysuru division.

Chowta urged the State government to back the proposal and work with the Railway authorities to ensure that the administrative reorganisation benefits passengers and strengthens railway infrastructure in the coastal region.

Chowta also sought the Chief Minister's intervention to facilitate discussions with the Railway Ministry and other concerned authorities. He said coordinated efforts between the State government, elected representatives and railway officials would be important to secure better infrastructure and services for the region.

Mangaluru has long been a key transport and commercial



“Bringing the Mangaluru railway network under the Mysuru division could help address several long-standing demands related to railway development. The need for improved connectivity, faster execution of pending projects and better passenger amenities in Mangaluru and neighbouring areas.

- Brijesh Chowta, Dakshina Kannada MP Captain

centre on the Karnataka coast. Improved railway administration and infrastructure are expected to support the movement of passengers and goods and strengthen connectivity between coastal Karnataka and other parts of the State. The MP's appeal comes

amid renewed discussions over the administrative structure of railway operations in the region. Railway users and local organisations have also been seeking faster implementation of projects and adequate budgetary support for Mangaluru's railway infrastructure.

Chowta expressed hope that the State government would extend its support to the proposal and take up the matter with the Centre. He said a coordinated approach would help ensure that Mangaluru receives the railway infrastructure required to meet the region's growing passenger and economic needs.

CM covering up Minister Nagendra's corruption

CH NEWS. SHIVAMOGGA

The previous Siddaramaiah government accepted the resignation of Minister Nagendra, who is the main accused in the Rs 187 crore Valmiki Corporation scam, but Chief Minister DK Shivakumar is covering up the corruption by anointing Nagendra, the mastermind of the scam, MLA SN Channabasappa said.

Speaking at a press conference at his office on Wednesday, he said that Chief Minister DK Shivakumar had promised to form a corruption-free government at the beginning of the first session after assuming office as the Chief Minister. But now he is acting contrary to the promise made by standing behind accused Minister Nagendra, saying that the government does not have money to alleviate the drought in the state. Discussions on serious issues like drought in the state should not be held in the session held earlier. He alleged that the entire session was taken up for the Nagendra case, fearing that if there was a discussion, funds would have to be given for drought relief, and he made the Nagendra case the pretext.

The Congress government is running on the death of Chandrashekhara, an officer who committed suicide by writing a death note against the Valmiki Corporation scam. Although there was to

be a discussion on serious issues like KPSC, Valmiki, Bidadi, the session was ended two days early due to the struggle of BJP allies. Do the Congress state and national leaders who speak against us have any morals? Are they giving the key to the corrupt minister, he asked bitterly.

The government has been answering only 50 percent of the questions we have asked in the last three years. The government does not have the strength to answer even the simplest questions asked by the MLAs. Out of 400 questions asked, the government has been answering only 125. Even after 3 months since the schools started, shoes and socks have not been supplied to children. The priests are paying the electricity bills of C, D class temples. Even though they are being added to the household lights, the government is not answering. There is also no answer about the investigation into the Kuvempu University scam. There is a pension problem for 23.24 lakh people in the state. Only one month's pension has been released in 6 months. The government should clarify when the remaining 5 months' pension will be released, he demanded.

BJP city President Mohan Reddy, leaders S Gnaneshwar, Deendayal, Manjunath Navale Srinag, DS Shivakumar, Yoshodha, Latha Srinivas, Prakash Vaddinakoppa, Somesh were present.



Mangaluru SWR integration must boost rail development

CH NEWS, MANGALURU

The integration of Mangaluru's railway region with South Western Railway (SWR) should be used to accelerate railway development in coastal Karnataka, the Kanyakumari District Railway Users' Association (KKDRUA) has said. Congratulating Dakshina Kannada MP Captain Brijesh Chowta, the association said the Railway Board's decision should spur new projects, faster execution of stalled works and adequate budgetary support.

It urged SWR and elected representatives to prepare a development plan focusing on pending projects, improved connectivity and timely completion of sanctioned works. The KKDRUA also called for an audit of passenger amenities at Mangaluru Central and Mangaluru Junction stations to identify infrastructure gaps and plan improvements. It said the integration should address long-standing demands by strengthening connectivity, modernising passenger facilities and improving existing railway infrastructure.

Kinnal Eid Milad procession spreads harmony message

CH NEWS, KOPPAL

Eid Milad-un-Nabi was celebrated with religious fervour and enthusiasm in Kinnal village of Koppal taluk, with a colourful procession conveying a message of communal harmony, brotherhood and national unity.

The procession, organised to mark the birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammed, began in the morning from Ahle Sunni

Jamia Masjid. A specially decorated open vehicle featuring models of Mecca and Medina was among the major attractions. Green flags, religious chants and the participation of children added to the festive atmosphere as the procession moved through the village.

The procession passed through several prominent circles and memorials in the village. At Sri Basaveshwara Circle, participants paid floral

tribute to the statue of Basaveshwara. They later offered respects at the statue of Dr B.R. Ambedkar at Ambedkar Circle.

The procession then proceeded through Sri Siddarameshwara Circle, Sri Hazrat Tipu Sultan Circle and Sri Bhagat Singh Circle, where participants paid floral tributes to the respective statues. The organisers said the gesture was intended to convey the values

of equality, mutual respect and national integration.

The procession later passed through the Hazrat Raja Baga-sawar (Yamanurappa) Dargah route and reached Sri Kanakadasa Circle, where a floral tribute was offered to the statue of Kanakadasa. Participants said honouring personalities from different social and cultural backgrounds reflected the village's spirit of coexistence and harmony.

PUBLIC CRITICISM FOLLOWS

Haveri MLA Prakash Koliwad fined ₹500

CH NEWS, HAVERI

Ranebennur Congress MLA Prakash Koliwad was fined Rs 500 by traffic police for allegedly riding a motorcycle without wearing a helmet, following criticism after photographs and a video of the incident surfaced on social media.

Koliwad was reportedly riding a Bullet motorcycle without a helmet on August 25. The photographs and video showing the MLA without protective headgear went viral on social media, drawing criticism from members of the public.

Several users questioned whether traffic rules applied equally to elected representatives, pointing out that ordinary motorists are fined for riding without helmets. Following the public reaction, Ranebennur traffic police issued a notice to the MLA over the violation.

A fine notice of Rs 500 was



subsequently delivered to Koliwad's residence. The MLA paid the penalty after receiving the police notice and later shared details of the payment on his Facebook account.

Koliwad said the police had performed their duty and that he respected their action. He said the Superintendent of Police had issued the notice to him and that he respected the officer for carrying out her responsibilities without making any distinction.

The incident has once again highlighted the importance of traffic discipline among all road users, including elected representatives. Wearing a helmet while riding a two-wheeler is a mandatory safety requirement, and violations can result in penalties.

The action against the MLA has also drawn attention to the need for consistent enforcement of traffic rules. Officials and citizens have repeatedly urged motorists to

MLA fined for helmet rule violation

Faced with public outrage over unequal enforcement, Ranebennur police fined MLA Koliwad Rs 500 for riding a two-wheeler without a helmet. The MLA promptly paid the penalty, praised the officers for treating everyone equally, and reaffirmed that traffic laws apply to all citizens.

following safety regulations to reduce the risk of serious injuries and accidents on roads.

The fine paid by Koliwad following the police notice has sent a message that elected representatives are also subject to traffic regulations. The incident has renewed calls for motorists across Haveri district to follow helmet and other road safety rules.

Quick Read

Kohl's misses quarterly sales estimates

NEW YORK

Kohl's missed Wall Street estimates for second-quarter sales on Wednesday, as cautious consumer spending on discretionary items offset gains from the department store chain's turnaround efforts, sending its shares down about 5% before the bell. The company, however, raised its annual profit forecast after receiving \$150 million in tariff refunds during the quarter. U.S. consumer sentiment deteriorated in August, while retail sales fell for the first time in nine months, underscoring increasingly "selective" spending among middle- and lower-income households.

'Volkswagen staff cost-cutting journey 'not over'

BERLIN

Volkswagen CEO Oliver Blume urged workers at the German automaker's Emden plant, which could face closure under a sweeping turnaround plan, to step up savings efforts, warning that costs were still too high when compared with rivals. "This journey is not over. Because we not only measure ourselves against our own past performance. We measure ourselves against the best locations in Europe," Blume told staff, according to excerpts of his speech shared by the company on Wednesday.

'India-Japan trade could reach \$50 bn by 2030'

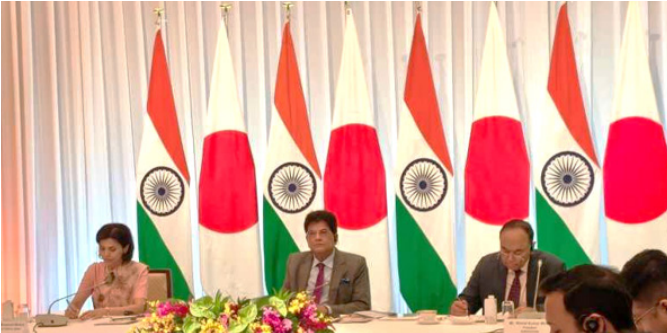
Bilateral merchandise trade has risen 33% since FY21, outpacing trade growth with the US, EU and China.

TOKYO

India and Japan could see their bilateral trade rise to \$50 billion by 2030, driven by stronger economic complementarities, expanding business engagement and cooperation in emerging technologies and supply chains, according to an ASSOCHAM report released on Wednesday.

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal released the report, titled "India-Japan @75: From Enduring Friendship to Strategic Business Partnership", during a startup roundtable in Japan. The launch was attended by ASSOCHAM Secretary General Saurabh Sanyal, President Nirmal Kumar Minda and India's Ambassador to Japan Nagma Mohamed Mallick.

ASSOCHAM said India's trade with Japan currently accounts for less than one per cent of the country's overall trade, highlighting considerable room to deepen market access and increase higher-value exports. The report said economic cooperation is also moving beyond traditional industrial sectors into semiconductors, artificial intelligence, digital technologies, critical minerals and resilient supply chains.



INDIA-JAPAN TRADE IN A NUTSHELL
Bilateral trade target: \$50 billion by 2030.
India-Japan trade remains below 1% of India's overall trade.
Focus areas include semiconductors, AI and digital technologies.
Critical minerals and resilient supply chains offer new opportunities.
India's market and workforce complement Japan's technology and capital.
Goyal holds talks with leading Japanese business groups.

