

Heavy casualties after massive landslide strikes border region between China and Nepal

GIYRONG, CORRESPONDENT : Hundreds of people, including many foreign tourists, remained missing Wednesday night after a massive landslide struck a border area between China and Nepal.

Chinese state media reported that the landslide struck Nepal at around 9am before spilling into Gyirong county in Tibet. The disaster hit a border checkpoint administered by the city of Shigatse, with authorities reporting "major casualties and missing persons".

According to South China Morning Post, footage circulating online showed the landslide sweeping down on the checkpoint within seconds as people fled the area, before mud and debris covered the scene.

In Nepal, the Tourism Board said 384 tourists and travellers were missing, including 93 Nepalese nationals and 291 foreigners. The missing foreigners included citizens of India, Australia, the US, the UK and the Netherlands, while



the nationalities of another 111 people had not yet been confirmed.

Chinese President Xi Jinping ordered local authorities to "spare no effort" in searching for and rescuing those missing, evacuating residents, treating the injured and minimising casualties. He also called for stronger monitoring and early-warning systems and measures to prevent secondary disasters.

Soldiers and personnel from the People's Armed Police have been deployed

to the disaster zone to assist with rescue and relief operations. Authorities have also closed the road leading to the Gyirong checkpoint for seven days. China Anneng Construction Group, a state-owned construction and emergency-response company, sent 200 rescuers, geologists and engineers to the site, with another 100 personnel on standby. Rescue teams brought heavy machinery and equipment including reconnaissance drones, 3D laser scanners

and life detectors, according to Xinhua. The landslide has also disrupted a strategically important commercial crossing. Gyirong Port is Tibet's main foreign-trade port and handles most of China's trade with Nepal. Since two-way passenger and freight clearance resumed after the pandemic in 2022, traffic through the port has

increased sharply, including the export of Chinese electric vehicles to Nepal. China's embassy in Nepal said it had activated its emergency response mechanism and was checking on Chinese citizens and companies in the affected area. It also called on the Nepalese government to carry out full-scale rescue operations.

Jairam Ramesh targets Maharashtra CM over 'Modani' favouritism, calls APTEL protest hypocritical

New Delhi, Correspondent : Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh on Wednesday launched a sharp attack on the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, accusing him of hypocrisy over his reported complaint to Prime Minister Narendra Modi that the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (APTEL) was heavily biased in favour of private power companies.

In a post on social media platform X, Ramesh said the Maharashtra Chief Minister had "apparently protested to the Prime Minister that the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (APTEL) is biased heavily in favour of private power companies."

Questioning the Chief Minister's stand, the Congress leader alleged that the "major recipient" of favourable APTEL decisions in Maharashtra during 2025 and 2026 had been the "Modani conglomerate", claiming that at least four cases had been decided in its favour.

"But the Maharashtra Govt has itself bent over backwards to favour Modani not only in



power projects but also in real estate development projects like at Dharavi," Ramesh said.

He alleged that the Maharashtra government's reported concern over the functioning of APTEL appeared to have surfaced only after a decision of the tribunal went in favour of another private company, JSW.

"The CM's sudden ire at Modani is full of hypocrisy. His complaint to the PM seems to have been triggered by an APTEL decision in favour of another private company JSW," Ramesh said.

Ramesh further argued that if the Chief Minister was genuinely concerned about tribunal decisions affecting the interests of the

Maharashtra government and electricity consumers, he should also question earlier rulings that, according to the Congress leader, had benefited the conglomerate. "If he means what he says, the CM should be questioning all the earlier decisions that have benefited Modani at the expense of the state government and consumers," he said.

The Congress leader's remarks come amid an ongoing political debate over the involvement of private companies in major power, infrastructure and urban redevelopment projects in Maharashtra, including the high-profile Dharavi redevelopment project.

Kharge urges swift action to locate Indians missing in Nepal Flood Disaster

New Delhi, Correspondent : Congress president and Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday expressed profound grief over the devastating flash floods in Nepal and urged the Government of India to move swiftly to trace and assist more than 100 Indian nationals reported missing in the disaster.

In a post on social media platform X, Kharge extended his condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and said the Indian National Congress stood firmly with the people of Nepal as they grappled with the humanitarian crisis.

