

## IN BRIEF

### Ajit Pawar pays tribute to Dr Deepak Tilak

Mumbai, July 16 (UNI) :Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar paid tribute to Dr Deepak Tilak, the great-grandson of freedom fighter Lokmanya Tilak, former vice-chancellor of Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth and Trustee Editor of the historic daily 'Kesari' who passed away today at his pune residence.

In his condolence message, Pawar said Dr Tilak made remarkable contributions in the fields of education, journalism, and social service. Carrying forward the legacy of the Tilak family's public service, Dr Tilak upheld nationalistic values, moral integrity, and a commitment to public enlightenment through Kesari.Highlighting Dr Tilak's work in promoting the Japanese language, Pawar noted that his efforts were recognized by the government of Japan. He also played a key role as the chairperson of the Lokmanya Tilak National Award Committee.Describing him as a thinker, efficient administrator, sensitive journalist, and dedicated social worker, the Deputy CM stated that Dr.Tilak's demise has left a void in Pune's public life. "I share the grief of his family.May his soul rest in peace," Pawar said.

### Woman attempts self-immolation at Beed Police HQ

Beed, July 16 (UNI) : A woman collapsed outside the Beed Superintendent of Police office today following a volatile confrontation where she and family members attempted self-immolation.The incident involved Dnyaneshwari Munde, widow of murdered Parli businessman Mahadev Munde, who was protesting with relatives demanding arrest of culprits in the eighteen-month-old unsolved murder case.During the protest, the family produced petrol bottles and threatened self-immolation while chanting "Give us justice." Officers confiscated two fuel containers during the physical altercation that ensued. Following the scuffle, Munde met SP Navneet Kanwat for discussions. Emerging afterward, she told media: "I retain faith in police," briefly outlining her dialogue with the superintendent.

## Accelerate development of logistics hub for industrial expansion in Dhule: CM Fadnavis



Mumbai, July 16 (IANS) : Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday directed the administration to accelerate the development of a logistical hub for industrial expansion in Dhule from North Maharashtra.

"In view of the increasing population of Dhule city, it is essential to set up a logistics hub (dry port and special terminal for storage) for civic amenities and industrial expansion. For this, the feasibility should be examined from technical, financial and logistical points of view, and

the process of setting up the hub should be expedited as per the advice of experts," he said after chairing a meeting on various projects of Dhule Municipal Corporation.

Fadnavis said that necessary facilities should be provided to industries in Dhule. Also, arrangements should be made for rainwater drainage in Devpur, Valwadi, and low-lying areas, and coordination should be made with the Disaster Management Department.

Keeping in mind the expansion and population

growth of Dhule city, he gave instructions regarding laying pipelines, setting up solar projects with battery storage for industrial projects and sanctioning funds for the underground sewage drainage scheme. Also, Dhule city is spending Rs 32 to 33 crore on electricity every year for water distribution and street lights, and to reduce this burden, solar projects should be set up at suitable places, said the Chief Minister.

The city has expanded from 46.46 sq km to 101.08 sq km. Therefore, he also

suggested that funds should be sanctioned from the Urban Upliftment Scheme for basic amenities in the increased area.

Apart from this, CM Fadnavis also directed that positive action should be taken to build a shopping centre on the MHADA land along Chalisgaon Road and a hostel for working women in Dhule.Meanwhile, Sports Minister Dattatray Bharne has informed that the government is positive about allocating about 1500 acres of land for the Mini MIDC at Junction in Indapur taluka, and this was discussed in a meeting with Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. "Junction in the western part of Indapur taluka is known as an important and small-scale industrial village. Industrialists are engaged in the manufacture of various equipment here. The demand of the industrialists here to start the MIDC has been pending for the last 40 years. By implementing this demand, the youth of the area will get work," said Minister Bharne, who was elected from the Indapur Assembly seat.

## Opposition protests outside Assembly over Shiv Sena MLA's assault on canteen staff

Mumbai, July 16 (UNI) Wearing 'lungi, baniyan,' legislators of the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) staged a protest today outside the Maharashtra Assembly to condemn the alleged assault on a hostel canteen employee by Shiv Sena (Shinde faction) MLA Sanjay Gaikwad and the inaction over the incident.

Raising slogans like 'Chaddi-Baniyan gang, down down!' and 'this hooligan government must go,' several opposition MLAs appeared at the protest site dressed in towels and vests (baniyan), drawing public and media attention to their symbolic gesture against the incident.

The protest erupted after a video went viral in which MLA Sanjay Gaikwad, a legislator from the Eknath Shinde faction of the Shiv Sena, allegedly stormed into the canteen at the MLA hostel dressed only in a towel and vest and physically assaulted a canteen employee over alleged poor quality of food served to him.

The incident has sparked widespread outrage among opposition parties.

Prominent leaders such as Ambadas Danve (leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council), newly appointed NCP (Sharad Pawar faction) state president Shashikant Shinde, senior MLA Jitendra Awhad, and Congress Legislative Council leader Satej Patil led the protest.

## Nurses warn of statewide strike over pay, contracts

Mumbai, July 16 (UNI) : The Maharashtra State Nurses Association has declared plans for an indefinite statewide strike commencing July 18 unless the government addresses their critical demands of pay parity and contractual hiring practices.The association, representing over 30,000 nurses, will initiate protests at Azad Maidan starting July 16, escalating to a one-day strike on July 17. Failure to resolve grievances by July 18 will trigger an open-ended work stoppage across all government hospitals.

Central to the dispute is the state's continued recruitment of nurses on contractual terms rather than filling permanent vacancies. "Fifty percent of nursing positions in government hospitals remain unfilled, forcing unsustainable workloads on existing staff," stated Sumitra Tote, General Secretary of the association. "The union explicitly rejects temporary contracts as a solution to staffing shortages," she added.

## Shiv Sena, Republican Sena form alliance ahead of local body elections

Mumbai, July 16 (IANS) : Ahead of local and civic body elections in Maharashtra, the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and Republican Sena, founded by Anandraj Ambedkar, on Wednesday formed an alliance on three pillars - thought, faith and development.

Shiv Sena chief leader and Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said that both Shiv Sena and Republican Sena are armies. They are armies that fight against injustice on the streets."One is an army that carries the legacy of

Balasaheb Thackeray's thoughts, and the other is an army that carries the legacy of Bharat Ratna Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar. I worked as a common man when I was the Chief Minister, and now I am working as a Deputy CM who is dedicated to the Common Man.The common man, the worker, is our social commitment. The link between the people at the grassroots level should not be broken, that is the path we have followed till now," he added."Eknath Shinde became the Chief Minister because of the Babasaheb

Ambedkar Constitution. Narendra Modi, who comes from a common family, became the Prime Minister. The Constitution is supreme, and the common people should get justice in it; it should be brought into the mainstream. We are working keeping in mind Babasaheb's Constitution and the ideals of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj," said Deputy CM Shinde.He said that power should be used to bring better days to the lives of the common man. "Both parties are parties of workers, so this alliance will work," he added.Republican

Sena chief Anandraj Ambedkar said that the Shiv Sena-Republican Sena alliance will bring about social and political changes in the state. He expressed confidence that he would include Ambedkar activists in the government.

Deputy CM Shinde said that the Constitution was never in danger, but the opposition used fake narratives for political gain. "People showed them a place in the Assembly elections. As long as the sun and moon exist, Dr Babasaheb's Constitution will remain," he added

## Cabinet hails Shukla's return from ISS

New Delhi, July 16 (UNI) The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi today hailed the successful completion of Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla's 18-day mission aboard the International Space Station (ISS), describing his return as the dawn of a "new chapter" in India's space journey.

It passed a resolution commending Shukla's pioneering achievement and asserting that the mission symbolized India's infinite aspirations and emerging global leadership in space exploration.

"The Cabinet joins the nation in celebrating the safe return of Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla to Earth after his historic 18-day mission aboard the ISS," said Information & Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, while reading out the resolution at a press conference here.

The resolution further credited Prime Minister Modi for his strategic foresight in steering India's space ambitions and emphasized his unwavering belief in India's potential to become a dominant force among spacefaring nations. Shukla's mission, which concluded on July 15 has been described as a source of pride, glory, and joy for the entire nation. It has been hailed as a crucial step towards India's own human spaceflight aspirations, including the ambitious Gaganyaan mission and the establishment of the Bharatiya Antariksha Station.

"This successful mission elevates India's global standing in space exploration and reinforces the nation's resolve to be at the forefront of human space exploration," the Cabinet resolution noted.

## BJP contemplating to remove 4-5 pc of voters from list, alleges Tejaswi

Patna, July 16 (UNI) Leader of opposition in the Bihar Assembly, Tejaswi Yadav today alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was contemplating "removing 4 to 5 percent" of the electorate from the voters' list.

Accusing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of systematically deleting voters' names from the electoral rolls, Yadav here alleged that it was the BJP's politically motivated move to influence the upcoming assembly elections.

Yadav reiterated that Bihar has approximately 7.90 crore registered voters, and if even one percent of them were removed, it would have serious consequences on the result.Yadav pointed out that if 7.90 lakh voters

were deleted across 243 Assembly constituencies, it would lead to an average removal of 3,251 voters per constituency. He further explained that Bihar has 77,895 polling booths, averaging around 320 booths per constituency. Even if only 10 names were removed from every booth, 3,200 votes per constituency would be removed, he added. Referring to the data of previous elections, Yadav said that in the 2015 Bihar Assembly elections, the margin of victory in 15 constituencies was less than 3,000 votes. However, the number rose to 35 constituencies in the 2020 elections. He alleged that the BJP was targeting such seats where the margin of victory was narrow.



## UPI has reached tea sellers, vegetable vendors : Ashwini

When the world questioned how a tea seller or a vegetable vendor could use digital payments, but today that dream has come true -- UPI payments have surpassed Visa transactions, Union Minister for Electronics and IT, Ashwini Vaishnaw, said on Sunday. Addressing a packed hall at the Yashobhoomi Convention Centre here on the occasion of 10 years of Digital India, he said that this is the strength of 1.4 billion Indians.

(See on page 8)

## Odisha CM's chopper grounded for more than month ....



More than a month after being stranded on the college playground in Odisha's Kendrapara district, the defunct helicopter which carried the Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on June 9 for his maiden visit to the district, embarked on its return journey to Mumbai for its repair by road on a trailer vehicle today.

( See on page 2)

## UN chief deeply concerned over violence in southern Syria



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is deeply concerned over the continued violence in the Druze-majority area in Suweida governorate in southern Syria, which has resulted in dozens of casualties, including among civilians, said Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for the UN chief, on Tuesday.

(See on page 5)

## British tennis player Moore given four-year doping ban



British tennis player Tara Moore has been banned for four years for a doping offence, despite being cleared by an independent tribunal 18 months ago.An appeal by the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) has been upheld by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (Cas).

(See on page 7)

## Sikkim CM announces phased housing and blanket distribution for needy families

Gangtok, July 16 (UNI) : Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang today assured the people that the state government will construct houses by 2027 for those given tokens earlier, with economically weaker families getting "special priority".

He emphasised that the distribution process will take place in a phased and systematic manner to ensure the benefits reach the genuinely needy first.

Addressing concerns over delays and confusion regarding allotment orders and material support, the Chief Minister clarified that even judicial officials have received allotment orders. "Let them sit quietly with their orders for now. We are moving step by step. If we try to give everything to everyone at once, it becomes unmanageable," he said, urging citizens to remain patient and cooperative.

Tamang explained that housing projects will be built across 27 designated areas, and beneficiaries who have already started constructing houses will be grouped into separate clusters.