India's large domestic market, young workforce and expanding manufacturing capabilities were identified as strengths that complement Japan's advanced technology, capital and industrial expertise. Improvements in ease of doing business could further accelerate investment and commercial ties, the industry body said.

The report comes as both countries seek deeper cooperation across manufacturing, technology and supply-chain sectors. Earlier, Goyal said he had discussed India's expanding opportunities in trade, mobility, industry, banking and insurance with leading Japanese business and financial institutions.

During his Japan visit, Goyal met senior executives from Toyota Tsusho, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation Group, Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group and Nippon Life Insurance, according to his posts on X.

EPFO advances Kerala pension amid Onam

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has credited the August pension to 4,40,901 pensioners in Kerala on August 26, ahead of the usual month-end schedule, to help beneficiaries and their families meet financial needs during Onam.

According to an official statement issued Wednesday, the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS), 1995 pension was released early as a special arrangement for the festival. The move is intended to ensure pensioners can access funds without inconvenience during the celebrations.

The pension has been transferred directly into beneficiaries' bank accounts through EPFO's Centralized Pension Payment System (CPPS), which enables streamlined pension disbursement across the country. The organisation said the technology-enabled system is part of efforts to provide timely social security benefits and improve pension services.

CPPS: KEY BENEFITS

The Centralized Pension Payment System allows pensioners to receive payments through any bank, eliminates repeated verification at commencement, and ensures immediate credit after release. It also removes the need to transfer Pension Payment Orders when beneficiaries relocate or change banks or branches. The nationwide system aims to make pension disbursement simpler, faster and more accessible for retirees.

Ordinarily, the monthly pension under the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS), 1995, is disbursed at the end of the month.

EPFO has now completed the full-scale rollout of CPPS across all its pension-disbursing offices, marking a significant shift from the earlier decentralised arrangement. Previously, zonal and regional offices maintained separate agreements with a limited number of banks, generally three to four.

Under the new system, pensioners can receive their pen-

sion through any bank and do not need to visit a bank for verification when pension payments begin. Pension is credited immediately after release, according to EPFO.

The system also eliminates the need to transfer Pension Payment Orders when pensioners relocate, change banks or switch branches. This is particularly beneficial for retirees who move to their hometowns after retirement.

EPFO said the nationwide system is designed to make pension payments more seamless, accessible and citizen-centric. Reducing administrative hurdles for pensioners nationwide.

India D2C funding shows recovery

NEW DELHI

India's direct-to-consumer (D2C) companies raised \$6 billion in equity funding across nearly 2,000 rounds between 2021 and 2026 year-to-date, with investment showing signs of recovery after a sharp slowdown, according to a Tracxn report released Wednesday.

Annual funding peaked at \$1.6 billion in 2022 before falling to \$824 million in 2024. Funding rebounded to \$898 million in 2025, marking a 9 per cent year-on-year increase.

The recovery was driven largely by seed and early-stage investments. These stages accounted for 70 per cent of total D2C funding in 2025, compared with 38 per cent in 2021. Early-stage funding alone increased 66 per cent from its 2023 low, indicating that capital is increasingly reaching



D2C funding snapshot
\$6 billion: Equity funding raised since 2021
~2,000: Funding rounds recorded
\$898 million: Funding in 2025
70%: Share of 2025 funding from seed and early stages
15: D2C IPOs recorded
105: D2C acquisitions recorded
\$2.3 billion: Combined lifetime funding of five leading companies

younger companies.

Deal activity remained relatively consistent despite fluctuations in funding value. Ev-

ery full year during the period recorded between 307 and 380 funding rounds. Notably, 2024 saw the highest number of rounds even as overall funding value reached its lowest level during the period.

Late-stage funding, meanwhile, declined sharply, falling 69 per cent in value between 2022 and 2025. Its round count, however, returned to the 2021 level of 15.

The sector has also recorded significant exits and public-market activity. Fifteen D2C initial public offerings and 105 acquisitions were recorded between 2021 and 2026 YTD.

Lenskart, Licious, FreshToHome, BlueStone and Country Delight lead the funding rankings, together raising \$2.3 billion over their lifetimes. FreshToHome raised \$15 million in January 2026, while Country Delight secured \$7 million in May.

AI TALENT SURGES IN RETAIL GCCS

NEW DELHI

AI workforce penetration in retail GCCs has more than doubled, rising from 2.1 per cent in 2022 to 4.8 per cent in 2025 and projected to reach 10.6 per cent by 2028, according to a new report on Wednesday.

Retail and consumer GCCs currently employ close to 7,800 professionals in core AI and data roles, with demand for AI and

Data talent standing at 990 positions in 2025.

Of the 180 GCCs assessed, only 22 among the top 50 mega Retail GCCs were found to have established AI capabilities, where they are building, not just consuming AI, according to a TeamLease Digital report.

Bengaluru commands 54 per cent of India's retail GCC AI talent pool with 4,200 professionals, while

senior AI leadership above 8 years of experience remains a scarce, concentrated layer across the country.

Delhi-NCR is a distant second, followed by Hyderabad. Chennai, Mumbai and Pune each hold fewer than 20 senior leaders apiece.

Within this workforce, the senior AI talent pool — professionals with 8 or more years of experience — stand at just 320 individuals nationally. Nearly two-thirds

of that cohort (63 per cent, roughly 202 professionals) sit at the AI engineering lead level, averaging 9 years' experience.

AI/Data directors account for 22 per cent (around 71 professionals, averaging 12 years). At the apex, AI architects and principal scientists represent just 15 per cent of the pool -- approximately 47 professionals nationally, averaging 14-plus years of experience.

Govt tells SIDBI to scale up lending to MSMEs

NEW DELHI

The government has asked the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) to scale up lending to MSMEs in rural and semi-urban areas nationwide through the network of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), an official statement said on Wednesday.

Sanjay Lohiya, Secretary, Department of Financial Services (DFS), emphasised at a meeting with top SIDBI and RRB officials the need to synergise the strengths of SIDBI, which understands the credit needs of MSMEs and RRBs, which have an excellent reach across the smaller towns and villages of the country.

RRBs will also be able to achieve their goal of diversifying their loan portfolios by focusing on MSME lending, and rule engine-based underwriting is also expected to help them maintain good as-

set quality, he added.

He also highlighted the importance of MSME cluster data for a focused approach to reaching out to a large number of micro and small units. RRBs were told to contribute towards making the country a next-generation manufacturing hub and also take an active part in Rozgar Melas, conducted by state governments to disseminate financial awareness among MSMEs.

It was further suggested that RRBs make MSME lending through this Co-Lending arrangement an important target for branches. CMD, SIDBI, also urged the RRBs to come forward and make the arrangement a success.

The Co-Lending Origination Platform, developed by SIDBI, is an end-to-end digital platform providing a faster and paperless credit journey, resulting in the quick sanction and disbursement of loans.

INDIA JOB POSTINGS REBOUND IN JULY

NEW DELHI

India's job postings on Indeed rose 1.2 per cent in July 2026, marking a modest recovery after three consecutive months of decline and bringing postings 8.3 per cent above the year-ago level, according to data released by the global job site on Wednesday.

Despite recent volatility, hiring activity in the country's formal economy remains strong, with job postings still 84 per cent above pre-pandemic levels, the data compiled by Indeed said. It stated that the latest rebound indicates that demand for workers continues to remain elevated even as hiring patterns shift across sectors.

Callam Pickering, Senior Economist, Indeed APAC, said Indian job postings staged a modest recovery in July, ending the three-month slide, while remaining well above pre-pandemic levels and continuing to outperform other markets tracked by Indeed.

"The real story is beneath the headline number," Pickering said, pointing to strong demand for healthcare and care-economy roles, even as hiring in technology-related occupations has weakened.

Over the past three months, job postings increased across nearly 80 per cent of occupations, suggesting that hiring strength is broader than the overall headline figures indicate.

Healthcare and care-related occupations recorded some of the strongest gains. Postings for medical technicians increased 30 per cent, while childcare roles rose 26 per cent. Demand for physicians and surgeons also climbed 26 per cent, while therapy-related roles increased 25 per cent.

'Creating models for Global South by investing in youth'

NEW DELHI

Dr Priti Adani, Chairperson of the Adani Foundation, has said that by investing in youth, women and local creators, we are doing more than just solving local challenges we are creating models for the Global South.

Addressing the gathering at the 'AVPN Global Conference 2026' in the national capital, Dr Priti Adani called for greater collaboration, shared learning, and partnerships to help address complex social challenges and take effective solutions to more communities.

The Adani Foundation, the social welfare and development arm of the Adani Group and strategic partner of the 'AVPN Global Conference 2026', hosted the welcome dinner at Bharat Mandapam for nearly 2,000 national and international delegates.

"It is a privilege to welcome philanthropy leaders from across the world to India at a time when the world is looking towards India and Asia as an emerging engine of growth and opportunity. Over three decades, our journey at the Adani Foundation has taught us that lasting change comes from empowering communities to shape their own futures," the Adani Foundation Chairperson emphasised.

"As social challenges become more complex, we must learn from one another, share what works and build partnerships that take impact further. AVPN gives us a



wonderful opportunity to share India's grassroots experience while learning from inspiring ideas across Asia and the world," Dr Priti Adani said.

She said that from metros to mandis and campuses to small towns, India is now innovating everywhere.

"Whether it is a waste management problem or a climate change issue, be it safe drinking water or affordable healthcare, better agricultural practices or innovation up to the last mile, Indian startups are working to solve the nation's problems, big and small," said Dr Priti Adani.

The gathering came as the Adani Foundation marks 30 years of work across India. AVPN is Asia's largest platform for social impact, where over 700 resource providers, innovators and intermediaries from across 43 markets collaborate to mobilise capital.

India Inc acquisitions double, 1/3 fail: Crisil report

NEW DELHI

The 2X surge in mergers and acquisitions shows the resilience of India, with companies increasingly using acquisitions to scale faster, enter new markets and acquire capabilities that would take longer to build organically, a Crisil Ratings report showed on Wednesday.

What sets this cycle apart is the stronger credit backdrop supporting deal-making. Moderating organic capex, lower leverage and prudent funding have strengthened balance sheet flexibility, enhancing companies' ability to absorb acquisition-related risks, said the report.