"Deeply shocked and saddened by the devastating flash floods in Nepal. My heartfelt condolences to those who have lost their loved ones. We stand in solidarity with the people of Nepal in this hour of grief," Kharge said.

The Congress president said reports about a large number of missing Indian nationals had added to concerns over the scale of the tragedy and called upon the Indian government to take immediate and effective measures to locate them and ensure their safety.

"We are deeply concerned about reports of over 100 Indians who remain missing. I urge the Government of India to take immediate steps to trace them, ensure their safety and provide all possible assistance to their families," he said.

Kharge also called for India to extend comprehensive humanitarian assistance to Nepal, where rescue teams continued to battle difficult weather, damaged infrastructure and hazardous terrain in



their efforts to reach stranded and affected people.

"India must also extend every possible humanitarian assistance to Nepal in this difficult hour," Kharge said, adding that the Indian National Congress stood with the people of Nepal and prayed for the safety of all those affected by the disaster.

The devastating flash floods struck northern Nepal on Wednesday, causing extensive destruction across mountainous border regions. Initial reports suggested that the catastrophe may have been triggered by a suspected earthquake followed by a massive ice and rock avalanche on the Tibetan side of the border, unleashing a powerful surge of water, mud and debris into Nepal's Himalayan river valleys.

At least 16 to 17 deaths have been confirmed, according to available official assessments, though the toll is feared to rise as rescuers reach remote and badly devastated areas. Nearly 400 travellers have reportedly gone missing, including 291 foreign tourists. At least 105 Indian nationals and 12 British citizens are among those reported missing.

The disaster has also affected security personnel deployed in the

border region. As many as 41 personnel, including members of the Nepal Police and the Armed Police Force, remained unaccounted for after a border post was inundated by the sudden floodwaters.

The Bhote Koshi River reportedly experienced a massive surge at around 9 a.m. local time, carrying water, rocks, mud and debris through narrow Himalayan valleys with destructive force. Settlements in Nepal's Rasuwa district near the Nepal-China border were among the worst affected.

Timure and Syapru Besi suffered severe damage, with reports of multi-storey buildings collapsing and parts of villages being swept away. Floodwaters and debris also travelled downstream into Nuwakot district, where several residential areas were partially submerged.

Authorities have issued high-water warnings for areas along the Trishuli and Narayani river systems, triggering emergency evacuations and intensified monitoring of vulnerable settlements. The floods have also caused serious damage to Nepal's power infrastructure, with more than 430 MW of electricity supply reportedly affected after six major hydropower facilities suffered structural damage.

The Rasuwagadhi and Chilime hydropower projects were among the affected facilities. The resulting disruption accounts for more than 12 per cent of Nepal's national hydropower capacity and could pose additional challenges to rescue, relief and restoration operations.

Maha boosts Pune's industrial powerhouse Chakan with Rs 2,320 Cr MSME Push

Mumbai, Correspondent : Giving a massive impetus to the industrial landscape of Maharashtra, the State Government has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with 49 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to inject a proposed investment of Rs 2,320.97 crore into the Chakan-Bhosari industrial belt.

The pacts were finalized here at the Sahyadri Guest House in the presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Industries Minister Dr Uday Samant.

The high-value investments are projected to scale up production capacities, accelerate the 'Local to Global' manufacturing wave, and generate thousands of fresh employment



avenues within Pune's core automobile and engineering cluster.

Highlighting the pivotal role of small businesses, Chief Minister Fadnavis stated that MSMEs serve as the primary bedrock supporting large-scale industrial expansion by providing vital components, spare parts, and localized services.

"Maharashtra is the country's growth

engine, and MSMEs are bridging critical import gaps while anchoring local supply chains," Fadnavis said.

To ensure targeted and data-driven growth, the state has announced a comprehensive 'MSME Census' to accurately map the size, structure, employment potential, and requirements of small industries across the state.

Furthermore, ageing industrial clusters are slated for an upgrade into autonomous "Industrial Townships" with independent civic administrations, beginning with Pune district. Addressing concerns regarding industrial migration, Industries Minister Uday Samant strongly dismissed rumors of businesses shifting base outside the state.