These households will be given building support, such as materials and labour assistance, from the government. He added that

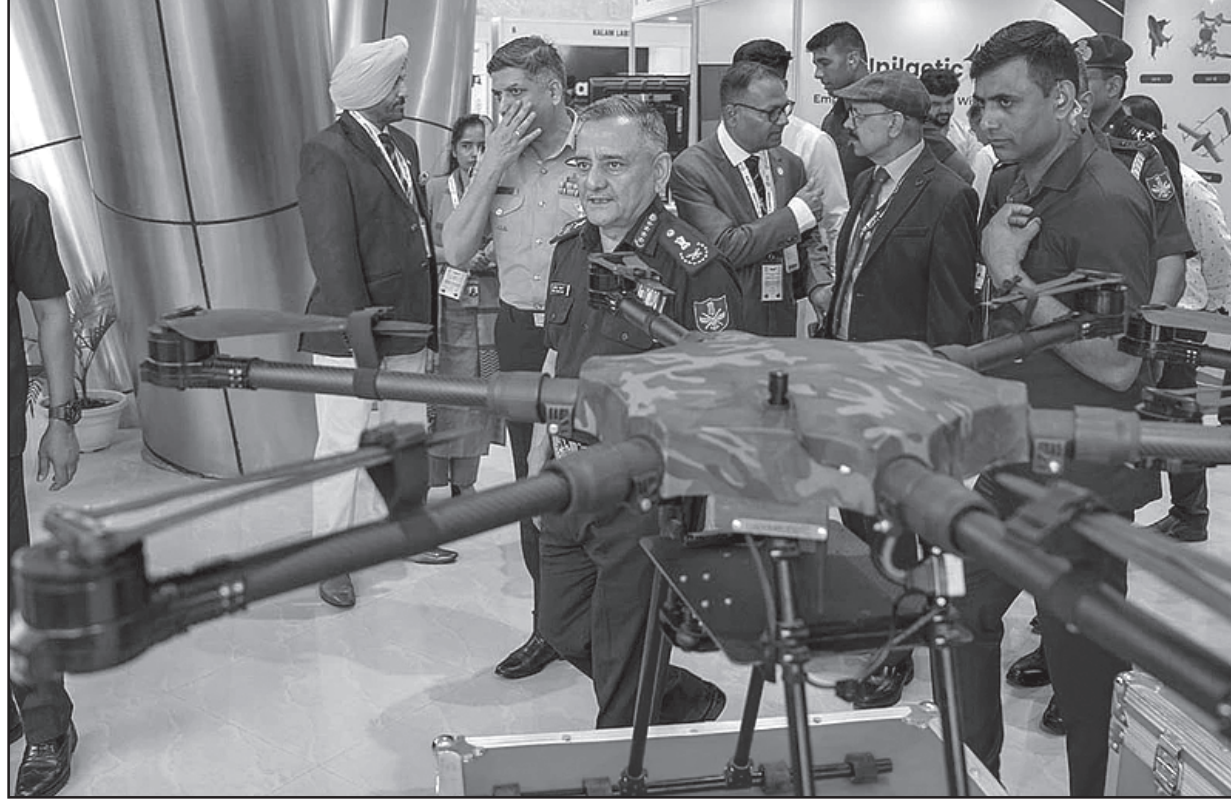
the construction of 11,000 houses is a large task and will be completed in multiple phases.

"In the past, we used to provide 100 houses per ward. Now we're planning it according to Panchayats, district Panchayats, and MLA constituencies," the Chief Minister stated.

He also stressed that families truly in need will be given priority. "Some people just want benefits, but we can't give resources to those who have already received them. We will work according to the earlier list and stick to our policy," he said.

As part of the broader welfare efforts, the state government will begin distributing roof sheets and blankets from July 19 across all districts. Supplies have already been sent from Gangtok to the district stores, and many areas, including West Sikkim, have received their materials at respective Block Administrative Centres (BACs).

"People can collect the blankets from their nearby BAC or BDO office—be it Jorethang, Gangtok, or elsewhere," CM Tamang announced. He also urged citizens not to sell the items, warning that strict action will be taken against those involved in black marketing.



Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan during a workshop-cum-exhibition on 'Indigenisation of critical components currently being imported from foreign OEMs in the areas of UAV and C-UAS', in New Delhi on Wednesday.

## Mamata Banerjee hits the streets against the illegal detention of the Bengali migrant workers

Kolkata, July 16 (UNI) : West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee, known for her walkathons, once again demonstrated her unmatched street presence as she marched 3.5 km through bustling central Kolkata streets amid euphoric crowds, protesting the alleged eviction of Bengali-speaking people across the country, capturing the moment on their phones from College Street to Dorina Crossing.

At the starting point College Square, a stage was set as the Chief Minister began her walk at 1.50 PM, accompanied by a tableau displaying posters like "Double Engine

Government – Is it a crime to speak in Bengali?" and "We respect all languages, but we will not tolerate any form of disrespect toward our mother tongue, Bengali," clearly signalling Mamata Banerjee's intent to hit the nerves of Bengali sentiment and pride ahead of the crucial 2026 assembly polls.

Her entourage included TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, state ministers Arup Biswas, Firhad Hakim, Chandrima Bhattacharya, Udayan Guha, Sujit Basu, Sashi Panja Dola Sen several MPs, MLAs and party leaders found it difficult to keep pace with Mamata, as she reached Subodh

Mullick Square in just 15 minutes.

While braving the torrential rain, the chief minister flanked by TMC All India General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee and Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim enjoyed her walk, traffic was choc-a-bloc on all arterial roads she traversed.

Despite a robust three-tier security arrangement—comprising nearly 1,500 police personnel, six assistant commissioners, and two deputy commissioners deployed along the 3.5 km route—managing the crowd proved challenging as the Chief Minister's presence sparked overwhelming

public enthusiasm.

From Subodh Mullick Square, the marchers took the arterial S.N. Banerjee Road to reach the end point Dorina Crossing at Esplanade, with security personnel stationed not only along the streets but also atop high-rises lining the route.

However, the crowd, eager to catch a glimpse of her, spilled onto the roads from the pavements, while spontaneous moments like her waving and pausing for photos sent the security cordon for a toss.

She was followed by several ministers, MLAs, and MPs carrying posters and wearing neck-hung tableaux highlighting the

## Tripura Congress MLA warns BJP leaders

Agartala, July 16 (UNI) : Tripura Pradesh Congress MLA Gopal Chandra Roy today launched a scathing attack on the ruling BJP, stating that attempts to suppress the voices of the opposition to hide public grievances will not succeed, as "power will not remain with them forever."

Roy made these remarks while distributing leaflets among the public, highlighting what he termed as the "core issues" affecting common people.

He demanded that the state government immediately withdraw the recent hikes in power tariffs, water tax, house tax, and smart meter charges.

"The government must explain the reason behind the sudden spike in the prices of essential commodities. If they believe silencing the Congress will divert attention from these issues, they are mistaken," said Roy.

Taking a swipe at the ruling party, the Congress legislator said, "Health, wealth, and power are not permanent. The BJP should remember that their time in power is not eternal."

Calling for intervention, Roy urged Union Home Minister and Tripura Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha to address the deteriorating law and order situation in the state.

## Cong leaders Kharge, Rahul meet Assam party leaders to discuss future strategy and strengthening organisation

Guwahati, July 16 (UNI) : Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, visited Assam for a day-long trip aimed at reinforcing the party's structure ahead of the 2026 Assam Legislative Assembly elections.

The leaders held a closed-door meeting with Assam Congress functionaries, including Gaurav Gogoi, the party's state president, MPs,

MLAs, and other key members of the party.

The discussions revolved around strengthening the party organisation and formulating strategies for the upcoming elections. Gaurav Gogoi emphasised the importance of these talks, sharing on social media that the session also included the Political Affairs Committee, office bearers, DCC Presidents, and heads of various party fronts. Alongside the

organisational discussions, Kharge and Gandhi also met with members from tribal communities and those experiencing threats, displacement, and other forms of harassment, emphasising their support for vulnerable groups in the state.

The leaders were warmly received at the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport with the traditional Assamese 'gamosas.'

This visit marked the

first time Kharge and Gandhi interacted with the state's party leadership since Gogoi's appointment as the state president. Later in the afternoon, they were scheduled to meet party functionaries in Chaygaon, about 40 kilometers from Guwahati.

Their visit underscores the Congress party's renewed efforts to address challenges ahead and strengthen its base in Assam ahead of the assembly elections next year.

## Meghalaya Court reserves order on bail plea by co-accused

Shillong, July 16 (UNI) : A lower court in Meghalaya on Wednesday reserved its order on the bail plea of Silome James, a co-accused in the murder of an Indore-based businessman Raja Raghuvanshi.

James was produced before the court of Judicial Magistrate of the First Class (JMFC) Don Kitbor Koshy Mihsill via video-conferencing from the Shillong District Jail. Assistant Public Prosecutor Tushar Chanda had "strongly opposed" the bail petition on lawful grounds.

However, Advocate Devesh Sharma from Indore, who appeared in favour of James, was hopeful of securing bail for his client as the trial was yet to begin.

"I have given my arguments for my client that he is innocent and he does not know anything about the case (murder of Raja Raghuvanshi)," Sharma said.

James, one of the main accused at Indore, was arrested for alleged destruction and concealment of evidence in connection with the case. James had led the Special Investigation Team of Meghalaya Police to a stream where the country made pistol with two magazines, two .32 ammunition and Rs. 50,000 in cash that was found from his 110 car (MP09WG 2352). Two other co-accused, Lokendra Tomar, the owner of the building where prime murder-accused Sonam was hiding after the murder of her husband Raja, and security guard Balbir Ahirbar were granted conditional bail on July 9 by the court.

## Sikkim govt warns employees against using political influence

Gangtok, July 16 (UNI) : The Sikkim Government today asked all its employees to stop using political or external pressure to seek personal benefits in service-related matters and warned of "strict disciplinary action" in case of violation of the order.

In a circular issued during the day, Chief Secretary R. Telang made it clear that the practice of exerting such pressure went against the rules and will "no longer be tolerated". The circular, brought out by the Department of Personnel, refers specifically to Rule 21 of the Sikkim Government Servants' Conduct Rules, 1981, which prohibits any government servant from

trying to use political or other forms of influence to further their interests in matters of service.

The circular also cited a past directive—dated April 21, 1995—which had earlier reminded employees of the same rule.

However, the government noted with concern that many employees continued to violate this rule despite repeated instructions.

"This has been viewed very seriously by the Government," the circular states, adding that any such violation from now on will invite strict disciplinary action. Such actions will be taken under the Sikkim Government Servants' (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1985, said the circular.

## Odisha CM's chopper grounded for more than month embarks on return journey by road

Bhubaneswar, July 16 (UNI) : More than a month after being stranded on the college playground in Odisha's Kendrapara district, the defunct helicopter which carried the Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on June 9 for his maiden visit to the district, embarked on its return journey to Mumbai for its repair by road on a trailer vehicle today.

The chopper developed some problems due to lightning. Three aviation engineers spent a week in Kendrapara to repair it. But they could not repair it, said the Additional District Magistrate (ADM), Kendrapara, Rabindra Kumar Mallick.

A team of aviation engineers first removed the blades of the helicopter and later with the help of a JCB machine lifted it on a trailer for its journey to Mumbai on the road.

Kartik Chandra Dutta the operation manager of Mumbai based Heligo Charters Pvt. Ltd (HCPL) said "This helicopter was manufactured by German based Airbus Company. As per the safety of the helicopter and pilots, we shifted it on the road. After reaching Mumbai, the helicopter will be repaired."