"Indian corporates are increasingly using M&As to accelerate growth, expand market access and acquire capabilities that would take years to build organically. This is reflected in annual deal volumes, which have more than doubled since fiscal 2017," said Subodh Rai, Managing Director, Crisil Ratings.

The momentum is broad-based, though shaped by sector-specific priorities. For instance, pharma and healthcare, enterprise technology, artificial intelligence, and consumer businesses are using acquisitions to bridge technology, talent, and intellectual-property gaps.

In contrast, cement and metals are pursuing acquisitions for consolidation, reducing build times from four-six years to one-three years.

The resilience of India Inc has been forged through a volatile operating environment over the past decade, marked by frequent disruptions and shorter recovery cycles.

FED INFLATION ROADMAP

Warsh faces pressure at Jackson Hole

NEW YORK

Investors are looking to the annual Jackson Hole symposium for clues about how Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh plans to steer monetary policy as elevated Treasury yields increasingly tighten financial conditions.

Warsh is scheduled to deliver his first speech as Fed chair on Friday at the Wyoming gathering, traditionally a key platform for central bank officials to signal their policy outlook. However, investors do not expect Warsh to follow the forward-guidance approach as-



sociated with previous Fed chairs. Instead, he has urged traders and portfolio managers to focus more closely on market signals.

That approach has left investors seeking greater clarity, particularly after Warsh

appeared to suggest that rising Treasury yields could reduce the need for the Fed to raise interest rates by tightening monetary conditions. The comments have added to concerns over his inflation strategy while consumer prices remain above the Fed's 2% target.

Long-term Treasury yields have also surged amid concerns about rising US government debt and increased bond issuance. The Treasury Department responded by doubling some long-dated bond buybacks, a move officially aimed at supporting liquidity but widely viewed

by investors as an attempt to contain yields.

The temporary relief has highlighted a difficult environment for the Fed, with elevated term premiums adding to borrowing costs. Investors want Warsh to clearly reaffirm the 2% inflation objective and explain how quickly policymakers would act if price pressures remain above target.

Market participants are particularly focused on whether the Fed would tolerate inflation above target for an extended period or pursue a faster return to price stability.



- PRADIVYA NAMBIAR

QUANTUM HEALING: WHEN SCIENCE MEETS THE NEW WELLNESS FRONTIER

Quantum” is another word that has travelled an unexpected distance. Once associated mainly with laboratories, complex equations and the strange behaviour of matter at the smallest scales, it is now becoming part of a new language of wellness. Quantum healing. Quantum energy. Frequency technologies. Resonance. Wearable devices. Even jewellery and everyday wellness products inspired by ideas of energy and vibration. It is a fascinating shift: concepts that once belonged almost entirely to physics are now being explored in the context of the human body and well-being. Quantum physics has transformed our understanding of matter, energy and the physical world. At the same time, modern biology continues to reveal just how dynamic and interconnected the human body is. Our cells communicate, respond to their environment and depend on finely balanced electrical, chemical and energetic processes. Perhaps this is why the language of frequency and resonance is finding such a natural place in today’s wellness conversation. We already live in an environment filled with electromagnetic activity. We use mobile phones, WiFi, Bluetooth devices and countless other technologies every day. The human body is not isolated from its physical environment; it constantly interacts with light, heat, electrical activity, chemical signals and electromagnetic fields. The emerging wellness conversation asks whether there are other ways of understanding these interactions and whether technologies designed around frequency, resonance or other forms of energy could eventually play a meaningful role in supporting well-being. Some of these technologies are already being explored through physiological measures such as heart-rate variability, brain activity and other biological responses. Early research in different areas has reported measurable changes, opening interesting questions about how energy, frequency and biological systems may interact. There is still much to understand. What are the mechanisms involved? Which effects are meaningful? How reproducible are the findings? And how might future research translate these discoveries into practical applications? These are not reasons to close the door on the possibilities. They are reasons to keep exploring. Science has repeatedly expanded the boundaries of what we thought was possible. Ideas that once seemed abstract have become technologies that are now part of everyday life. Quantum physics itself began as a radical new way of looking at nature and has since transformed modern technology, from electronics and lasers to medical imaging and communications. Perhaps quantum wellness represents another stage in that continuing conversation between science, technology and human well-being. The challenge and perhaps the opportunity lies in understanding how far these principles can meaningfully extend into the world of human wellness. The important thing is to remain curious as the field develops to explore new ideas, encourage good research and remain open to what future discoveries may reveal. The quantum world reminds us that nature is often stranger, richer and more interconnected than our everyday experience suggests. And perhaps that is what makes the new conversation around quantum wellness so compelling. We are still learning how much there is to discover.

BRIDGING THE GAP IN URBAN WATER GOVERNANCE

As rapid urban expansion accelerates across major Indian metropolises, cities confront a growing crisis in water security. Dwindling groundwater reserves, severe seasonal monsoonal shortfalls, and outdated inter-state water distribution models continually jeopardize access to safe drinking water for millions. The current administrative approach remains predominantly reactive relying heavily on emergency cusec allocations, legal mandates, and costly, energy-intensive infrastructure. To build long-term climate resilience, urban authorities must transition from crisis management to sustainable hydrological planning. Modernizing water governance requires immediate structural shifts across key policy areas:

Dynamic Allocation Frameworks: Static water-sharing quotas calibrated to historical averages fail during prolonged severe droughts. State regulatory bodies must establish transparent, binding protocols that dynamically adjust allocations based on real-time monsoon metrics and environmental inflows.

Decentralized Purification Technologies: High-efficiency, low-cost filtration models such as bio-based filtration systems offer scalable solutions to purify urban supplies and treat industrial contaminants without straining municipal energy grids.

Mandatory Conservation & Recycling: Urban planning guidelines should mandate greywater recycling, strict rainwater harvesting mandates, and systematic groundwater recharge across all commercial and residential developments.

Hydrological Intelligence: Satellite monitoring, IoT sensors, and predictive data modeling are essential tools for accurately tracking basin capacities, enabling proactive infrastructure management.

Securing urban water futures requires moving past fragmented legal disputes and short-term measures. By integrating scientific innovation, adaptive water-sharing mechanisms, and community-level conservation strategies, policymakers can establish a sustainable framework that guarantees clean water access for growing populations while protecting vital natural river ecosystems. Furthermore, urban water security cannot be achieved without addressing equitable distribution and financial sustainability.

Municipal authorities must implement transparent, volumetric water pricing tariffs that discourage excessive industrial and commercial waste while protecting low-income households. Integrating nature-based solutions such as restoring urban wetlands, protecting natural floodplains, and rejuvenating degraded lakes will naturally boost groundwater retention and mitigate urban flooding risks. Finally, fostering robust public-private partnerships will accelerate the adoption of smart metering technology, allowing cities to detect pipeline leaks instantly and minimize non-revenue water loss.

- ALLAN AUGUSTINE

KPSC MUST BE FREED FROM POLITICAL INFLUENCE



- SHYAM SUNDAR VATTAM

The Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC), entrusted with the vital responsibility of selecting candidates for various government departments, is facing a serious crisis of credibility. Allegations of question paper leaks, favouritism, nepotism, irregularities and other malpractices have repeatedly raised questions about the functioning of an institution that is expected to uphold the highest standards of fairness and integrity.

The KPSC is not merely another government agency. For thousands of young people in Karnataka, it represents a gateway to a secure and respectable career in public service. Every recruitment notification creates hope among lakhs of aspirants who spend years preparing for competitive examinations. When examinations are delayed, selection lists are cancelled or recruitment processes are questioned because of alleged irregularities, it is the honest candidates who suffer the most. The fundamental problem is the growing perception that the KPSC is not sufficiently insulated from political influence. Governments may change, but concerns over interference in the functioning of recruitment bodies have persisted. If members are perceived to owe their positions to political patronage, questions will naturally arise about their independence while making crucial recruitment decisions. A recruitment commission must be above political considerations. Its primary obligation should be to the Constitution, the law and the principles of merit and equality not to the political establishment of the day.

The consequences of a flawed recruitment process are far-reaching. Every year of delay can cost an aspirant an opportunity because of the age limit. A candidate who has prepared honestly for several years may suddenly find himself or herself ineligible because an examination has been postponed or a recruitment process has been cancelled. Such candidates cannot simply recover the lost years. Repeated controversies also create a dangerous perception that merit alone may not be sufficient to secure a government job. If young people begin to believe that money, influence or political connections matter more than ability and hard work, faith in the entire system will erode.

Political parties, unfortunately, often respond to KPSC controversies in a predictable manner. The Opposition attacks the government whenever irregularities are reported, while those in power defend the process or accuse the Opposition of politicising the issue. When governments change, the positions often change too. What remains missing is a sustained, bipartisan effort to reform the institution.

The KPSC requires structural reforms rather than temporary political firefighting. The first step should be to ensure a transparent and credible process for appointing members of the Commission. The government should consider a system in which the selection of members is based primarily on competence, integrity, administrative experience and professional credentials, rather than political affiliation or proximity. The

It is a responsibility to
Karnataka's youth and to the
future of public
administration

Chairman, in particular, must be chosen after a thorough assessment of his or her track record and suitability for the position. A broader selection mechanism involving the government and Opposition could help build public confidence in these appointments. If all major political parties agree on the process, the credibility of the Commission would receive a significant boost.

ing appropriate legal protection to genuine reforms undertaken to strengthen the independence and efficiency of the Commission. Courts must remain the ultimate safeguard for candidates whose rights are affected by arbitrary or illegal decisions. The ruling party and the Opposition must therefore rise above partisan politics on this issue. Instead of trading accusations every time a recruitment controversy



Secondly, the KPSC needs stronger institutional safeguards against political interference. Its functioning, examination systems, question-paper security, evaluation procedures and publication of results must be governed by clearly defined protocols that leave little room for manipulation.

Thirdly, technology must be used to strengthen examination security and transparency. Confidentiality of question papers, digital monitoring, secure evaluation systems and time-bound publication of results can reduce opportunities for malpractice. At the same time, accountability must be fixed whenever negligence or misconduct occurs.

The judiciary, too, can play a constructive role by provid-

emerges, elected representatives should speak in one voice for institutional reform.