## Manipur Governor reviews census, prison reforms, digital governance programmes

Imphal, July 16 (UNI) : Governor of Manipur, Ajay Kumar Bhalla, held a series of high-level meetings at Raj Bhavan, Imphal today, focusing on key developmental, administrative, and cultural priorities in the state.

In a significant development, Th. Chitra Devi, Director of Census Operations, Manipur, called on the Governor to brief him on the ongoing preparations for the upcoming Census 2027, scheduled to begin in April 2026. She detailed the activities and groundwork being carried out by the department and discussed various administrative and managerial challenges facing the Directorate. In response, Governor Bhalla assured full support from the State Government to ensure a smooth and efficient census operation in Manipur.

Later in the day, the Governor chaired a review meeting on the prison infrastructure and administration across the state. The meeting, held at the conference hall of Raj Bhavan, was attended by the Chief Secretary, Director General of Police, Director General of Prisons, Inspector General of Prisons, and other senior officials. During the session, the IG (Prisons)

presented a comprehensive report on the deteriorating conditions of the two main functional prisons and the challenges faced by six temporary jails operating across different districts. The issue of pending staff recruitments was also brought to light. Governor Bhalla advised immediate and coordinated action to address both infrastructural and administrative issues.

He emphasized the importance of improving prison conditions, enhancing security, and ensuring better management practices. He assured timely intervention and urged concerned departments to work collaboratively for systemic improvements.

In another key meeting, Governor Bhalla met with senior officials of the Planning Department to assess the progress of the Manipur Projects Coordination Portal (MPCP)—a digital initiative aimed at enhancing inter-departmental coordination for infrastructure and development projects.

The portal integrates departments such as PWD, PHED, MSPDCL, MSPCL, MAHUD, Police, District Administration, and IT for more efficient project execution.

bosses."

In recent times, Mamata Banerjee has voiced concern over the confinement, detention, and even deportation of Bengali-speaking migrant workers in BJP-ruled states, citing multiple instances of such incidents across the country—including Odisha, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Maharashtra.

With nearly 22 lakh migrant workers from Bengal are employed in various states, the chief minister's protest march is seen as an effort to rekindle the Bengali sentiment which the Trinamool Congress is likely to capitalise in the assembly polls scheduled in 2026.

## RJD terms teacher recruitment plan as Nitish's electoral gimmick

Patna, July 16 (UNI) : Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) today termed Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's announcement to conduct Teacher Recruitment Examination (TRE)-4 as an electoral gimmick.

RJD Spokesperson Chitrnanjan Gagan here alleged that despite being aware, the Chief Minister was asking for vacancy data from the Education Department. He said over three lakh teaching positions were vacant in Bihar. The RJD leader said if the Chief Minister was genuinely serious about recruitment, he must immediately issue a notification for hiring with a proper domicile clause and begin the recruitment process at the same speed as it was done during the Grand Alliance government.

He added that even the TRE-3 process remains incomplete despite 20 months having passed. "Now that the Assembly elections are approaching, the Chief Minister is suddenly remembering TRE-4," Gagan remarked.

Describing the announcement as incomplete and vague, he said the Chief Minister has spoken only about applying the domicile rule to posts reserved for women, while ignoring the broader demand of enforcing 100 per cent domicile reservation for all posts, especially in light of the injustice faced by Bihar's candidates in previous recruitment rounds.

## Editor and Lokmanya Tilak's great-grandson passes away

Pune, July 16 (UNI) : Dr Deepak Tilak, the great-grandson of freedom fighter Lokmanya Tilak and editor of the daily 'Kesari', passed away today due to age-related ailments at his residence.

He was 74.

He is survived by his son, Congress leader Rohit Tilak, along with his daughter and grandchildren.

His mortal remains have been kept for public darshan at historical Kesari Wada.

The last rites will be conducted at Vaikunth Crematorium at noon.

Dr Tilak served as the Vice-Chancellor of Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth. He was also the president of the Tilak Smarak Trust and the Vakrutva Uttejak Sabha. Under the Tilak Smarak Trust, the prestigious Lokmanya Tilak Memorial Awards are presented annually to individuals for their outstanding contributions in various fields. The Vakrutva Uttejak Sabha is known for organizing the renowned Ranade Debate Competition and the Vasant Lecture Series across Maharashtra. Dr Tilak made significant contributions to the promotion of the Japanese language in India. In recognition of this, Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs honoured him with a special award in 2021. He also played an important role in promoting sports, especially judo, by supporting athletes and encouraging participation in the sport.

## Ministerial level positive meeting for change in promotion stages of Zilla Parishad clerical employees : MLA, Satyajit Deshmukh



(By Rajesh Undi)

Mumbai, July 16: An important meeting was recently held in the Ministry under the chairmanship of Rural Development Minister Hon. Jayakumar Gore regarding the reduction of promotion stages of Zilla Parishad clerical employees. In this meeting, the Maharashtra State Zilla Parishad Clerical Employees Association presented its position and strongly demanded the consolidation of clerical posts and change of designation.

This meeting was organized on the special initiative of Shirala Legislative Assembly MLA Hon. Satyajitbhai Deshmukh. This meeting was attended by Principal Secretary of Rural Development Department Hon. Eknath Dawle, Sangli Z.P. Chief Executive Officer Hon. Trupti Dhodamise (via video conference), Chairman of Promotion Stages Study Committee Hon. Girish Bhale, Deputy Secretary Hon. Seema Jadhav, Deputy Chief Executive Officer Thane Z.P. Hon. Avinash Fadtare, Cell Officer Hon. Nitin Pawar and Assistant Cell Officer Hon. Balasaheb Gabhale were present.

"State President Sagar Babar proposed to merge the posts of Junior Assistant Clerk and Senior Assistant Clerk under the name of 'Development Officer' as they are almost the same in terms of educational qualification and work procedure. The organization also demanded that the posts of Assistant Administration Officer and Junior Administration Officer should be merged and given the designation of 'Administration Officer'.

MLA Hon. Satyajit Deshmukh, while giving a scholarly comment on this, said, "The nature of work,

responsibilities and pay scale of these posts are almost the same. It is necessary to reduce the steps to provide efficient and timely service. This will not put much burden on the government treasury."

The Secretary of the Rural Development Department clarified that since the Junior Assistant Clerk is a basic cadre, it will not be merged. However, the committee report regarding the merger of the posts of Assistant Administrative Officer and Junior Administrative Officer has been received and a decision will be taken after the approval of the Minister.

On this, Minister Hon. Jayakumar Gore assured in clear words that "We are positive to reduce the promotion steps of Zilla Parishad Clerks". He also directed the committee to compile information on the financial burden on the government if these posts are merged for the Finance Department. He said that he will take a decision after discussing with Chief Minister Hon. Devendra Fadnavis. State Treasurer Umakant Suryavanshi, State Secretary Arun Jorvekar, Sangli District President Vishal Patil, Organizer Dhanaji Mane and State Working President Baburao Pujarwad were also present in this meeting.

Special thanks and congratulations – MLA Satyajit Deshmukh

Date The organization expresses its heartfelt gratitude and congratulations to MLA Satyajitbhai Deshmukh for organizing this official meeting on July 15, just 10 days after the Clerks' Association submitted its statement on July 6, 2025, and for effectively presenting its position in the government court and promoting the decision-making process.

## Prada company delegation holds discussions on 'Kolhapuri Chappal' with collector

Kolhapur, July 16 (UNI) A visiting delegation from Italian company Prada today met district collector Amol Yedge at the collector's office here and held discussions on famous Kolhapuri chappals and other traditional items.

In an official release, the delegation, led by Paolo Tiveron, Technical and Production Director of Prada's Footwear Department, Daniel Contu, Manager of Pattern Making Department, Andrea Polastrelli and Roberto Polastrelli met Yedge along with Jain Economic Development Corporation Chairman and Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture Chairman Lalit Gandhi, District Industry Center Industry Officer Balaji Birajdar and Megh Gandhi were also present.

Yedge informed the delegation about the various ongoing projects related to Kolhapuri Chappals saying "Kolhapuri chappals are a type of traditional Indian footwear, whose history is linked to the city of Kolhapur in Maharashtra. Kolhapuri chappals are not just a normal footwear, but they are a part of the cultural heritage of Maharashtra. They are considered a symbol of the skill of local artisans."

## Review of National Tuberculosis Program at Primary Health Center, Dhasai and Taluka-level launch of "Nikshay Poshan Kit" distribution

(Standard Post Bureau) Thane, July 16: District Tuberculosis Officer Dr. Alka Parge visited Primary Health Center, Dhasai in Murbad taluka on July 15, 2025 to review the National Tuberculosis Program. In his presence, a detailed review of the program was taken and guidance was given on the ongoing measures for tuberculosis control.

On this occasion, the "Nikshay Poshan Kit" distribution initiative was also launched at the taluka level by Dr. Parge in collaboration with Welfare Society for Destitute Children, Ekalhare, a non-governmental organization, for the nutrition of tuberculosis patients. Under this initiative, regular nutrition kits will be provided to all active tuberculosis patients in Murbad taluka.

On this occasion, Taluka Health Officer Dr. Bansode also guided the attendees and informed them about the various schemes of the Health Department for the prevention of tuberculosis. He appreciated this



initiative and expressed the need for creating health awareness through social participation.

Medical Officer Dr. Nandkishore Gorde, health assistants, health workers and ASHA volunteers were present in large numbers at the program.

Through this initiative, attention is being paid not only to medication but also to the nutritional status of the patients, which is important for creating a healthy society as per the objectives of the National Tuberculosis Control Program. Dr. Parge explained on this occasion.

## Industrial electricity tariff in Maharashtra to be cheaper than other states: CM Fadnavis

Mumbai, July 16 (IANS) Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday said in the state council said that the industrial electricity tariff in his state will be the lowest compared to other states. According to the new tariff, Maharashtra's tariff is currently Rs 8.32 per unit, which will come down to Rs 7.38 in the next phase. In comparison, Tamil Nadu's tariff is Rs 9.04, Gujarat Rs 8.98 and Karnataka Rs 7.55. Industrial electricity tariff in Maharashtra will remain low in the next few years. Also, the tariff will not increase due to the tariff true-up process, he added. CM Fadnavis said this while replying to a question raised by member Abhijit Vanzari about the measures being taken to reduce the increase in electricity tariff in the state. The Chief Minister, who holds the energy department portfolio, said that electricity procurement will now be done through the 'Merit Order Dispatch' method.

Due to this, electricity is purchased from private companies at cheaper rates. Also, the cost of purchasing electricity has come down significantly

due to the use of solar, wind and battery storage. Since this is a long-term (25-year) contract, electricity prices will remain stable, he added.

CM Fadnavis said that in the previous tariff petition, industrial and commercial tariffs were reduced by putting a burden on residential consumers. But due to objections to this raised by the state run power distribution company Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company (Mahavitaran), now tariffs have been reduced in all categories during the recent order released by the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission.

"About 70 per cent of consumers consume electricity below 100 units and they will get a 26 per cent rate cut. Along with this, there will also be a rate cut on consumption above 100 units," he said.

"Significant changes have also been made in the solar pump schemes for farmers and a new scheme has been introduced for booster pumps. The cost of the single pole scheme is only Rs 15,000. Farmers are ready to be provided with 10 HP horsepower solar

pumps as per their requirement. If there is any complaint in this regard, it is being resolved on the Solar Unified Portal," said the chief minister. CM Fadnavis informed that smart meters will be installed in the agricultural sector to control electricity consumption. This will make it possible to understand exactly how much electricity is used for agriculture. This will allow accurate measurement of electricity consumption in

the agricultural sector and will help in formulating future policies, he added.

According to the chief minister, a separate solarisation proposal has been prepared for lift irrigation. He mentioned that provision of electricity through conventional methods in dark zones will also be considered.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY	
E-Tender Notice No.: Y/E/29/2025-26/21	
Dated: 07.07.2025	
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works:	
Item of work	Approx. Value
Augmentation of power supply arrangements by providing 1000 KVA CSS in view of introduction of Vande Bharath Train at Mysuru Railway Station.	Rs. 15,56,944.83
Last date for submission of bids: Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 28.07.2025	
For details log on: <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>	
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/General/Mysuru	
PUB/296/AAMO/PRB/SWR/2025-26	
Download the UTS Mobile App from Google Play Store for ease of booking of unreserved tickets	
E South Western Railway - SWR   SWR   SWR   SWR	

### CHANGE OF NAME

I HAVE CHANGED MY OLD NAME FROM **YOGITABAHEN UMESHKUMAR PATEL** TO NEW NAME **YOGITABEN UMESHBHAI PATEL** & I WILL BE KNOWN AS NEW NAME WHICH PLEASE NOTE **SD:YOGITABEN UMESHBHAI PATEL** ADD: 98, MOTI FARI, SEVA SAHAKARI MANDALI, KOSADGAM, KOSAD, PO: KOSAD, DIST: SURAT, GUJARAT - 394107.

### Government of India Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports Department of Youth Affairs Shastri Bhawan New Delhi

No.1-12011/1/2025-NPYAD Dt : 12.07.2025

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports invites nominations for the **Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award 2024**, the highest national recognition for outstanding achievements in the field of adventure. The Award aims to honour individuals who have demonstrated exceptional courage, skill, and spirit of adventure on land, water, air, as well as those who have made a lifelong and distinguished contribution to the field of adventure.

Details regarding the award, eligibility criteria, Guidelines etc. can be accessed on the portal (<https://awards.gov.in>) or through the "Latest News" section of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports website (<https://yas.nic.in>).

Eligible individuals are encouraged to submit their nominations only through the Government of India Awards portal (<http://awards.gov.in>). The last date for submission of nominations is 15th July 2025.

Under Secretary Department of Youth Affairs **cbc 47107/11/0005/2526**

### CHANGE OF NAME

I HAVE CHANGED MY OLD NAME FROM **BHARATKUMAR SHAMJIBHAI ODEDARA** TO NEW NAME **BHARATBHAI SHAMJIBHAI ODEDARA** & I WILL BE KNOWN AS NEW NAME WHICH PLEASE NOTE **SD: BHARATBHAI SHAMJIBHAI ODEDARA** ADD: GOLD B-902, SMRUDHI RESIDECY, BHARUCH ZADESHWAR, NEAR SWAMINARAYAN TEMPLE, JHADESHWAR BHARUCH, GUJARAT - 392011

### CHANGE OF NAME

I HAVE CHANGED MY OLD NAME FROM **UMESHKUMAR KANTILAL PATEL** TO NEW NAME **UMESHBHAI KANTIBHAI. PATEL** & I WILL BE KNOWN AS NEW NAME WHICH PLEASE NOTE **SD: UMESHBHAI KANTIBHAI. PATEL** ADD: 99, MOTI FARI, SEVA SAHAKARI MANDALI, KOSADGAM, KOSAD, PO: KOSAD, DIST: SURAT, GUJARAT - 394107.

## STANDARD POST

## Oil and sugar boards key initiative to build awareness on healthy eating

The recent move by the Ministry of Health to install sugar and oil boards in workplaces as well as schools is a key initiative to build awareness on healthy eating in the country, an expert said on Wednesday. Dr. Rima Dada, Professor speaking at AIIMS Delhi, said that the initiative comes at a time when Non-Communicable Diseases like obesity and diabetes are on the rise, especially among the young. "This is a very good initiative by the Ministry because over the past few decades, obesity has been increasing not just among adults but also among children," Dada said. "Diseases that used to appear in the third or fourth decade of life -- like type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure -- are now showing up in children. This early onset of lifestyle diseases is directly related to unhealthy lifestyles and poor eating habits," the expert added.

Taking to social media platform X, ICMR - National Institute of Nutrition, last week, informed that the Ministry of Health "has urged all govt offices to prominently display Sugar Boards" in the push for building healthier workplaces. The boards consist of informative posters and digital boards highlighting the harmful impacts of the amount of sugar and oil present in popular food items, including samosas, kachori, pizza, pakoras, banana chips, burgers, soft drinks, and chocolate pastries. It also displays the effects of these foods on the human body as well as shares the recommended amounts of fat and sugar for individual intake.

Dada noted that in line with the directive, AIIMS will also install such boards to help the healthcare workers boost their health. "Our Director, Dr. M. Srinivas, had earlier taken the initiative to provide healthy food options in hostel canteens and café areas. We will also display Oil and Sugar Boards, showing calorie and fat content of available items," Dada said. Earlier, the FSSAI noted that the move is inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for a healthier India. It added that the "innovative behavioural change strategy" will help tackle the "widespread promotion of sugar and oil boards".

These boards are vital in helping everyone make informed choices and stop obesity," said FSSAI on X, adding that it will also help boost its Eat Right India (ERI) movement.

In May, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) issued a directive to schools to install "sugar boards" in schools. Health experts noted that the public health measure also aligns with global nutrition goals, and will help India fight the menace of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke, and certain cancers.

# On the Fast Track: How Gujarat is Redefining Railway Infrastructure and Development



**Pravin Parmar**  
IRTS (Ret.),

Former Principal Chief Commercial Manager, Western Railway

(Standard Post Bureau)

Gujarat has long been distinguished as India's Growth Engine owing to its noteworthy accomplishments in industrial expansion and infrastructural development. By fostering entrepreneurship and manufacturing, the state has built a thriving economy strengthened by a resilient transportation network. This year's Railway Budget reinforces Gujarat's commitment to modernising its railway infrastructure. Significant investments are aimed at enhancing safety, improving passenger experience, and boosting regional economic growth.

The Railway Budget announcement was met with widespread applause and appreciation. The budget stood out with 40% of expenditure allocated to augment the safety on Indian Railways through various projects. According to Railway Minister Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw the record-breaking allocation of Rs. 17,155 crores will be invested in various

ongoing rail projects within the states.

Railway safety remains a keystone of Gujarat's modernisation efforts. Among the most significant measures is the elimination of railway level crossings, replacing them with Road Over Bridges (ROBs) and Road Under Bridges (RUBs). This initiative reduces accidents, promotes seamless vehicular movement, and enhances rail efficiency. Over the past decade, almost 1050 level crossings have been replaced with ROBs/RUBs. Moreover, all unmanned level crossings over the Broad Gauge network in Gujarat have been eliminated in 2018.

Gujarat state government in collaboration with Railways is working towards making Gujarat completely level-crossing free (Fatak-mukt Gujarat). The state government has approved Rs. 1372.91 crores for the elimination of 83 level crossings by replacing them with ROB/RUB, of which 11 level crossings have already been replaced with ROB/RUB and the rest, are at different stages under progress.

This will not only improve the safety of road users but will also eliminate waiting time at level crossing, saving both time and fuel. The state has also made a Joint Venture with the Ministry of Railways i.e. Gujarat Rail Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (G-RIDE) which developed connectivity to Bedi port, gauge conversion of the

Katosan-Becharaji-Ranuj line, and developed a Railway siding to Maruti Suzuki car plant for loading of manufactured cars to be transported to various parts of the country and ports for export.

In addition, the deployment of the indigenously developed Kavach technology is being expedited over 1800 route kilometres (RKM). Such initiatives reflect a comprehensive approach to railway safety.

Beyond safety, the railway Infrastructure in Gujarat is undergoing a transformation with major infrastructure investments aimed at bolstering both passenger and freight connectivity. Currently, 87 stations in Gujarat are undergoing a revamp to modernise station facilities and improve amenities and accessibility. All major ports, like Kandala, Mundra, Dahej, Hajira, Sikka, Bedi, etc, are already connected with railways and the plan to connect Jakhau port is also under process. To boost the freight traffic 8 Private freight terminals (PFTs) and 10 Gatishakti Cargo Terminals (GSTs) have already been established in the state and a few more are expected to be developed. Recently, an exclusive Railways container terminal has been opened at Unjha, facilitating the seamless movement of agricultural products to different parts of the country, and boosting export.

Mission Raftaar and Western Dedicated

Corridor (WDFC) are two notable projects that underscore the commitment to speed and efficiency for both passengers and freight transportation. Mission Raftaar's aim to increase train speed on high-density corridors such as Mumbai - Surat - Vadodara - Delhi and Mumbai - Vadodara - Ahmedabad routes. Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC) is an ambitious project aimed at facilitating dedicated tracks for swift and efficient transportation of goods to alleviate congestion on passenger routes. A stretch of 565 km of WDFC (38% of the total length) runs through Gujarat and is now fully operational.

Integral to this vision of modern railway infrastructure is, the Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train project, spearheaded by the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL). The bullet train promises to redefine high-speed travel in India, significantly reducing travel time and transforming the regional transportation landscape. As work progresses rapidly on this ambitious project, Gujarat is solidifying its reputation as a hub for cutting-edge railway infrastructure.

Ultimately, the success of these advances lies in their impact on passengers. With rapid urbanisation shifting travel dynamics, railway innovations must go beyond merely expanding tracks and stations - it

must prioritise efficient integrated transport solutions. The state's Multi-Modal Transport Hubs (MMTHs) is one such initiative aimed at ensuring seamless connectivity between different modes of transportation. Two prominent projects, Sabarmati MMTH and Surat MMTH, are set to revolutionise passenger movement by integrating rail, metro, bullet train, and bus services within a single facility. Features like digital ticketing, modern waiting lounges and retail spaces will significantly enhance the passenger experience. With these initiatives, Gujarat is on its way to becoming a benchmark for excellence in public transport in India.

The presence of four Vande Bharat trains in the state, including two serving the high-demand Mumbai - Gandhinagar and Mumbai - Ahmedabad sectors, highlights the efforts to provide high-speed premium travel thus catering to evolving passenger demands. The introduction of Namo Bharat Rapid Rail between Ahmedabad and Bhuj is a step towards boosting tourism by offering fast and comfortable travel to destinations like Rann of Kutch.

This indigenously manufactured train comprises only unreserved coaches and is fully air-conditioned as well as offers a myriad of modern passenger amenities.

Beyond Passenger convenience, investment

in the modernisation of railway infrastructure generates employment opportunities, stimulates industrial growth, and facilitates smoother trade operations. The efficiency of goods movement is greatly enhanced by improved railway connectivity - thus reducing costs and further enhancing Gujarat's appeal as a prime destination for businesses and investors. Additionally, tourism is also expected to flourish with a seamless integrated transportation infrastructure. Modernised railway stations, high-speed connectivity and streamlined travel options are poised to make Gujarat a preferred destination for both business and leisure travel, attracting domestic and international entities alike.

Gujarat's railway transformation is a visionary jump into the future of seamless integrated transportation. By focusing on three key areas - safety, cutting-edge infrastructure and passenger experience, the state is setting a benchmark for railway modernisation in India. As these ambitious projects take shape, Gujarat is proving that strategic investments in transportation can lead to broader economic prosperity, reinforcing its position as a leader in India's infrastructural evolution. It is not just about railways but about the growth where connectivity that unleashes infinite possibilities.

## Committee formed to amend the Maharashtra Prevention of Fragmentation and Consolidation of Holdings Act

Mumbai, July 16 (IANS) : The state government has established a committee headed by the Additional Chief Secretary of the Revenue Department to amend the Maharashtra Prevention of Fragmentation and Consolidation of Holdings Act, 1947.

Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule in the state assembly said that the 1947 Act was enacted to prevent the fragmentation of agricultural land into smaller parcels and to promote cost-effective farming.

However, over the years, challenges arising from this Act and the demand for regularising unauthorised fragmented land holdings have gained prominence.

The amendment was necessary to allow one-guntha (1,080 sq ft) plots in residential zones. It will also allow legal subdivision of a one-guntha plot in residential zones and simplify the process of subdivision of revenue land.

Minister Bawankule

said the government will grant legal status to subdivided land parcels up to January 1, 2025, by relaxing and gradually scrapping the land fragmentation law.

According to him, over 50 lakh families are reportedly affected by issues arising from land fragmentation regulations, adding that plots up to the size of one guntha (approx. 1,089 sq ft) formed before January 2025 will be considered legal, enabling citizens to obtain official property rights. Plots subdivided after January will have to comply strictly with development authority norms. Revenue Minister said the committee under the chairmanship of the Additional Chief Secretary (Revenue) will also prepare a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) within 15 days. The committee, comprises of Additional Chief Secretary (Revenue), Revenue and Forest Department, comprises the Additional Chief Secretary (Urban Development-1), Principal Secretary (Rural Development), Settlement

Commissioner of Land Records, Inspector General of Registration and Controller of Stamps, Director (Town Planning), and Joint/Deputy Secretary (Law and Judiciary Department). Additionally, Rajendra Kshirsagar, Member (Administrative) of the Maharashtra Land Revenue Tribunal, and N.R. Shende, retired Director (Town Planning), will provide guidance as special invitees.

The committee will formulate a methodology for planned land transfers and development in areas excluded from urban zones due to land fragmentation, examine the feasibility of simplifying the regularisation process under Section 8B of the Act, determine the procedure for regularisation of fragmented holdings under Section 9(3), establish a Standard Operating Procedure for regularising fragmented holdings created through registered deeds and considering their transfers in the rights register.

## SC allows Hany Babu to seek Bail in Bhima Koregaon case

New Delhi, Jul 16 (UNI) : The Supreme Court today granted liberty to former Delhi University Professor Hany Babu to approach either the trial court or the High Court for bail in the Bhima Koregaon-Elgar Parishad conspiracy case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

A bench comprising Justice Pankaj Mithal and Justice PB Varale passed the order while dismissing a miscellaneous application filed by Babu seeking clarification that the withdrawal of his earlier Special Leave Petition (SLP) did not prevent the High Court from hearing his bail plea.

The court also said that Babu could seek revival of the earlier SLP filed in the Supreme Court. In September 2022, the Bombay High Court denied bail to Babu, who was arrested in July 2020 by the NIA over alleged Maoist links in the Bhima Koregaon case.

Subsequently, in May 2024, he withdrew his SLP in the Supreme Court, stating his intent to approach the High Court for bail, citing a change in circumstances.

On May 2 this year, the High Court observed

that the Supreme Court's order allowing withdrawal did not expressly reserve liberty for him to approach it again, and asked Babu to seek clarification from the top court.

During today's hearing, Advocate Payoshi Roy, appearing for Babu, submitted that he has spent five years as an undertrial and withdrew his SLP to approach the High Court as several co-accused had been granted bail on grounds of prolonged incarceration.

She stated that in comparison to these accused, Babu was "better placed."

The court was informed that the Bombay High Court had granted bail to Rona Wilson, Sudhir Dhawale, and Sudha Bharadwaj, while the Supreme Court granted bail to P Varavara Rao on medical grounds, and to Shoma Sen, Vernon Gonsalves, and Arun Ferreira on merits.

Opposing the plea, the NIA counsel submitted that the miscellaneous application was not maintainable as a fresh bail petition lay before the NIA court, and the High Court would act as an appellate court under UAPA provisions.

He argued, "This is an interim bail couched as an MA."

Justice Mithal suggested that the petitioner approach the trial court, observing, "Your primary ground is, some other accused has been granted bail, that can also be considered by the trial court."

Advocate Roy responded that constitutional courts could grant bail despite the restrictions of Section 43D(5) of UAPA, relying on judgments like K.A. Najeeb, which held that courts can grant bail on grounds of delayed trial and violation of Article 21.

Justice Mithal acknowledged that constitutional courts can grant bail but questioned, "Can we direct the High Court to consider a matter which does not lie before it?"

He also noted that Babu's current plea was based on parity with co-accused and not specifically on grounds of delayed trial.

Concluding the hearing, the bench ordered, "The miscellaneous application is dismissed, leaving it open to seek remedies either before the trial court or the High Court or seek revival of the SLP."

## UN chief deeply concerned over violence in southern Syria

United Nations, July 16 (UNI) : UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is deeply concerned over the continued violence in the Druze-majority area in Suweida governorate in southern Syria, which has resulted in dozens of casualties, including among civilians, said Stéphane Dujarric, spokesman for the UN chief, on Tuesday.

"He is disturbed by reports of arbitrary killings of civilians, sectarian incitement, and looting of private property. He condemns all violence against civilians, especially acts that risk inflaming sectarian tensions," Dujarric said at a daily briefing.

The spokesman said the secretary-general urges Syria's interim authorities and local leaders to immediately de-escalate, protect civilians, restore calm, and prevent further incitement, and further urges the interim authorities to transparently and openly investigate and hold to account those responsible for violations. Guterres is also concerned about Israel's airstrikes on Syrian territory and calls on Israel to refrain from violations of Syria's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, said Dujarric.

"The Secretary-General underscores that it is imperative to support a credible, orderly and inclusive political transition in Syria in line with the key principles of resolution 2254 (2015)," he said.

## China-Laos sign agreement on Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Special Fund

Vientiane/Beijing, July 16 (UNI) Chinese Ambassador to Laos Fang Hong and Lao Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Maithong Thammavongsa have signed a cooperation agreement for the 2025 Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Special Fund.

The signing ceremony took place yesterday in Vientiane. Officials from relevant ministries and sectors also attended. Speaking at the event, Fang highlighted the significance of the LMC mechanism, which marks its 10th anniversary this year.

She reaffirmed China's commitment to the principles of "development first, equal consultation, pragmatism and efficiency, openness, and inclusiveness," and emphasised strengthening collaboration with Laos to ensure the fund delivers tangible benefits to people across the region.

In his remarks, Maithong praised the LMC for its vital role in promoting regional development.

He expressed gratitude to China for its continued support through the special fund and affirmed Laos' commitment to working closely with China to implement high-quality projects under the initiative.

He also emphasised the importance of fostering a shared future among the Lancang-Mekong countries.

Currently, 26% of the Vietnamese population has access to 5G services, according to the ministry.

Minister of Science and Technology Nguyen Manh Hung said intensive and extensive 5G coverage is an urgent priority for the remainder of the year.

Under a new development plan, the ministry aims to have the number of 5G base stations reach at least 50% of the current number of 4G stations by 2025. It is projected that the number of 5G stations could exceed 68,000 by the end of this year.

## Bangladesh observes nationwide state mourning on its first 'July Martyr's Day'

Dhaka, July 16 (UNI) The Bangladesh interim government has declared a one-day state mourning nationwide today, after it declared July 16 as 'July Martyr's Day.' The Cabinet Division issued a gazette notification in this regard yesterday.

According to the Cabinet Division, the day will be observed for the first time today. As part of the observance, national flags will be flown at half-mast at all government, semi-government, autonomous, and educational institutions, as well as at privately owned buildings and Bangladeshi missions abroad.

Special prayers will be offered at all mosques and other places of worship across the country today, in honour of the departed, as per The Daily Star.

Commemorating the event, Chief Advisor Mohammed Yunus called on all citizens to unite in building a new Bangladesh, free from discrimination, corruption, and autocracy.

"With renewed determination, we will move forward together on the path of a new Bangladesh, guided by the spirit of July. This is our pledge today.

## China pledges to continue supporting Iran in safeguarding its sovereignty in face of external bullying

Beijing/Tehran, July 16 (UNI) : China has pledged to continue supporting Iran in safeguarding its national sovereignty and dignity, resisting power politics and bullying, defending its legitimate rights and interests through political negotiation, and adhering to the principle of good-neighbourliness and friendship to continuously improve and develop relations with its neighbouring countries, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said today. Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks in north China's Tianjin during a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, who is in China for the meeting of the council of the ministers of foreign affairs of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states.

## Netanyahu's key coalition partner quits govt

London, July 16 (IANS) : The Israeli Ultra-Orthodox Shas party on Wednesday announced that it is quitting the Benjamin Netanyahu-led coalition government.

Israeli media reports said that the Shas party quit the government in protest against lawmakers' failure to guarantee future exemption from military conscription for religious students.

"With a heavy heart, we inform the public that we cannot stay in this government," Israeli newspapers said while quoting Shas party representatives.

The Shas party's leaving the coalition

government has left the Netanyahu government lurching, as it would be difficult for him to lead a minority government, while he is already dealing with multiple protests at home.

"We wouldn't work to undermine the coalition government. We will also support them in some laws," claimed the Shas party.

The departure of Shas comes one day after another ultra-Orthodox party, United Torah Judaism (UTJ), resigned from the government over the same issue, which has sparked an explosive debate in the country after more than 21 months of war with Hamas in Gaza. While

ultra-Orthodox seminary students have long been exempt from mandatory military service, many Israelis are angered by what they see as an unfair burden carried by the mainstream who serve.

Ultra-Orthodox Jewish leaders say full-time devotion to holy scriptures study is sacrosanct and fear their young men will steer away from religious life if they are drafted into the military.

Last year, the Israeli Supreme Court ordered an end to the exemption. Parliament has been trying to work out a new conscription bill, which has so far failed to meet the demands of both Shas and UTJ.

## Cameron Diaz to star in Netflix action-comedy film Bad Day

London, July 16 (UNI) : American actress Cameron Diaz will star in the upcoming Jake Szymanski-directed action-comedy film Bad Day on Netflix, confirmed PEOPLE.

The 52-year-old actress will star as "a single mom fighting to keep one little promise to her daughter on the absolute worst day of her life," per a release.

Laura Solon and Mark Moran are executive producers of the flick while Beau Bauman will be producer for Good One Productions.

Bad Day will feature a script by Solon (Let It Snow, Office Christmas Party).

## King of Malaysia to visit Russia in August

Bangkok, July 16 (UNI) : The King of Malaysia, Sultan Ibrahim, will make a state visit to Russia in August. The Star newspaper reported on Wednesday, citing the Royal Court Administration.

Sultan Ibrahim commented on his upcoming state visit to Russia at a briefing, which was led by Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Dato Seri Azman Mohd Zin at the Istana Negara Palace. Russian Ambassador to Malaysia Nail Latypov was reportedly present.

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim came to Russia on an official visit in May. Russian President Vladimir Putin asked him to convey his

best wishes to Sultan Ibrahim, along with an invitation to visit Russia.

Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar, the hereditary ruler of the Malaysian state of Johor (one of the country's states with a hereditary form of governance), ascended the Malaysian throne in January 2024.

In Malaysia, the King is elected every 5 years by the Conference of Rulers in accordance with the country's constitution. Of Malaysia's 13 states, nine are headed by hereditary rulers who serve as constitutional monarchs. These rulers are members of the Conference of Rulers and elect one ruler from among themselves to serve as king for a 5-year term.

## Axiom Space celebrates the arrival of Ax4 mission

Washington, July 16 (IANS) : Private American company Axiom Space on Wednesday informed that it celebrated the arrival of the Ax4 mission back in Texas. Yesterday, Axiom Space leaders celebrated the arrival of #Ax4 back in Texas," the American company posted on X.