Karnataka's youth deserve nothing less than a recruitment system in which merit is supreme, rules are predictable and every candidate is treated equally. The KPSC can regain its credibility, but that will happen only when political considerations are kept at a safe distance from recruitment. The objective should not merely be to save the KPSC from the latest controversy. It should be to rebuild an institution that inspires confidence among every aspirant. Restoring the independence, integrity and credibility of the KPSC is not a political favour; it is a responsibility to Karnataka's youth and to the future of public administration.

THE SECRET BEHIND MOSQUITOES' ATTRACTION TO HUMANS

Mosquitoes are among the most familiar insects in our surroundings, yet their ability to find humans is remarkably sophisticated. In a room with several people, mosquitoes may seem to prefer certain individuals over others. This raises an interesting scientific question: What makes some people more attractive to mosquitoes?

Scientists have discovered that mosquitoes use a combination of signals to locate humans. These include carbon dioxide, body heat, moisture and chemical odors released by the skin. When we breathe, we release carbon dioxide. Mosquitoes can detect changes in carbon dioxide in the air and use this information as an important clue that a potential host is nearby. But carbon dioxide is only the beginning of the process. As mosquitoes come closer, they use additional signals to identify a suitable target. Human skin releases hundreds of chemical compounds, and the combination of these compounds can differ from person to person. Sweat, skin chemistry and the microorganisms living naturally on the skin can all contribute to a person's distinctive odor profile. This helps explain why some people appear to attract more mosquitoes than others. It is not simply a matter of having “sweet blood.” Rather, mosquitoes respond to a complex mixture of chemical and physical signals.

How Do Mosquitoes



Find Us?

Mosquitoes have specialized sensory systems that allow them to detect chemical cues in their surroundings. Their ability to sense carbon dioxide helps them identify the general direction of a potential host. Once they get closer, odors from human skin become increasingly important. Body heat and moisture provide additional clues. A mosquito approaching a person can use these signals to locate exposed skin. This remarkable combination of

senses allows the insect to navigate toward a host even when the person is not immediately visible.

Why Do Female Mosquitoes Bite?

An important biological fact is that female mosquitoes are the ones that generally bite humans and other animals.



- Dr. Vijay Garg

They need nutrients from a blood meal to support the development of their eggs. Male mosquitoes do not normally seek blood. They mainly feed on nectar and other plant-based sources. This difference is an example of how evolution has shaped mosquito behavior. The female mosquito has developed an efficient system for finding animals that can provide the nutrients required for reproduction.

Skin Chemistry and

Mosquito Attraction

Every person's skin has a unique chemical environment. Sweat contains various substances, while naturally occurring microorganisms on the skin can transform some compounds into others. The resulting mixture contributes to a person's body odor. Scientists are studying how these chemical signals influence mosquito behavior. Some compounds may attract mosquitoes, while others may make a person less appealing to them. Research in this area could eventually help scientists develop more effective mosquito repellents and traps by targeting the insects' sensory systems.

Why Does This Research Matter?

The study of mosquito attraction is not merely an interesting question in biology. It has major implications for public health.

Mosquitoes can transmit diseases such as malaria, dengue, chikungunya, yellow fever and several other infections. Understanding how mosquitoes locate humans could help researchers develop better strategies for reducing mosquito bites and limiting disease transmission.

Retired Principal, Educational Columnist and Eminent Educationist, Street Kour Chand, MHR, Malout, Punjab

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Harnessing Quantum Health Safely

Quantum wellness promises an exciting bridge between cutting-edge physics and personal vitality, yet it demands cautious navigation. While non-invasive therapies tapping into body energy offer compelling holistic benefits, the market is increasingly flooded with untested claims. True innovation requires rigorous scientific validation, clear regulatory standards, and transparent clinical trials. Without proper oversight, enthusiasm risks turning into exploitation. Medical authorities and researchers must collaborate to separate legitimate quantum health breakthroughs from clever marketing, ensuring public safety while embracing genuine wellness advancements.

- Shreyas Prakash

Depoliticize Public Service Commissions

Constitutional bodies like the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) must remain untainted by political interference to function effectively. When merit takes a backseat to political patronage, public trust in governance collapses, leaving thousands of hardworking aspirants disillusioned. Systemic reforms such as transparent appointment protocols for commission members, independent oversight, and strict time-bound recruitment cycles are urgently needed. Restoring autonomy to the KPSC is essential to ensuring fair recruitment, safeguarding youth futures, and rebuilding integrity in public administration.

- Veronica A.

Decoding Mosquito Attraction Signal

Understanding why mosquitoes target certain individuals is a vital public health milestone. Recent research highlighting carbon dioxide plumes, body heat, and specific skin microbiota scent signatures reveals that attraction is driven purely by chemical signaling rather than luck. Decoding these biological triggers enables scientists to design highly targeted, eco-friendly repellents and smart traps instead of relying on broad chemical sprays. Translating these scientific insights into accessible consumer products will significantly reduce vector-borne disease transmission in vulnerable communities worldwide.

- Paul Judah

Quick Read

Six killed, 12 injured in Telangana bus crash

CH NEWS, Telangana
Six people, including five women, were killed and at least 12 injured when a private electric bus hit a truck near Dorakunta village in Suryapet district, Telangana, around 5:15 am on Wednesday. The bus was travelling from Hyderabad to Eluru with 42 passengers. Police said the truck was carrying heavy industrial pillars, which struck the bus after the collision. Two injured passengers were in serious condition and shifted to a hospital in Vijayawada.

Two workers killed in separate NHAI site accidents

CH NEWS, Kashmir
Two workers died in separate accidents at NHAI construction sites in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday. In Samba's Jakh, 25-year-old Gotam Sahu from Bihar was killed when a concrete structure collapsed while he was working on a bridge under the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra project. Another worker was injured. In Jammu, 45-year-old Budhi Singh from Ramban died after falling from a height near the Sidhra Tawi Bridge construction site.

Woman killed, 12 rescued in Howrah apartment fire

CH NEWS, KOLKATA
A 65-year-old woman, identified as Gopa Mukherjee, died after a fire broke out in her apartment at Andul in West Bengal's Howrah district on Wednesday afternoon. The fire started around 1 pm on the second floor of a five-storey building, police said. Five fire tenders reached the spot and controlled the blaze within an hour. At least 12 residents from other floors were rescued by locals, police and firefighters. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Speaker issues notices to 20 TMC rebels.

NEW DELHI
Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has issued notices to 20 Trinamool Congress (TMC) MPs who have joined the little-known Nationalist Citizens Party of India (NCPI). The notices seek their responses within seven days to disqualification petitions filed by the TMC.
The petitions are based on allegations that the MPs abandoned the TMC and later joined the NCPI. TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee has argued that their actions attract disqualification under the anti-defection provisions of the Constitution. The petitions are currently pending before the Speaker.
The development came after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the Supreme Court that Birla had already issued notices to the 20 MPs. Mehta was appearing for the Lok Sabha Speaker and the Secretary

DELHI WOMEN'S SCHEME

9.5 Lakh women register for Lakshmi yojana scheme

NEW DELHI
Nearly 9.5 lakh women have registered for the Delhi government's Lakshmi Yojana within a month of its launch, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said on Wednesday. The scheme provides eligible women with Rs 2,500 every month, aiming to improve their financial security and help them become more independent.
Gupta said the scheme was launched on August 1 and described the monthly assistance as a commitment made

BJP Government claims 43% manifesto promises fulfilled

West Bengal Urban Development Minister Agnimitra Paul on Wednesday said the BJP government had fulfilled 43 per cent of its election manifesto promises since May

KOLKATA

West Bengal Urban Development Minister Agnimitra Paul on Wednesday said the BJP government has fulfilled 43 per cent of the promises made in its election manifesto since taking office in May. She made the claim while speaking to reporters on the sidelines of CREDAI Kolkata Techcon 2026. Paul did not provide details of the promises that had been completed.

Paul also expressed confidence that investment in West Bengal would increase significantly. She said the government was working on development projects and expected industries to enter the state in a major way. Her comments

"Administration was focused on delivering development on the ground"
- Agnimitra Paul, Development minister

came as the government focuses on attracting fresh investments and strengthening industrial activity.

Assam STF arrests youth over Pakistan terror links

SILCHAR

The Assam Police Special Task Force (STF), working with Hailakandi district police, arrested a 21-year-old man on Wednesday over his alleged links with the Pakistan-based Shahzad Bhatti Network (SBN), officials said. Fazal Islam Barbhuiyan was arrested from the Ramnathpur area of Hailakandi district during an early-morning operation.
The arrest followed an investigation that began with earlier arrests in July. On July 25, the STF arrested Akramul Islam of Dhubri, Aminur Rahman of Chirang and Abdul Hussain of Barpeta. Police said mobile phones, Aadhaar cards, bank passbooks and allegedly altered religious material were recovered from the three accused.
STF Superintendent of Police Pranab Kumar Pegu said Barbhuiyan's name surfaced during questioning of the three men arrested earlier. Police then kept watch on his activities before making the arrest. Officials said incriminating documents were recovered from him, while his mobile phone records allegedly showed contact with terrorist groups through social media platforms, including Instagram.
Pegu said investigators had found evidence suggesting that Pakistan-based groups were contacting people in Assam through social media and attempting to influence them. According to the STF, the alleged activity was linked to efforts to create sleeper cells in the state. Officials said many details could not be disclosed as the investigation was still underway.
With Wednesday's arrest, the number of people held in the case has risen to four. The investigation into the network began after an arrest in Nalbari in May based on intelligence inputs. The STF said it was closely monitoring suspicious social media activity and warned that more arrests could follow as the probe continues.

Justice Mehta questions CJP over transfer request

NEW DELHI

Supreme Court judge Justice Sandeep Mehta has written three letters to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, questioning why his requests to transfer Rajasthan High Court Acting Chief Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma have not been acted upon.
Justice Mehta referred to what he described as clear evidence of favouritism within the court.
In his first letter, dated August 2, Justice Mehta described the situation in his parent High Court in Rajasthan as "grim and disturbing".
He questioned why his repeated appeals had been ignored despite what he considered serious concerns about the functioning of the institution.
Justice Mehta also alleged that Sharma had shown conduct unbecoming of a leader of the institution on more than one occasion.

September 1.
The Chief Minister said there is no limit on the number of women who can benefit from the scheme. She also clarified that registration has no closing date, allowing eligible women to apply whenever they are ready. According to Gupta, beneficiaries will receive the full Rs 2,500 for the month in which they register.
She gave an example, saying women who registered as late as August 24 would still receive the complete Rs 2,500 for August. The government

NEET aspirant found dead inside rented flat

KOTA

A 20-year-old NEET aspirant from Madhya Pradesh was found dead at her rented flat in Rajasthan's, police said. Officials suspect that she died by suicide. Police reached the house after receiving information and took her to MBS Hospital, where doctors declared her dead. Her body was later kept in the hospital mortuary, and her family was informed.
The student was from Chhatarpur and had been staying in Kota with her younger sister while preparing for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test at a private coaching institute. The sisters had been living in Kota since 2023 and moved into the rented flat in July, according to police.
Station House Officer Devesh Bhardwaj said the younger sister had gone for coaching classes and returned later. When she found that her elder sister was not responding to repeated knocks, she sought help from other residents of the multi-storey building. Police were informed after the flat was opened and the student was found dead inside.
Police said no suicide note had been found in the room so far. Officers are examining the spot and collecting information to understand the circumstances surrounding the death. The postmortem examination will be carried out after the family reaches Kota, officials said.
Further action will be taken after the postmortem and discussions with the family, police said. Officials are continuing their inquiry to establish what happened before the student's death. The incident has once again drawn attention to the pressures faced by young people preparing for highly competitive entrance examinations. The investigation is also continuing at present.

JAIPUR

The Congress has received more than 40,000 applications for 10,245 councillor seats in 309 urban local bodies across Rajasthan, creating a busy selection exercise before the municipal elections. Party sources said the strong response has encouraged leaders, while the new QR based system has made it easier for aspirants to apply online.
State Congress spokesperson Swarnim Chaturvedi said the QR initiative has attracted young people hoping to enter local politics. The party has opened an online portal where applicants can use the code, fill in their details and seek tickets. More than half of the party's tickets are expected to go to youth candidates.
Observers are consulting ward workers and functionaries to judge each applicant's background, support and chances of winning. The process is being carried out in three phases. Afterward visits,

create a more favourable environment for businesses.
Roy had also said the proposed industrial policy would include steps to increase exports from the state. The government is looking to use these measures to support industrial growth and attract companies to West Bengal.
Paul said the administration was focused on delivering development on the ground. The government hopes increased industrial activity and corporate investment will contribute to economic growth and create more opportunities in the state. Further details of the claimed 43 per cent implementation of poll promises were not provided by the minister.

Fake liquor factory busted, thousands of bottles seized

BHUJ

Gujarat Police have busted a fake liquor factory in Kutch district and seized nearly 10,000 empty and filled bottles of a popular Indian-made foreign liquor (IMFL) brand. Two people have been detained following the operation at a makeshift unit in Adipur, officials said on Tuesday. The raid comes days after 13 people died in Bhavnagar district after allegedly consuming spurious liquor sold in bottles carrying the label of a well-known IMFL brand.
Police said the seized material included about 9,400 empty bottles and 600 bottles containing 180 ml of liquor each. Around 600 litres of chemicals were also recovered from the site. The two detained suspects were identified as Hitesh Bam-

Rajasthan congress gets 40,000 civic poll applications

JAIPUR

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Uttarakhand landslides block 72 roads amid rain

MUSSOORIE

More than 72 roads across Uttarakhand were blocked by landslides and boulder falls on Wednesday as several areas received light to moderate rain. Pithoragarh, Nainital and Chamoli were the worst affected, reporting 14, 12 and 10 road closures respectively. The India Meteorological Department has issued a yellow alert, warning of thunderstorms, lightning and intense rainfall at isolated places in the state's hilly districts from August 27 to September 1.

In Uttarkashi, pilgrim movement on the Janki Chatti-Yamunotri route continued under SDRF supervision after a retaining wall collapsed near Bhangeligad. PWD teams began repairs, expected to take seven to eight days.
Three villages in Mori tehsil remained without electricity after a feeder was damaged. Officials said restoration work was underway.
Despite widespread disruptions, Uttarakhand recorded rainfall below normal levels in the 24 hours ending Wednesday morning.

KEY INSIGHTS	
10,000:	Bottles seized
9,400:	Empty bottles
600:	Filled bottles
600L:	Chemicals recovered
2:	Suspects detained
13:	Hooch tragedy deaths

aniya, a Mumbai resident, and Vijendra Jat from Mathura in Uttar Pradesh.
Inspector General of Police, Border Range, Chirag Koradiya said further action was being taken against those involved. The authorities are examining the seized bottles and chemicals as part of the investigation. Gujarat is a dry state, where the manufacture, sale and consumption of alco-

hol are prohibited.
The raid has added to the ongoing investigation into the Bhavnagar hooch tragedy. Police said 67 people had consumed the spurious liquor containing methanol, a highly toxic substance. Thirteen people died, while authorities have arrested 27 people in connection with the case so far.
The State Monitoring Cell, which investigates illegal liquor and gambling activities, is conducting a wider investigation across several states. Officials are tracing the source of methanol and other chemicals, as well as the people involved in procuring and transporting the raw materials. Further investigation and arrests are expected as police work to uncover the wider network behind the illegal liquor trade.

India rejects UN panel remarks as malicious

NEW DELHI

India on Wednesday rejected observations made by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD), describing them as "politically motivated" and "highly malicious".
The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the remarks did not present a fair picture of the country. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal issued the response after the UN committee expressed concern over reports of alleged large-scale violations by law enforcement officials against several ethnic and ethno-religious communities.
The committee also referred to Indigenous and Tribal Peoples and other vulnerable groups in its observations.
The concerns included references to Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, particularly Dalits, as well as non-citizens.

Modi assures Nepal support after deadly flash floods

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday spoke with Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah and offered condolences following the loss of lives in devastating flash floods. Modi assured Shah that India was ready to provide all possible humanitarian assistance as rescue and relief operations continued in the Himalayan country.
The floods struck the Bhote Koshi River in Nepal's Rasuwa region, leaving at least seven people confirmed dead and hundreds missing, according to preliminary reports. The disas-



ter has also raised serious concerns about the safety of tourists and residents in the affected areas.
The Nepal Tourism Board said 384 tourists were reported missing, including 291 foreign nationals and 93 Nepali citizens. Among the foreign nationals, 105 were Indians. Tourists from the United Kingdom, Australia, the United

States, Malaysia, South Africa and the Netherlands were also reportedly missing. Officials stressed that these figures remain preliminary and are being verified.
The missing travellers were linked to nine travel agencies, while rescue teams continued searching for survivors and gathering information. Authorities were working with travel agencies and local officials to confirm identities and locate those still unaccounted for. Several tourists' nationalities also remained unconfirmed.
India and Nepal are coordinating closely as relief efforts continue.

Quick Read

Two escaped rape accused arrested in Rajasthan

CH NEWS, SRINAGAR
Two rape accused who escaped from Srinagar Central Jail were arrested in Rajasthan on Wednesday, officials said. Farman Khan and Mukhtar Guijar fled the high-security prison on August 23 after scaling its front wall. Both were facing separate cases under the POCSO Act. Police launched a major manhunt and issued wanted notices and rewards for information. Their arrests followed a tip-off from Srinagar Police. Further investigation is underway to establish how they escaped and trace any assistance they may have received during their flight.

Two labourers missing after boat accident

CH NEWS, PATNA
A boat carrying 21 labourers capsized during anti-erosion work along the Ganga in Bhagalpur's Raghapur block on Wednesday. Nineteen workers were rescued, while Sikandar Mandal and Badal Mandal remain missing. SDRF teams, police, local divers and villagers continued the search. District Magistrate Alankrita Pandey ordered action against contractors for alleged safety violations. Boat use for transporting materials has been banned, with tractors to carry geo-bags instead. Officials were directed to enforce safety rules and prevent minors from hazardous work.

Meghalaya assembly opposes uranium mining

SHILLONG
The Meghalaya Legislative Assembly on Wednesday unanimously adopted a government resolution opposing uranium mining and uranium ore-processing facilities in the state. Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma described the decision as historic, saying it reflected the collective position of the people and lawmakers against uranium-related activities.

Sinha calls for quaternary healthcare across India

SRINAGAR
Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday called for India to move beyond tertiary healthcare and expand quaternary-level treatment. Addressing the Quaternary Healthcare and Research Summit in Srinagar, Sinha said advanced medical care and research should become accessible to people across the country, including those living away from major cities. Recalling his visit to Akhnor in 2020, Sinha said doctors had highlighted the lack of modern equipment needed to diagnose rare diseases. He said the experience showed the gap between healthcare available at district hospitals

CJP PROTEST MARCH

AISA Backs Sep 5 CJP Delhi March

MUMBAI
The All-India Students' Association (AISA) on Wednesday extended support to the Cockroach Janta Party's proposed September 5 protest march in Delhi. The student organisation said the demonstration would seek withdrawal of FIRs registered against students and an inquiry into allegations of pellet and bullet firing during earlier protests. AISA national president Neha Bora said the concerns that had led to youth mobilisation remained unresolved. She



Rahul Gandhi targets Bihar govt over accountability

Rahul Gandhi accused the Bihar govt of suppressing student protests instead of addressing recruitment exam irregularities, paper leak allegations and concerns over accountability

NEW DELHI

Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday accused the Bihar government of using police action to avoid answering questions raised by students. He alleged that authorities were suppressing protests instead of addressing concerns over alleged irregularities in recruitment examinations and reported paper leaks. Gandhi said students were asking straightforward questions about the examination process and government accountability. He questioned why irregularities had alleged-



ly occurred, why action had not been taken over paper leak allegations and how long the government would continue to affect the future of young people. His remarks came amid controversy surrounding a video that showed a six-year-old boy being taken away by police

"Students are asking simple questions, and the government must answer them instead of using police action."
- Rahul Gandhi, LoP

during a student protest in Patna. The incident drew attention on social media and added to criticism surrounding the handling of demonstrations by authorities. Gandhi said the government should listen to students and respond to their concerns rather than rely on police measures. He argued that young people preparing for recruit-

ment examinations deserve a fair and transparent system, especially when their careers depend on the results. The Congress leader's comments have added to the political debate over examination irregularities and the treatment of protesters in Bihar. The allegations come at a time when concerns among students remain focused on recruitment procedures, paper leak claims and the need for accountability. The government's response to these allegations will remain important as students continue seeking clarity over their examinations and future opportunities

Jagan targets Naidu over drought, farmer crisis

AMARAVATI

Former Andhra Pradesh chief minister and YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Wednesday criticised the TDP-led coalition government over its response to drought conditions caused by El Nino. He said the government had failed to prepare a contingency plan despite farmers facing serious concerns over the kharif crop. Speaking at a press conference in Tadepalli, Jagan said Andhra Pradesh had recorded around 52 per cent deficient rainfall during the past two months. He alleged that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu had not given farmers

clear assurances or announced alternative measures. Jagan also accused the government of weakening Rythu Bharose Kendras and reducing support measures, including crop insurance and e-cropping. Jagan said the government had not started distributing seeds for alternative crops or announced a clear strategy to deal with the impact of El Nino. He also alleged that Andhra Pradesh's interests were being ignored over water from Srisailem and Nagarjuna Sagar. Citing government data, he said crop insurance applications had fallen from 1.18 crore in 2022-23 to 35.17 lakh. The YSRCP chief also attacked the government over

reservations for Backward Classes in local body elections. He claimed his government had provided greater representation to BC communities and spent Rs 1.82 lakh crore through various welfare schemes. He accused Naidu of repeating an earlier political dispute over the quota as elections approach. Jagan further raised concerns over law and order, referring to the Addanki incident involving police personnel and an autorickshaw. He alleged that authorities gave conflicting accounts and attempted to hide the facts. He also claimed organised ganja sales were growing. Jagan said these issues showed the coalition government needed to act quickly on farmers' concerns and governance.