The 20-day mission, led by Axiom Space in collaboration with NASA, SpaceX, and other government space agencies, including ISRO, was launched to the ISS on June 26. Shubhanshu Shukla became the first Indian to go to the International Space Station (ISS).

Shukla returned to Earth on Tuesday along with fellow astronauts from the US, Poland, and Hungary aboard SpaceX's Dragon spacecraft "Grace".

Lucknow-born Shukla was included in the astronaut selection process by ISRO in 2019 after Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018

## Cambodian PM Hun Manet orders strict national crackdown on all online scams

Phnom Penh, July 16 (UNI) Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet has ordered authorities to root out all online scam centers across the country, warning that any officials who obstruct crackdown operations could be fired.

In an order signed on July 14 and publicized yesterday night, Hun Manet said some foreign criminal groups have used Cambodia as a base for operating their illegal online activities. He said the leaders of all cities and provinces, as well as police, "must be responsible for wiping out all online scam centers in their geographical and jurisdictional boundaries in accordance with law and regulations." The Cambodian PM ordered the military to get ready to provide support to the crackdown operations. He also instructed authorities to prevent foreigners from illegally entering Cambodia and to deport anyone who has entered illegally, lives illegally, or engages in illegal activities in the Southeast Asian country.



announced from the Red Fort that a son or daughter of India would go to space very soon.

In January 2025, the 39-year-old astronaut was selected as the pilot for the Ax-4 mission -- a collaborative mission between NASA and ISRO.

The IAF officer became the youngest

astronaut-designate under India's Gaganyaan mission -- the country's first human spaceflight mission.

Speaking to IANS in March, Shukla said he hopes to use his "journey to inspire this entire generation to pursue their careers in the field of space," as he "was

extremely inspired and motivated" by Rakesh Sharma.

On the Ax-4 mission, Shukla served as the pilot alongside Commander Peggy Whitson of the US.

On the ISS, Shukla conducted seven pioneering experiments related to food and space nutrition that aimed to

enhance understanding of sustainable life-support systems, a crucial aspect of future long-duration space travel.

Shukla's mission is not only an inspiration for billions of Indians but also a key stepping stone for India's Gaganyaan human spaceflight mission, slated for 2027.

## Russia rejects Trump's ultimatum on Ukraine as U.S. steps up arms support

Moscow/Kiev, July 16 (UNI) : Russia on Tuesday rejected U.S. President Donald Trump's 50-day ultimatum to agree to an Ukraine ceasefire, dismissing the threat of "severe tariffs" as unacceptable. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov emphasized that Moscow favors a diplomatic resolution to the Ukraine conflict and is ready to negotiate. "However, if this is not met with a proper response, if we cannot

reach our set goals through diplomacy, then the special military operation will go on," he continued. He said Moscow's position is unshakable. "We expect Washington and NATO to take this seriously."

Trump on Tuesday denied earlier allegations that he encouraged Kiev to strike deep into Russian territory, saying that he isn't taking sides in the conflict and advised Ukraine "shouldn't target Moscow" with long-range weapons. Just one day before the

clarification, Trump said at the Oval Office that the United States will send weapons to Ukraine through NATO, and threatened "severe tariffs" targeting Russia if a ceasefire deal is not reached in 50 days.

He said some of the first Patriot missile systems could arrive in Ukraine "within days." The Russian Foreign Ministry condemned the weapon deliveries as evidence that NATO countries are not interested in peace. U.S. Commerce Secretary

Howard Lutnick said Trump's reference to 100 percent secondary tariffs meant "economic sanctions."

Meanwhile, Ukraine's parliament on Tuesday voted to extend the country's wartime status and military mobilization for another 90 days, through Nov. 5. Lawmakers also approved a temporary withdrawal from the Ottawa Convention, an international treaty that prohibits the use of anti-personnel landmines.

## Israeli official says peace agreement with Syria depends entirely on regime behaviour

Tel Aviv/Damascus, July 16 (UNI) : Shortly after Israel's attacks on Syria due to violence against the indigenous Druze community, and the US bid for calm, Tel Aviv has put the onus of reaching peace on Damascus, with a senior official stating that any kind of peace agreement with the new Syrian administration "depends on how the regime behaves."

"Everything depends

on how this regime behaves.

There's no doubt things have taken a negative turn in the past few days, after a brief period of calm. But we're not deluding ourselves," said the official, reports Times of Israel.

"Our policy isn't based on illusions — it's based on reality.

First and foremost, we want security, and we're clear with the other side about what we expect," the

official added.

The IDF says strikes in the past few hours have hit armoured vehicles and pickup trucks with mounted machine guns, which were heading to the Druze majority city of Suweyda, where deadly clashes have taken place. In addition, they have also targeted army positions and weapons depot.

"Syria is making serious mistakes. The legitimacy of their regime recently

received may be distorting their sense of reality...they would do well to wake up. This country has been torn apart from within for years, with external help, through endless war and bloodshed. What's happening now is not helping them get to a better place," the official said.

The official added that Damascus's posture toward European and other foreign actors doesn't reflect the ground reality in Syria.

## Chinese researchers successfully synthesise-assemble large scale human DNA, make breakthrough in cross-species transfer

Tianjin, July 16 (UNI) A Chinese research team has made a significant leap in the field of synthetic biology by precisely synthesising and assembling large-scale human DNA and successfully transferring it across species.

This achievement not only advances the technology of human genome synthesis but also opens new avenues for treating genetic disorders, according to the researchers.

The study, conducted by the state key laboratory of synthetic biology at Tianjin University, was recently published in the international journal Nature Methods under the title 'De novo Assembly and Delivery of Synthetic Megabase-Scale Human DNA into Mouse Early Embryos'.

The team, led by Yuan Yingjin, an academician with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, developed a method called SynNICE.

This method involves assembling synthetic human genomic DNA in yeast and then extracting the yeast nuclei with intact chromosomes using a technique called NICE (Nucleus Isolation for Chromosomes Extraction).

The extracted nuclei, carrying the synthetic DNA, were then injected into the early embryos of mice. The researchers focused on a specific region of the human genome known as AZFa, located on the Y chromosome.

This region is crucial for male fertility, and its deletion can lead to severe infertility with no current clinical solution.

The AZFa region contains a high percentage of repetitive sequences, making it particularly challenging to synthesise and assemble.

Despite this, the team successfully synthesized this region in yeast and transferred it to mouse embryos.

## Health



# Tips to help you sleep Like a baby

Like a balanced diet and exercise are important to stay healthy, sleep ensures that your body gets proper rest and is rejuvenated. Here are some ways to get a good night's sleep...

## Sleep at a fixed time:

It is important to go to sleep at a fixed time. This doesn't mean just going to bed at the same time every day, but actually falling asleep at that time. Ensure that you follow this strictly.

## Don't go to bed right after dinner:

Apart from keep your dinner light, make sure that you give a gap of at least two hours between dinner and bedtime. Chances are that you will keep tossing and turning if your stomach is full before going to bed.

## Wash your face and feet:

Taking a shower is a good idea before going to bed, since it helps you relax, but if this is too much of a hassle, then make sure that you wash your face and feet before hitting the sack.

This way, the day's stress will literally get washed away.

## Wake up at the same time:

Just like you sleep at a fixed time, you must wake up at the same time each day as well. If you sleep well, then you don't need an alarm to get up at the same time every day. Try to maintain this over the weekend as well.

## Workout in the evenings:

While it is advisable to start your day with a workout, it also makes sense to work out in the evening. This way, you can shake the stress of the day away and burn a good number of calories. This is bound to tire you out, thereby ensuring that you sleep well.

Don't carry a book to bed: Many people are of the habit of reading before going to sleep, but this can keep you

**In today's world, when there is so much stress and people are hard-pressed for time, there isn't enough time to relax. Hence, sleeping disorders are commonplace.**

up longer than you would want. Finish reading on the couch or chair and don't take your book to bed.

## Sleep in a dark room:

If you are someone who needs to have a light on at night, break this habit. You can instead switch on a night bulb in another room. Your bedroom should be devoid of any light as this helps you sleep better.

## Keep noise at bay:

Just like you should keep books away from your bed, ensure that your iPod isn't with you in bed.

Apart from tampering with your sleep, listening to music while in bed is also an unhealthy practice.

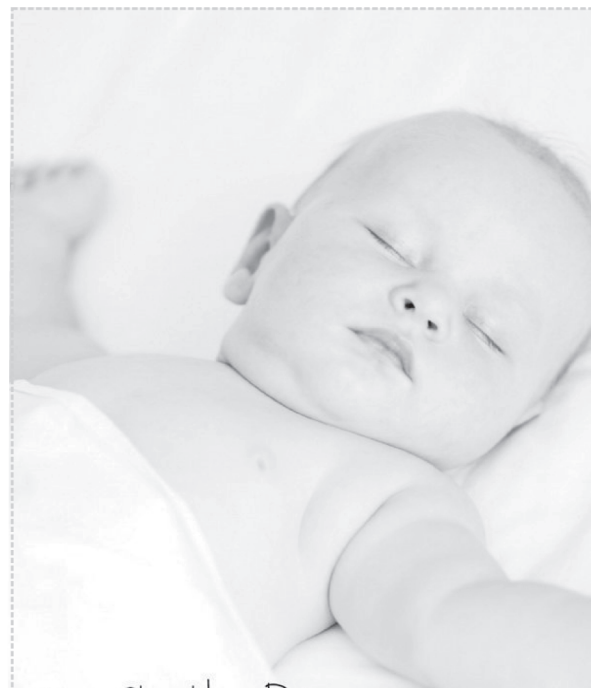
## De-clutter your bed:

The number of items on your bed are also responsible for the quality of your sleep. Make sure that your bed is comfortable and only has the things that are required, such as pillows, sheets and blankets.

Everything else should be taken off.

## Avoid caffeine:

Follow a healthy diet and ensure that you don't consume caffeine since it tends to mess with your sleep cycle.



## Ayurveda remedies Ginger versus turmeric

In Ayurveda, ginger and turmeric or haldi are key ingredients for treating several ailments. We take a deeper look at which root is better for health - ginger or turmeric? Different vitamins in ginger: Ginger is rich in magnesium, vitamin B 6 and vitamin C. It also contains calcium, phosphorus, copper, zinc and iron in small amounts.

### Benefits of ginger:

Improves digestion of food  
Improves absorption of nutrients

Cures colds - throat and nose congestion  
Reduces nausea

Reduces flatulence  
Reduces abdominal cramps  
Reduces inflammation and joint pain  
Ginger reduces hypo pigmented patches on your skin.

### Remedies with ginger:

- One can eat thin slices of ginger in a salt and lime juice mixture before and after

meals to improve appetite and digestion.

- It can be used in cooking as a fresh spice to enhance the taste.

- Therapeutically ginger juice is mixed with basil leaves juice and honey to cure coughs and colds.

### Different vitamins in turmeric:

Tumeric or haldi is a powerhouse of iron, potassium and vitamin B6. Magnesium, vitamin C and calcium can also be found in turmeric.

### Benefits of turmeric:

Reduces infection  
Improves circulation  
Improves digestion  
Heals wounds  
Enhances the skin  
Boosts immunity  
Liver detox  
Improves cholesterol levels  
Fights free radicals  
Improves anaemia  
Fights colds and the build-up of mucus  
Relief from joint pains and inflammation

### Remedies with turmeric:

- Turmeric anti-aging face pack  
- Milk and turmeric helps fight colds and builds immunity  
- Turmeric is one of the key ingredients of Indian cooking, especially in curries, which makes it an integral part of our lives.

## Brilliant ways to prevent Obesity

**You don't need fancy exercise equipment or an expensive gym membership for losing weight. Walking, jogging, running, cycling and swimming are great for weight loss**

Regardless of whether one is just a little overweight, fat, or morbidly obese — losing weight is the one thing that really tops the list of priorities for most people. Every second person you know is on some kind of a 'losing weight' programme — either with the help of a control diet or with a combination of diets and exercise. Though most do not need to obsess about their weight, it is the obese who really need to do something about it. Dr Muffazal Lakdawala, bariatric surgeon, recommends some practical tips on how to prevent obesity...

- Recognise that obesity is a disease. In fact, in the US obesity has reached epidemic proportions; while most epidemics can be defeated with a pill or vaccine, obesity requires people to change the way they eat and live, making it harder to defeat. Obesity is a major risk factor for serious chronic diseases and conditions including Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, sleep apnea, gallstones, infertility, varicose veins, gout, osteoarthritis and Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT).

- If you are overweight, take action right now to prevent crossing over into obesity. The first step is to make healthier lifestyle choices in your diet and exercise.

- Eat healthy. Include fruits, green vegetables, cereals and whole grain foods in your daily diet. Avoid sweets, fried, junk, packaged and refined foods. Eat small meals and chew your food slowly.

- Set aside at least 30 minutes every day for cardiovascular exercise. You don't need fancy exercise equipment or an expensive gym membership for this purpose. Walking, jogging, running, cycling and swimming are great for weight loss. It is essential to exercise at least thrice a week.

- Ignore popular quick-fix weight loss methods unless they are medically supervised. This category includes fad diets, weight loss pills and powders and fat burning machines. Not only do these techniques have serious side effects, some of them have a yo-yo cycle wherein you will regain excess weight just as quickly as you lost it.

- If you are overweight, don't socially ostracise yourself even though it may appear that society is pushing you to it. Weight gain has a deep psycho-social impact in these condemnable "size zero figure" times. Depression and stress further aggravate the condition.

- Become a non-smoker. It's a myth that smoking induces weight loss. Nicotine suppresses the appetite but its side effects are enormous.

- Avoid drinking. Most forms of alcohol contain a high percentage of fat. The fat content shoots up thanks to sweetened aerated drinks and greasy, fried foods that alcohol is usually paired with.

- If diet and exercise fail in obesity prevention, don't shy away from bariatric surgery. It's the only medically proven method for sustained weight loss. Unlike liposuction or the tummy tuck, it's not a cosmetic option either.

- Reverse the clock. Discouraging as this state of health might be, please remember that you are not a lost cause. Give life a second chance. Depending on which spectrum of weight gain you belong to, there are effective solutions — from lifestyle modifications, diet and exercises to surgery.



## Brentford confirms signing of Henderson

London, July 16 (UNI) : Brentford has confirmed that it has completed the signing of Premier League and Champions League-winning player Jordan Henderson on a two-year contract. Henderson joins Brentford on a free transfer after departing Ajax this summer. The midfielder returns to the Premier League after short stints in Saudi Arabia with Al-Ettifaq and then in the Netherlands with Ajax. Prior to that, Henderson was with Liverpool, where he spent 12 years and won the Premier League, Champions League, FA Cup, two League Cups, Community Shield, Super Cup and Club World Cup. Brentford head coach Keith Andrews said, "When we became aware of Jordan's availability, it was a pretty simple decision."

"We did our due diligence around his recent games to see where he is: he's still phenomenally fit and he's still phenomenally motivated to achieve things in the game, having already achieved a lot," he said. "With the void of experienced players leaving the building - Christian Norgaard, Mark Flekken and Ben Mee - it was important to replace that," he added.

## India A Men's Hockey Team loses a close 2-3 match against England

Amstelveen, July 16 (UNI) : The India A Men's Hockey Team suffered their second consecutive loss on their European tour, losing a close 2-3 match to England here the Netherlands.

Despite young Indian forwards Maninder Singh and Uttam Singh scoring for India A at Wagener Stadion, the team lost the match to world number 5 England after a close competition yesterday.

After the match India A Coach Shivendra Singh said, "We initially had three really good wins on this tour, and now two really close losses. We knew that as the tour progressed, we would face tougher competition and teams. We are now taking each game as it comes and learning from it as we progress."

## Shastri picks two key moments in India's Lord's defeat

London, July 16 (UNI) : The third Test at Lord's was a fiercely contested battle between England and India, with little separating the two sides for most of the match. But in the end, it was the hosts that edged ahead to seal a hard-fought victory.

England's bowlers, led by Jofra Archer and Ben Stokes, triggered a dramatic collapse in the final session of Day 4 and the opening session of Day 5 to bowl India out for 170 in pursuit of 193, despite a valiant fightback from ICC No.1 ranked Test all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja.

In a gripping Test that swung back and forth, Shastri pointed to the key moments that tilted the balance in England's favour, just when India seemed to have had the upper hand.

"The turning point for



India's Jemimah Rodrigues, Harleen Deol, Prasidh Krishna and Abhimanyu Easwaran during a meeting of members of the Indian men's and women's cricket teams with King Charles III at the Clarence House, in London on Wednesday.

## South Korea claims East Asian Cup title as China draws with Japan

Suwon (South Korea), July 16 (UNI) : China finished second in the women's 2025 EAFF E-1 Football Championship here today after a goalless draw with Japan in the final round, while South Korea beat Chinese Taipei 2-0 to win the event's title for first time in 20 years. The clash between China and Japan kicked off in rain. China applied high pressing and quick attacking from the start, but neither side could break the deadlock in the first half. The second half saw both teams continue to push forward, but heavy rain affected performances of both

sides. In stoppage time, Japan's Takahashi Hana had two chances to score but narrowly missed both. The match ended in a 0-0 stalemate.

With one win and two draws each, China, Japan and South Korea all finished with five points.

Chinese Taipei was at bottom after three defeats. The three top teams were tied in points, head-to-head results and goal difference.

According to the EAFF competition rules, rankings were then determined by the number of goals scored among the tied teams.

South Korea secured the championship with three goals, followed by

China with two and Japan one. It marked South Korea's second East Asian Cup title, the first since 2005. China head coach Ante Milicic said after the tournament that he was proud of his team for their effort under difficult weather conditions.

"Both teams worked hard despite the climate. I'm proud of the way my team played and fought," he said. Reflecting on the last-minute goal conceded against South Korea on July 9, Milicic admitted, "Conceding in the final minute cost us the title. It's a lesson we must learn -- we can't afford to lose focus in

the closing moments of a match." Chinese player Wang Shuang said that the team improved with each game during the tournament. "Our teamwork and understanding got better throughout the tournament. Today, some of the younger players really impressed with their bravery and confidence," she said. "I think the experience we gained from this tournament is more valuable than the results themselves. I believe these younger teammates will grow stronger and more confident as they gain more playing opportunities in the future," she added.

China with two and Japan one. It marked South Korea's second East Asian Cup title, the first since 2005. China head coach Ante Milicic said after the tournament that he was proud of his team for their effort under difficult weather conditions.

## British tennis player Moore given four-year doping ban

London, July 16 (UNI) : British tennis player Tara Moore has been banned for four years for a doping offence, despite being cleared by an independent tribunal 18 months ago.

An appeal by the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) has been upheld by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (Cas). The four-year ban starts immediately, but will be reduced by the 19 months Moore was provisionally suspended when the case first came to light. The 32-year-old was Britain's top ranked women's doubles player when she was provisionally banned in May 2022 having

tested positive for nandrolone and boldenone at a tournament in the Colombian capital Bogota the previous month.

But in December 2023 an independent tribunal ruled contaminated meat was the source of the positive test, and that Moore "bore no fault or negligence". The British player said she had suffered "19 months of lost time and emotional distress", and that her reputation had been damaged as a result of the case, according to a BBC report.

She returned to the tour in April 2024 and has played mostly on the ITF World Tour since. Earnings for

## China, Japan bag five wins in a row at women's softball Asia Cup

Xi'an (China), July 16 (UNI) : China and Japan remained unbeaten in the single round-robin preliminaries of the women's softball Asia Cup after recording fifth straight win here today. China beat Singapore 7-0, and Japan saw off Chinese Taipei 4-1 and smashed Hong Kong, China 16-0 to share a 5-0 record. Facing Singapore, Yan Siyu helped team China take a 1-0 lead through their rivals' errors in the first inning. Xie Jiixin contributed a base hit to give Xi Kaixin the chance to score in the third inning.

In the fifth inning, Yan contributed a base hit which allowed her teammates to score three runs and seal their fifth victory at the tournament.

"When we failed to finish any run in the second inning, our coach asked us to be patient," Xie said.

"We will face some tough games in the next few days, I will do my best and lead us to move forward," she added. Considered as the title favorites, team Japan and Chinese Taipei held an 1-1 draw before the last inning. However, batter Fujimori Natsumi hit a home-run with two-out in the seventh that brought team Japan a 4-1 victory. In the other games played today, South Korea beat Hong Kong, China 9-1 and overwhelmed Thailand 8-0, The Philippines won over India 15-0 and defeated Malaysia 14-0.

## Asian Surfing at Mahabs from Aug 3-12

Chennai, July 16 (UNI) : Top surfers will converge at the tourist spot off Mahabalipuram coast, about 55 km from Chennai, for Asian Surfing Championships 2025 to be held from August three to 12. Mahabalipuram, the jewel of Tamil Nadu's coastline, is set to make waves on the international stage as some high octane action is on the cards during the 10-day extravaganza as the event will decide the qualifiers for 2026 Asian Games.

Renowned for its powerful right-hand point break — affectionately known as "Mini Snapper Rocks"

— Mahabalipuram offers the perfect stage for Asia's best surfers to display their skills. This year's championship will bring together surfers from 20 Asian countries. Competitors will battle it out in Shortboard divisions: Open Men, Open Women, U18 Boys, and U18 Girls. Beyond the medals — Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Copper — surfers will be vying for qualification spots for the 2026 Asian Games, making this a landmark event on the Asian surfing calendar.

Tamil Nadu continues to lead India's surfing movement, with 8 out of 12 Indian team athletes coming from the state. This is a testament to the region's strong grassroots programs and focus on elite athlete development. The

championship is supported by the Tamil Nadu Government, the Department of Youth Welfare and Sports Development, and the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT), who serve as official sponsors.

The Asian Surfing Championships 2025 will see the newly crowned men's and women's champions receive direct berths to the SurfCity El Salvador ALAS Global Finals, scheduled for November 17-23, 2025. This paves a new pathway for Asian surfers to compete and shine on an even bigger international stage. Addressing a press conference here today, Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Youth Welfare and Sports Development Udhayanidhi Stalin said "Tamil Nadu has always believed in empowering youth through sports and fostering a spirit of excellence and inclusivity. Hosting the ASF Asian Surfing Championships 2025 in Tamil Nadu highlights our commitment to nurturing new sports like surfing, creating world-class opportunities for our athletes, and strengthening Tamil Nadu's position as India's sports and adventure tourism hub. We are proud to support our surfers and look forward to welcoming Asia's best to our shores."

## Salman Khan unveils season 2 of Indian Supercross Racing League

Mumbai, July 16 (UNI) : Bollywood star Salman Khan today unveiled Season 2 of the Indian Supercross Racing League (ISRL), where he serves as the brand ambassador.

With Khan's immense influence, cross-demographic appeal, and personal passion for motorcycles and fitness, ISRL is poised to transcend niche sport boundaries and evolve into a mainstream cultural phenomenon.