Bengal orders job cards for migrant workers' families

KOLKATA

The West Bengal government has directed all district magistrates to identify families of migrant workers for issuing Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Cards under the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act. The cards will provide eligible rural households with up to 125 days of guaranteed wage employment annually and encouraging workers to return home. The Panchayat Affairs and Rural Development Department issued a circular asking district administrations to begin and complete the identification process at the earliest. Officials said the programme is aimed at creating regular income opportunities in villages, strengthening local economies and encouraging migrant workers to return to their home districts. According to the state Labour Department, more than 22 lakh migrant workers have been identified in West Ben-



West Bengal has directed district magistrates to identify migrant workers' families for rural job cards, offering up to 125 days of guaranteed wage employment annually and encouraging workers to return home.

gal. Their details have already been shared with district administrations. Officials will now verify the information and identify the families that can benefit from the rural employment guarantee. The government has asked district magistrates to treat the exercise as a priority rather than a routine administrative task. Murshidabad has the highest number of identified migrant workers, with around four lakhs, followed by Malda

with nearly three lakh and West Midnapore with more than 1.5 lakh. The employment guarantee under the new law is mainly intended for adult members of rural households willing to undertake unskilled manual work. The state has received an assurance of central assistance for implementing the scheme, while around Rs 1.265 crore has been allocated by the state Rural Development Ministry. Officials said the initiative could provide families with a local source of income and reduce their dependence on migration for employment.

Gujarat food scheme reaches 1.14 crore beneficiaries

GANDHINAGAR

More than 1.14 crore people from over 25 lakh families in Gujarat have received foodgrains under the state's Food Security Scheme during the past five years, according to data released by the Food and Civil Supplies Department on Wednesday. Beneficiaries received wheat, rice and coarse grains either free or at subsidised prices. Food and Civil Supplies Minister Raman Solanki said the government had taken several steps to strengthen food security under Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel. He said eligible families were also provided sugar, edible oil and gram on a monthly basis and during festivals, helping them manage essential house-

hold needs. The data showed that coverage expanded steadily. In 2022-23, around 3.06 lakh families, covering 14.48 lakh beneficiaries, received benefits. The number rose to 5.63 lakh families and 25.43 lakh beneficiaries in 2023-24. In 2024-25, about 7.49 lakh families and 34.53 lakh beneficiaries were covered. In 2025-26, the scheme reached 9.20 lakh families, benefiting nearly 39.65 lakh people. During these years, the state distributed large quantities of wheat, rice and coarse grains. In 2025-26 alone, beneficiaries received 8.76 lakh metric tonnes of wheat, 10.45 lakh metric tonnes of rice and 0.88 lakh metric tonnes of coarse grains.

YouTuber and mother killed in highway crash

AGAR MALWA

A 23-year-old YouTuber from Uttar Pradesh, Chhavi Varshney, and her mother were killed after their Ertiga rammed into the rear of a truck on the Ujjain-Garoth highway on Tuesday morning. The accident occurred around 6 am near Ramkhedi village. Three others, including Varshney's father, were seriously injured. The impact badly damaged the car, while the truck lost control, broke through a roadside railing and veered off the road. Police are investigating the crash.

Kharge targets BJP over rising household costs



NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday criticised the Narendra Modi government over rising prices of essential commodities, saying the BJP's promise of "acheche din" had instead made it harder for ordinary families to manage their household budgets. He accused the government of failing to control food inflation and ease the financial pressure on consumers. In a post on X, Kharge said the prices of basic items had become a serious concern for common people. He argued that families were being forced to spend more on everyday needs, leaving less money available for other household expenses. According to him, the government must address the issue instead of avoiding questions about inflation. Kharge also accused the BJP of trying to escape public scrutiny through what he described as distracting stunts

and irrelevant statements. He said the Congress would continue to raise questions about the cost of living and demand answers from the government on behalf of ordinary citizens. The Congress president said inflation directly affects families because food and other essential goods form a major part of monthly spending. He maintained that people could not be expected to ignore the continued pressure on their household finances while political debates focused on other issues. Kharge warned that voters would remember the difficulties caused by rising prices and would judge the government over its handling of inflation. His remarks added to the Congress's criticism of the Centre on economic issues, with the party continuing to demand greater accountability over the cost of essential commodities. The issue is likely to remain a major political point as concerns over household expenses continue.

No diplomatic deal possible with Iran 'savages': Netanyahu

Recounting a recent meeting with Trump, Netanyahu said they had discussed the possibility of diplomacy with the Islamic republic.

JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said a diplomatic deal was not possible with the "savages" who rule Iran as he hailed US President Donald Trump's new campaign of economic pressure.

Recounting a recent meeting with Trump, Netanyahu said they had discussed the possibility of diplomacy with the Islamic republic and added: "I doubt, however, that an agreement can be reached with that group there, with those savages."

"I tell you -- an agreement cannot be reached," Netanyahu told an event late Tuesday at an Israeli settlement in the occupied West Bank.

Netanyahu has long been sceptical of diplomacy with Iran, openly campaigning against a 2015 nuclear deal brokered by then US president Barack Obama, but he has been publicly careful not to criticise Trump while he sought a negotiated settlement.

Trump joined Netanyahu in a US-Israeli joint attack on Iran in late February but



agreed to a ceasefire in April in the face of widespread US public opposition to the war, which had sent oil prices spiralling.

Trump on Monday declared "economic D-Day" aimed at destroying Iran's economy, which has already endured years of sanctions, but he has shown reluctance to resume a full-scale war even as he grows frustrated that Tehran will not accept his demands.

Netanyahu voiced support for Trump's economic pressure campaign and said he had told Trump of this "third option", while praising the US president for pursuing it in "a very, very, very strong way". Trump had chosen to target

Iran-Oman agree on temporary Hormuz route

Muscat: Iran and Oman have agreed on a temporary maritime route for ships travelling through the Strait of Hormuz, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said on Wednesday. He, however, warned that the waterway will not fully reopen until the United States fulfils its commitments under an interim peace deal signed in June, which has since lapsed. The US-Israel war on Iran, which began with strikes on Tehran on February 28, has effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz to shipping, sending global energy markets into crisis. The narrow waterway through which one-fifth of global oil and natural gas supplies from Gulf producers are shipped in peacetime has become a major bone of contention between Washington and Tehran, and disagreements over the critical channel continue to hinder any hopes of a lasting peace plan. Since the US bombing of parts of Iran in July following more disputes over the strait, Iran has refused to hold direct talks with it. Even though active warfare has since paused again – replaced by a strategy of piling economic pressure on Iran – it has maintained that it will speak directly to only Oman about the future of the waterway, which passes through the territorial waters of the two countries.

not just Iran itself but decided on "tightening the siege on those who assist this regime, this terrible dictatorship. This is very important," Netanyahu said.

The Israeli leader had

pushed for years for a US attack on Iran, whose Shia cleric-run state supports anti-Israel armed groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas, which led the devastating October 7, 2023 attack on Israel.

14 Infants killed in Islamabad fire

A nursery fire at Islamabad's main public hospital killed newborns, triggering grief, anger and questions over safety standards and emergency preparedness

ISLAMABAD

At least 14 infants were killed in a devastating fire at a state-run hospital in Pakistan's capital Islamabad on Wednesday, with officials saying the blaze began after a blast in an air conditioner inside the nursery ward.

The fire erupted around 7 am local time on the third floor of the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences' mother and child health ward. Health Minister Mustafa Kamal said the blast triggered the fire and that the presence of large amounts of oxygen in the ward helped the flames spread rapidly.

There were 16 newborns inside the ward when the fire broke out, with one infant reportedly rescued. Television footage showed the ward badly gutted, with blackened walls, damaged equipment and smoke rising from the



FIRE TRAGEDY
• At least 14 infants killed.
• 16 newborns were reportedly inside.
• One infant was rescued.
• Fire followed an air-conditioner blast.
• Health secretary suspended after investigation ordered.

building. The ward was later sealed off.

Parents gathered outside in anguish, with some accusing the hospital of inadequate staffing and poor fire safety. One mother, Javeria, said there had been no doctor or

nurse in the ward and that families were not allowed to see the bodies of their children after they were removed.

Another parent, Mudasir, alleged the building lacked fire safety measures and proper emergency exits, saying only one door was open for families visiting their children.

Kamal rejected claims that doctors and staff were absent when the fire began. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif ordered an investigation and suspended the health secretary over the tragedy.

The incident has renewed concerns over safety standards at Pakistan's under-resourced public hospitals.

“It is not God's will... I don't accept it.”
— Javeria, who lost her newborn

Quick Read

Taiwan Prez pushes \$6.6 bn military drone bill

TAIPEI

Taiwan must demonstrate its resolve to defend itself and pass a six-year, T\$210 billion (\$6.6 billion) special budget to buy military drones, President Lai Ching-te said on Wednesday ahead of a crucial vote



in the opposition-controlled parliament. Taiwan's government says the plans to buy some 210,000 new military drones cannot wait, given the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East have shown the importance of uncrowded weapons in modern warfare.