At the season launch press conference in Mumbai highlighted Salman's involvement and plans to join as investor which will add significant momentum to ISRL's growing ambition of becoming a destination for automotive and customer-centric brands, as well as family-focused entertainment. This aligns with the end-goal of the league to support and cultivate a new generation of Indian racing heroes. As part of the mission to elevate Supercross in India to a global level, Salman Khan also launched the 'ISRL Proving Grounds' dedicated to grassroots motorsport development in India. The facility, to be built on a 7-acre site near Pune, will feature multiple purpose-built tracks including those for amateurs, kids, motocross, supercross, ATVs, electric bikes, trail riding, and more.

Speaking at the event, Salman said, "I've always been passionate about motorcycles and off-roading, when I saw what ISRL is building bringing together world-class talent, supporting home-grown athletes, and creating an entire ecosystem and lifestyle around the sport, I knew this was something I wanted to be part of, not just as a face, but as a believer." "This league is about pushing boundaries, and that's something I connect with deeply. With the launch of the 'ISRL Proving Grounds', we're giving India's youth the opportunity to access the support, tools, and coaching they need to chase big dreams and compete on a global stage."

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## Central Railway organises Station Mahotsav at 6 Stations of Mumbai Division



### Station Mahotsav at Reay Road

(Standard Post Bureau) Mumbai, July 16 : Central Railway organised Centenary Celebrations of 6 Heritage Stations on Mumbai Division on 16.07.2025 as part of the Station Mahotsav as advised by Railway Board. These include Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, Reay Road, Asangaon, Vasind, Kasara and Igatpuri stations. A total of 15 stations on all 5 Divisions of Central Railway have been identified for celebrations of Station Mahotsavs.

The Celebrations featured a Heritage exhibition at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus wherein various artefacts belonging to the GIPR era were displayed. A miniature replica of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus heritage building with colour lightings was displayed along with miniature models of Steam Locomotives, Wooden Coaches of the GIPR era. The other displays included Brass bells, Brass badges of Railway workers, Old Lamp Posts, Heritage wooden chairs, Coat & Umbrella

stand, Heritage Pendulum Clocks etc of the GIPR era reminding the visitors of the olden era. Big Iron Box used for Railway Cash earnings, Hand Signal Lamps and Ball & Token Machine once used at Stations were also displayed. In addition to the Old, the exhibition also displayed a model of the Vande Bharat Trains in service presently and a model of the Bullet Train expected to be operational in the near future. The exhibition also displayed Charts, Content and Photographs

with information about Railways' progress over the years.

Visitors to the exhibition were also taken on a virtual tour of CSMT with VR 360 degree glasses offering a 360 degree visual. Memorabilia including Diaries, Coffee Mugs, T-Shirts and Key Chains with colour and Black & White photos of CSMT were also on display for sale as a souvenir.

A big Rangoli on the theme was also displayed at the CSMT Suburban concourse as part of the celebrations.

The exhibition, open from 11.00 hrs to 18.00 hrs was a trip down memory lane with an encouraging response in the initial hours with hundreds of visitors including Students, Office going people, Professionals, Heritage enthusiasts, Rail Fans and passengers having come to board long distance trains.

Reay Road, Asangaon, Vasind, Kasara & Igatpuri, stations wore a festive look with decorations. Activities like shramdaan and plantation of saplings were conducted. Selfie points were set up for people to take selfies as a remembrance of the event. "The Centenary Celebrations were a memorable blend of history, culture, education, and celebration—truly befitting stations that have served the passengers of Indian Railways with dedication for over a century.

## Additional Stoppage provided at Ambaliyasan Station to Valsad - Vadnagar Superfast Express

(Standard Post Bureau) Mumbai, July 16 : For the convenience of passengers, Western Railway has provided an additional stoppage at Ambaliyasan station to Train No. 20959/20960 Valsad - Vadnagar Superfast Express on experimental basis.

According to a press release issued by Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Mr Vineet Abhishek, the details are as under: Train No. 20959 Valsad - Vadnagar Superfast Express will halt at Ambaliyasan station with immediate effect. The train will arrive Ambaliyasan station at 11:47 hrs and depart at 11:49 hrs. The timings of this train at Mahesana and Visnagar stations have also been revised. Similarly, Train No. 20960 Vadnagar - Valsad Superfast Express will halt at Ambaliyasan station at 17:48 hrs and depart at 17:50 hrs. The timings of this train at Gandhinagar Capital station have also been revised.

For detailed information regarding the timings, halts & composition of the above trains, passengers may please visit [www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in](http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in).

## WR extends trips of Six pairs of Weekly Special Trains

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, July 16 : For the convenience of passengers and with a view to meet the travel demand, Western Railway has extended the trips of six pairs of Weekly Special trains on existing composition, path, maintenance and timings with some revisions.

According to a press release issued by Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Mr Vineet Abhishek, details of the trains are as under:

1. Train No. 09043 Bandra Terminus - Barhni Special has been extended upto 28th September, 2025. Similarly, Train No. 09044 Barhni - Bandra Terminus Special has been extended upto 29th September, 2025.

2. Train No. 09025 Valsad - Danapur Special has been extended upto 29th September, 2025. Similarly, Train No. 09026 Danapur - Valsad Special has been extended upto 30th September, 2025.

3. Train No. 09031 Udhna - Jaynagar Special has been extended upto 28th September, 2025. Similarly, Train No. 09032 Jaynagar - Udhna Special has been extended upto 29th September, 2025.

4. Train No. 09045 Udhna - Patna Special has been extended upto 26th September, 2025. Similarly, Train No. 09046 Patna - Udhna Special has been extended upto 27th September, 2025.

5. Train No. 09195 Vadodara - Mau Special

has been extended upto 29th September, 2025. Similarly, Train No. 09196 Mau - Vadodara Special has been extended upto 30th September, 2025.

6. Train No. 09343 Dr Ambedkar Nagar - Patna Special has been extended upto 25th September, 2025. Similarly, Train No. 09344 Patna - Dr Ambedkar Nagar Special has been extended upto 26th September, 2025.

The booking for extended trips of Train Nos. 09043, 09025, 09031, 09045, 09195 & 09343 opens from 17th July, 2025 at PRS counters & on IRCTC website. For detailed information regarding timings of halts and composition, passengers may please visit [www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in](http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in)

## South Western Railway Central Hospital Hubballi Unveils State-of-the-Art Digital Radiography System



(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, July 16 : Mr Mukul Saran Mathur, General Manager of South Western Railway, inaugurated a cutting-edge PRORAD 3NC Digital Radiography (DR) System and a newly renovated Medical Examination Room at South Western Railway Central Hospital, Hubballi, today, marking a significant milestone in advancing diagnostic imaging services and reinforcing SWR's commitment to delivering high-quality, accurate, and

efficient patient care. This PRORAD 3NC Digital Radiography (DR) System is the first of its kind in Hubli-Dharwad city and North Karnataka, was procured at a cost of Rs. 99,60,000/-

The PRORAD 3NC Digital Radiography System features advanced flat panel detector technology for high-resolution imaging with rapid image acquisition, enabling faster diagnoses and improved patient throughput, while its

wireless DR detector enhances flexibility, streamlining workflows and boosting operational efficiency to provide superior diagnostic accuracy and optimize the hospital's diagnostic capabilities.

Mr K.S. Jain, Additional General Manager; Dr. G.S. Ramachandra, Principal Chief Medical Director, SWR; Smt. Bela Meena, Divisional Railway Manager Hubballi; and other senior officials were present during this occasion.

## PRSI in collaboration with NMDC celebrated World Public Relations Day

(Standard Post Bureau) Hyderabad, July 16 : Hyderabad Chapter of the Public Relations Society of India (PRSI), in collaboration with National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC), celebrated World Public Relations Day today i.e., 16th July, 2025 with great enthusiasm and professional fervour on Wednesday evening at the Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI), Red Hills, Hyderabad.

The event commemorated the legacy of Ivy Ledbetter Lee, regarded as the father of modern public relations and focused on the evolving role of Public Relations in diplomacy, governance, corporate communication and media. Delivering the keynote address, Lion Dr. Kiran Kumar, Honorary Consul of Bulgaria in Hyderabad for the State of Telangana, emphasized the critical role of public relations in nurturing trust and brand image in the society.

"Public Relations is not just a communication tool, but a bridge that connects people, cultures, and countries," he remarked requesting PR professionals to take Initiative to spread



positivity.

He said that he had learnt a lot from PRSI to reach out people in his business development. He declared Rs 1 lakh for the

PRSI corpus fund. "Dr. S. Ramu, senior Journalist and Journalism educator, who presided over the programme, reflected on the significance of World

Public Relations Day, highlighting the need of ethics, truth and transparency in PR practice in the highly polarized world. Dr. K. Yadagiri,

Chairman of PRSI Hyderabad Chapter, spoke about PRSI's nationwide footprint and its professional development initiatives aimed at enriching PR knowledge and capabilities across sectors.

Smt. Aparna Rajhans, Secretary of PRSI Hyderabad Chapter, appreciated the support extended by NMDC in co-hosting professional development programs, underlining the importance of such partnerships in elevating public relations as a strategic discipline.

The celebration saw the presence of several distinguished PR practitioners, Office Bearers, Executive Committee Members National Council Representatives, Patrons and Advisors of the Chapter as well as PR & Journalism faculty and students from leading institutions.

In a heartfelt felicitation, the Chapter honoured Dr. S. Ramu for his dedicated service and leadership as Chairman during the previous term. His contributions to building strong institutional partnerships and mentoring young professionals were warmly acknowledged by the fraternity.

## UPI has reached tea sellers, vegetable vendors : Ashwini

New Delhi, July 16 (ANS): When the world questioned how a tea seller or a vegetable vendor could use digital payments, but today that dream has come true -- UPI payments have surpassed Visa transactions, Union

Minister for Electronics and IT, Ashwini Vaishnaw, said on Sunday. Addressing a packed hall at the Yashobhoomi Convention Centre here on the occasion of 10 years of Digital India, he said that this is the strength of 1.4 billion

Indians. The celebration highlighted India's inspiring journey from being a digitally divided nation to becoming the world's third-largest digital economy. At the heart of this transformation is the CSC network, a rural digital

infrastructure that now reaches nearly 90 per cent of villages in the country -- empowering people at the grassroots level.

Minister Vaishnaw praised the efforts of lakhs of Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs), who

have made digital services accessible even in the remotest corners of India.

He shared stories of women like Manjulata from Odisha's Mayurbhanj and Rose Angelina from Meghalaya's East West Khasi Hills.

radiology unit, CT, all Doctors consultation rooms and retired employees waiting lounge. He interacted with the pensioners and family members regarding treatment facilities available and also took feedback regarding any improvements required.

Further, the General Manager inspected the emergency wards (casualty), Special ward, Intensive Coronary Care Unit (ICCU), Dialysis unit and newly inaugurated Cardiac Cath Lab & recovery room. The General Manager inspected the cleanliness, working environment and interacted with some of the patients and enquired about the facilities and treatment being provided. He also inspected the male medical wards, maternity ward and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) etc.

## Sanjay Kumar Srivastava, GM, SCR Inspects Central Hospital

(Standard Post Bureau)

Hyderabad, July 16 : Mr Sanjay Kumar Srivastava, General Manager, South Central Railway inspected Central Hospital, Lallaguda, Secunderabad today. He was accompanied by Dr. Nirmala Rajaram, Principal Chief Medical Director, SCR; Shri Lokesh Vishnoi, Divisional Railway Manager, Hyderabad Division; Dr. I. Sivanaga Prasad, Medical Director, Central Hospital; Senior Doctors and other senior officials during the inspection.

Mr Sanjay Kumar Srivastava commenced the inspection at the old out-patient block (OPD), wherein he inspected all clinics such as Ophthalmology, Dental, ENT, Chest clinic etc. At the new OPD block, the General Manager inspected