Brazil vote offers opposing politics, fiscal outcomes

SAO PAULO

Brazil's October election offers voters yet another stark left-versus-right choice, but investors see less difference on the fiscal front with debt likely to keep rising under either candidate. Flávio Bolsonaro, the son of far-right fire-brand and former President Jair Bolsonaro, has painted a picture of a troubled economy as he aims to unseat leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, whom polls show holding a narrow lead. Analysts are pricing a Lula victory followed by an adjustment that only slows the pace of debt accumulation, but markets are skeptical that either candidate could make a credible start on significantly changing the trajectory of debt.

BACK-TO-BACK STORMS BATTER SOUTHERN CHINA

HONG KONG

China's coastal and southern regions are bracing for days of intense rainfall as Typhoon Narra moves inland and Typhoon Saudel approaches the eastern seaboard, forcing authorities to evacuate tens of thousands of people and suspend businesses and tourist activities.

Narra made landfall as a tropical storm in the southern island province of Hainan after lingering over the Beibu Gulf for several days. The storm dumped heavy rain across Hainan, Guangxi and Guangdong, pushing rivers above warning levels and flooding low-lying areas.

Narra and Saudel, together with tropical cyclones Gaenari and Atsani, have formed a rare group of four storms simultaneously swirling across the Northwest Pacific and South China Sea, according to China's Meteorological Administration.

Heavy rainfall is expected to continue across southern China even as communities deal with the effects of recent



downpours.

Attention is also turning to Saudel, which is forecast to make landfall along China's eastern coast between Zhejiang and Fujian provinces between Thursday and Friday. Its outer rain bands could stretch towards Guangxi, potentially adding to rainfall in already affected areas.

Saudel crossed Japan's Okinawa prefecture early Wednesday, bringing destructive

winds and rough seas. Nearly 35,000 homes lost power, while 92 flights serving airports across Okinawa were cancelled. All Nippon Airways also suspended flights to and from Naha Airport.

Taiwanese forecasters said Saudel was tracking north of the island and was expected to weaken gradually, although moderate rainfall could continue in parts of Taiwan through Friday.

post-pandemic.

He said he'd like to propose that countries monitor AI's ability to create molecules and carry out biological attacks something that would not get in the way of any tech industry's development. Gates' staff are working to finalize a meeting with Xi for his next China trip, his spokesman said, scheduled for November.

President Xi "might be surprised by how vehement I am," Gates said. He said China is protecting children from AI companion addiction, but he believes few leaders globally are rising to the occasion to get ahead of a litany of potential harms from AI.

"Yes, in the past, technology never did this. This time is different. This is like an evolutionary milestone that needs incredible policy management by society as a whole." China's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Gates struck a more optimistic note about AI in January, but since then he has become concerned that it can conduct attacks while supplanting jobs and hooking users psychologically.

For instance, technology from OpenAI, Anthropic and Meta recently hacked real-world websites in what were supposed to be isolated cybersecurity evaluations.

Bill Gates plans to meet Chinese Prez

SAN FRANCISCO

Bill Gates is looking to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping later this year, eager to propose global efforts to mitigate the growing risks posed by artificial intelligence. The Microsoft co-founder and billionaire philanthropist in an interview that he believes China might agree to restricting potentially dangerous AI model releases if the U.S. took initiative on that first.

"The whole world would go along with that," said Gates, who met with Xi three years ago, when he was the first foreign entrepreneur to be hosted by the Chinese president

US spy chief held talks with Russian counterparts: Kremlin

MOSCOW: U.S. CIA Director John Ratcliffe held talks with Russian intelligence officials during his visit to Moscow but did not meet President Vladimir Putin, the Kremlin said on Wednesday.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that Putin had been briefed on the outcome of Ratcliffe's talks, which come as the war in Ukraine is escalating and as efforts to reach a lasting peace deal between the U.S. and Iran have stalled.

Peskov declined to disclose what had been discussed or to provide any further details however. "All I can tell you is that there have been contacts via the security services. I can tell you that there have been no meetings with the Russian president. Naturally, President Putin is kept informed of everything without delay," said Peskov.

Asked if visits by such senior U.S. officials could help improve the dire state of U.S.-Russia relations, Peskov said that contacts between the two countries' intelligence agencies were a positive thing. "These contacts often continue even during the most difficult periods in bilateral relations. Our president, incidentally, has spoken about this. However, it is still too early to say to what extent this will, overall, help to steer our bilateral relations out of the profound crisis in which they currently find themselves," he said.

Harry, Meghan's media storm shows power and peril of brand

LONDON

If Prince Harry and his wife Meghan were hoping the press would give them an easier time on their return to Britain, the frenzied reporting around her potential new acting role may indicate how they, and their brand, will fare.

With most royal commentators flummoxed by the couple's imminent return to Britain six years after they left for the U.S., reports emerged that Meghan was in talks to appear in a Guy Ritchie Netflix crime drama, before a new report said a backlash had prompted the offer to be withdrawn.

While neither side confirmed nor denied any talks, branding experts said it showed what the couple would offer to brands and entertainment groups as they build their life outside the

royal family: huge media interest, polarised opinions and drama.

But it also shows the challenge they will face as they seek to promote the charities and brands they work with and attempt to maintain some kind of privacy, in a country where polling shows they have become unpopular, at least among older people.

"You can't buy this kind of publicity for a TV show," entertainment journalist Caroline Frost. Mark Borkowski, a British PR guru, agreed: "Both Harry and Meghan give people visibility. They can generate an audience."

Harry (41), younger son of King Charles, and Meghan (45) are returning to Britain six years after they cited the intense media scrutiny as one reason they were quitting royal duties to carve out independent careers, backed by commercial tie-ups.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, AANAND S S/o P R SANTHANA KRISHNAN, R/o Flat No. 1103, T11, 11th Floor, L and T Raintree Boulevard, Bellary Road, Shabari Nagar, Byatarayanapura, Bangalore, Karnataka-560092, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as AANAND SANTHANA KRISHNAN.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Divya Ramakant Naik W/o Pradeep Naik R/o #185, Chinnapura, VTC: Arbail, PO: Idagundi, Sub District : Yellapur, District: Uttara Kannada, State: Karnataka-581337, have changed my name to Prithvi Pradeep Naik

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that in the Advertisement published on 05-08-2026, a typographical/ clerical error occurred regarding a registered document. Incorrectly Published As: Registered Discharge Deed executed by S. Ramakrishna S/o Siddappa in favour of Munireddy S/o Narayanareddy. Correct Reading: Registered Discharge Deed executed by SMFG Credit India Company Limited in favour of Munireddy S/o Narayanareddy. All concerned parties, financial institutions, and the general public are requested to take note of this correction and read all connected/ further documents accordingly. K. S. HARISH KUMAR, B.A., L.L.B. Advocate Office: Near Kishore School, Above Apollo Pharmacy, Beside Santhoshi Matha Temple, Bangalore Main Road, Chinthamani. Mobile: 9980110692

ORDER OF FREEDOM

UKRAINE AWARDS MUSK HIGH STATE HONOUR

KYIV

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has bestowed one of Ukraine's top state honours on SpaceX owner Elon Musk as Kyiv seeks to expand use of the company's Starlink terminals, which provide battlefield communications for Ukrainian forces.

Under a presidential decree published on the presidential website on Wednesday, Musk was awarded the Order of

Freedom. The decree praised Musk "for outstanding personal contributions to protecting human life and freedom, and for developing relations between the peoples of Ukraine and the United States of America."

Musk switched on the Starlink satellite internet service over Ukraine shortly after Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022. It has become the lifeblood of Ukraine's battlefield communications



and a tool for piloting drones.

Musk agreed to turn off thousands of Russian "grey-market" Starlinks in Ukraine this year, causing problems for Russian forces, at the behest of former Defence Minister Mykhailo Fedorov before he was dismissed in July.

Ukraine has now asked to use Starlink over Russian territory as it seeks to attack targets including launchers

for ballistic missiles that are wreaking destruction on Ukrainian cities.

Zelenskyy has said he was told that Musk opposed the move as a "major escalation" of the war, but that Ukraine had "started to receive a different, more encouraging feedback."

Using Starlink over Russian territory could reduce capabilities that Russia is relying on to drag out the war, Zelenskyy said.

Roadmap of his injury:

- Pucovski was 16 when the 2014 incident allegedly occurred.
- Lawyers allege he was allowed to resume training after being knocked unconscious.
- His parents were reportedly not immediately informed.
- He later suffered 13 concussions during his career.
- A medical panel eventually advised him to retire.



Pucovski Sues School Over Concussion

SYDNEY

Retired Australia batter Will Pucovski has launched legal action against his former school Brighton Grammar, alleging it failed to follow concussion protocols after he was knocked unconscious during an Australian rules football training session in 2014.

Pucovski was 16 when his head allegedly collided with a teammate's knee during an aggressive physical drill. His lawyers claim the coach had urged players to "go in hard" after a heavy defeat to Scotch College. The claim alleges Pucovski was assisted from the field but later allowed to take part in another drill without appropriate medical assessment.

His parents, according to the writ filed in the Supreme Court of Victoria, were not immediately informed about the incident. In the following days, Pucovski reportedly developed severe headaches, blurred vision and nausea. His parents eventually took him to hospital, where doctors advised him to stop physical activity and stay away from school while recovering.

Pucovski's lawyers allege the 2014 incident caused a traumatic brain injury from which he never fully recovered. They further claim the injury left him more vulnerable to subsequent head trauma during his cricket career.

Pucovski endured a succession of concussions and ultimately suffered 13 during his career. A medical panel eventually advised him to end his playing career. Pucovski, who announced his retirement from professional cricket last year at 27, had been regarded as one of Australia's most promising batting talents. The legal action now places renewed focus on the consequences of concussion and the duty of schools to protect young athletes.

Jadeja's DRS Woes Stretch To 22

COLOMBO: Ravindra Jadeja's run with the Decision Review System continued as the spinner failed with a review during the second Test against Sri Lanka. The unsuccessful challenge extended his streak to 22 consecutive reviews as a bowler without overturning an umpire's decision.

Jadeja convinced his captain to review an LBW appeal against Keshara Nuwantha. However, replays showed the batter had edged the delivery onto his pad, leaving India to lose a review.

The spinner's last successful review as a bowler came in July 2023 during a Test against West Indies in Dominica. Kumar Roach had



Jadeja's Test Milestones
350 Test wickets for India
First Indian left-arm bowler to reach the mark
Fifth Indian overall with 350 Test wickets
Third left-arm spinner globally to reach 350
Fourth player with 4,000-plus runs and 350-plus wickets

the decision was incorrect and was overturned. Since then, Jadeja has struggled to make successful calls. Of his 22 unsuccessful reviews, four have ended with umpire's call, while India have lost 18 challenges.

The sequence comes despite Jadeja reaching milestones in the series.

In the first Test against Sri Lanka, he became the first Indian left-arm bowler to claim 350 Test wickets. Zaheer Khan is second among Indian left-arm bowlers with 311 wickets.

Jadeja, 37, is the fifth Indian to reach 350 Test wickets, joining Anil Kumble, Ravichandran Ashwin, Kapil Dev and Harbhajan Singh. Globally, he is the third left-arm spinner to reach the mark.

He has also joined a group of Test all-rounders with more than 4,000 runs and 350 wickets, becoming the fourth player to achieve the double after Kapil Dev, Ian Botham and Daniel Vettori.

'The real test lies ahead': Mirabai Chanu

NEW DELHI

As the thirst for a maiden Asian Games medal gets stronger every day, Saikhom Mirabai Chanu is leaving no stone unturned to win the only global medal that has eluded the Tokyo Olympics silver medallist. Staying injury-free ahead of the September 19-October 4 Games in Aichi-Nagoya remains Mirabai's topmost priority.

Two men who have been part of Mirabai's stellar journey have been her coach Vijay Sharma and American strength and conditioning coach Dr Aaron Horschig. The association with Dr Horschig started in November 2020 and continues till today.

"We have a video call every Thursday with him and we discuss everything about training, recovery and the next steps. Everything is reviewed to the finest detail and since Dr Horschig was a weightlifter himself, he knows every muscle in the body. This constant review has kept me in shape," Mirabai told SAI Media.

The quest for the Asian Games has been relentless. Mirabai and team did not waste a day after winning the gold medal at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow this time. The CWG organisers had dismantled the weightlifting hall but Mirabai, Sharma and physio Rohit Chhabria found a gymnasium and paid for a training session in Glasgow.

"I was straight back to training at Modinagar. In fact, I did not go home (in Manipur) and I have set myself a challenge 'no going home till I win a medal at the Asian Games,'" said Mirabai.

Injuries have jinxed Mirabai's quest for an Asian Games medal. At the last Asian Games in Hangzhou, Mirabai finished fourth in the 49 kg category after a hip and thigh injury ruined her campaign in the snatch section itself. In the 2018 edition in Jakarta, Mirabai was ruled out with a severe back injury. Despite the hat-trick of Commonwealth Games.

North Korea Plans Smaller Asian Games Team

HANGZHOU

North Korea is set to send around 100 athletes competing in 14 sports to the Asian Games in Japan later this year, according to the secretary general of the country's Olympic Committee.

The planned delegation is significantly smaller than the 185 athletes North Korea sent across 18 sports at the previous Asian Games in Hangzhou in 2023. Despite the reduction, Pyongyang is hoping its smaller contingent can improve on its medal tally from the last edition.

North Korea won 11 gold, 18 silver and 10 bronze medals in Hangzhou, making the upcoming participation an important test of the country's sporting strength after years of restricted international competition.

According to Korean media reports, Olympic Committee secretary general Ko Chol Ho told the Tokyo-based Choson Sinbo newspaper that he hoped the reduced team would win more medals than it did three years ago.



North Korea at Asian Games:

- **Athletes:** Around 100
- **Sports:** 14
- **Last Asian:** Hangzhou 2023
- **Previous delegation:** 185 athletes in 18 sports
- **2023 medal tally:** 11 gold, 18 silver, 10 bronze
- **Asian Games:** Sep 19–October 4

North Korea sharply restricted overseas sporting participation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The country also did not send athletes to the Tokyo Summer Olympics in 2021, citing the global health crisis.

Its limited international participation continued beyond the pandemic, with North Korea also absent from the 2022 and 2026 Winter Olympics.

The 20th Asian Games will be held in Nagoya and other cities across Japan's Aichi prefecture from September 19 to October 4. More than 11,000 athletes from 45 countries are expected to compete.

North Korea's participation comes against a backdrop of

Pakistan fast bowler Aimen Anwar retires from international cricket

LAHORE

Pakistan fast bowler Aimen Anwar has announced her retirement from international cricket with immediate effect, bringing her career to a close after representing the country at three T20 World Cups and the 2022 ICC Women's Cricket World Cup.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) confirmed on Wednesday that Aimen is stepping away from international cricket after representing Pakistan in eight ODIs and 37 T20Is from July 2016 to February 2023.

The right-arm medium-fast bowler made her T20I debut against England in Southampton in July 2016, becoming Pakistan women's 37th player to earn a T20I cap. She made her ODI debut against Bangladesh in Colombo in February 2017 and went on to take four wickets in the 50-over format.

In T20Is, Aimen took 29 wickets, finishing with 33 international wickets across formats in her 45-match Pakistan career.

Aimen was part of Pakistan's squads at the Women's T20 World Cups in 2018, 2020 and 2022-23. She also featured in Pakistan's campaign at the 2022 ICC Women's Cricket World Cup in New Zealand.

Her return to the national set-up for the 2020 T20 World Cup followed the selectors recalling her after her performances in domestic cricket. The PCB had included her in Pakistan's 15-member squad for the tournament in Australia.

After stepping away from international cricket, Aimen has stayed involved in the sport through broadcasting and has now begun another chapter as an official. She made her debut as a match referee at the ongoing National Women's U19 Tournament on Monday, after successfully completing her match-referee induction course in January this year.

Her international career spanned nearly seven years, during which she was part of several important phases in Pakistan women's cricket and featured alongside some of the country's leading players.



Syndrela Das, Payas Jain included in TOPS Development Scheme

NEW DELHI

Rising Indian table tennis players Syndrela Das and Payas Jain have been included in the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) Development Scheme, strengthening the country's focus on nurturing young talent ahead of the 2026 Asian Games, 2030 Commonwealth Games and the 2036 Olympics.

Seventeen-year-old Syndrela, who hails from Kolkata, earned her place in the development programme following a string of impressive performances on the international stage. The teenager won a silver medal in the Girls' Doubles event and a bronze in the Girls' Singles competition at the Asian Youth Championships in Thailand earlier this year.

Syndrela had also enjoyed a highly successful 2023 season, when she won National Ranking age-group titles in the Under-15, Under-17 and Under-19 singles categories. She subsequently made the transition to the senior national circuit in 2025.

Earlier this year, TOPS had created a dedicated group for young table tennis players in the 14-17 age bracket as part of an effort to build India's bench strength for the 2030 Commonwealth Games and the 2036 Olympic Games.

Lyon's Australia Spot Faces Fresh Pressure

MELBOURNE

Nathan Lyon's position in Australia's Test side is facing fresh scrutiny as selectors weigh the merits of an all-pace attack for upcoming series against South Africa and New Zealand.

Lyon, Australia's second-highest Test wicket-taker with 571 wickets from 143 matches, had been an automatic selection for more than a decade. However, changing conditions and the strength of Australia's pace attack could limit his role as he approaches his 39th birthday in November.

After missing the final two Ashes Tests because of a hamstring injury, Lyon returned for the Bangladesh series as a specialist spinner supporting Mitchell Starc, Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood.

His recall was not guaranteed for the second Test after he took 1-125 in the opening defeat and was out-bowled by Bangladesh's spin-bowler Mehidy Hasan Miraz. Australia even considered selecting Scott Boland alongside an all-pace attack in Mackay, but the pitch conditions ultimately favoured Lyon.

The spinner responded with 3-25 in Bangladesh's second innings, although his impact was limited because the visitors collapsed for 64 and 95 across their two innings.

Wicketkeeper Alex Carey acknowledged that Australia's fast bowlers had done most of the work, leaving Lyon with fewer overs.

However, Carey also backed the veteran's quality and experience.

Lyon remains adamant that he can continue contributing at the highest level. Despite the injury setback and questions over workload, he does not believe Australia should abandon a specialist spinner.

The selectors must now balance Lyon's remarkable record against evolving conditions and an increasingly dominant pace attack.

Alex Carey: "Nathan's a high-class bowler, has been for a number of years."

Alex Carey: "Australia's quicks were getting the job done, resulting in fewer overs for Lyon."

Nathan Lyon: "The veteran remains convinced he belongs in Australia's Test side despite growing competition."



MAN UNITED'S FERNANDES NAMED PFA PLAYER OF THE YEAR



OLD TRAFFORD

Bruno Fernandes, the lynchpin of Manchester United's attack who provided a Premier League-record 21 assists during the 2025-26 season, was named the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) Player of the Year.

Club captain Fernandes, a United player since 2020, also scored nine goals as he helped the club finish third in the English top flight. Manchester City forward Khadija Shaw, who was the Women's Super League top scorer with 21 goals, was named as the Women's Player of the Year for the second time, having previously won the award in 2024.

The men's annual award, voted for by members of the players' union, has now been won by United players 12 times, more than any other club in England and Wales.

Fernandes is the second Portuguese player to win the award after Cristiano Ronaldo won it twice in a row in 2007 and 2008.

The 31-year-old thrived as coach Michael Carrick allowed United's front four more freedom to control the attack. "Bruno can just create moments. He's bright. I think that little bit of freedom suits him. He's got a natural brain," Carrick said in February.

Fernandes has scored 110 goals and provided 106 assists for United. He reached 200 goal involvements (goals and assists) in just 314 matches, the second-quickest United player to reach the milestone in the Premier League era after Wayne Rooney, who did the same in 295 matches.

The Young Player of the Year award went to 21-year-old Manchester City left back Nico O'Reilly after a breakthrough campaign that also saw him win the Premier League Young Player of the Season award. England international O'Reilly made 53 appearances for City in all competitions, scoring nine goals. Arsenal's 22-year-old striker Olivia Smith was named the Women's Young Player of the Year for the second time in a row.

PFA Premier League Team of the Year: Goalkeeper: David Raya (Arsenal).