Kanda Express to carry only 450 metric tonnes of onions to Delhi amid quality dispute

Nashik, Correspondent : The much-awaited Kanda Express, carrying onions from Nashik to Adarsh Nagar in Delhi, will depart between 3 and 4 pm and is expected to reach Delhi in around 24 hours. However, a dispute has erupted over the quality and quantity of onions being transported.

An inspection of the loaded rake found onion sacks containing 10-mm and 20-mm onions. According to farmers, these are low-grade onions, locally classified as gulti or third-category produce, which is generally sold in Nashik for around Rs 5 to Rs 10 per kg. Farmers alleged that some of the

onions loaded onto the train were also rotten and claimed that such produce could be sold in Delhi for Rs 30 to Rs 35 per kg.

The controversy has raised questions about the onions being procured by the National Cooperative Consumers' Federation (NCCF) and NAFED. Farmers pointed out that several conditions were imposed for procurement and claimed that only good-quality onions measuring around 45 to 55 mm were supposed to be purchased. They are now asking where that quality onion is.

After learning about the alleged

quality issue, Prahar Kisan Sangathan activist Ganesh Nimbalkar attempted to stop the train. He demanded that officials show the quality onions that were allegedly procured for the shipment.

Nimbalkar alleged that the onions loaded onto the rake were of poor quality and partly rotten. He termed the situation a case of corruption and questioned where and from which farmers the onions had been purchased. He said farmers were ready to supply good-quality onions at Rs 30 per kg, but alleged that the government was not willing to purchase them.

PM Modi assures Nepal of India's full support after deadly flash floods

New Delhi, Correspondent : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday conveyed his condolences to Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah over the loss of lives in devastating flash floods and assured the neighbouring country of India's full humanitarian support as rescue and relief operations continued in the disaster-hit Himalayan regions.

In a post on social media platform X, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India stood in solidarity with the people of Nepal during the difficult time and that teams from the two countries were coordinating closely to strengthen rescue and relief efforts.

"Spoke to Prime Minister Balendra Shah and conveyed condolences on the loss of lives due to the floods in Nepal. The people of India stand in solidarity with their sisters and brothers in Nepal at this difficult time," Modi said.

"India is ready to provide all possible humanitarian assistance to Nepal. Our teams



are coordinating closely on rescue and relief efforts," he added.

The flash floods struck northern Nepal on Wednesday, unleashing widespread destruction across mountainous border regions. Initial reports suggested that the disaster may have been triggered by a suspected earthquake and a massive ice and rock avalanche on the Tibetan side of the border, sending a powerful surge of water, mud and debris through Himalayan river valleys and into Nepal.

At least 16 to 17 people have been confirmed dead, according

to available official assessments, although the number is feared to rise as rescue teams reach remote and severely affected areas. Nearly 400 travellers have reportedly gone missing, including 291 foreign tourists. Among them are at least 105 Indian nationals and 12 British citizens.

The flooding has also left 41 security personnel, including members of the Nepal Police and Armed Police Force, unaccounted for after a border post was overwhelmed by the sudden torrent.

The Bhote Koshi River

reportedly surged dramatically at around 9 a.m. local time, carrying enormous quantities of water, rocks and debris through narrow valleys. Settlements in Nepal's Rasuwa district, close to the Nepal-China border, were among the worst affected.

Timure and Syapru Besi suffered extensive destruction, with reports of multi-storey structures collapsing and sections of villages being swept away. Floodwaters and muddy debris also moved further downstream into Nuwakot district, where several residential areas were partially submerged.

Authorities have issued high-water warnings for areas along the Trishuli and Narayani river systems, prompting emergency evacuations and increased monitoring in vulnerable locations. The disaster has also dealt a significant blow to Nepal's power infrastructure, with more than 430 MW of electricity supply reportedly affected after six major hydropower facilities suffered structural damage.

The Rasuwagadhi and

Chilime hydropower projects were among the affected facilities. The disruption accounts for more than 12 per cent of Nepal's national hydropower capacity and could further complicate emergency operations and recovery efforts.

Rescue operations have been hampered by difficult weather conditions and Nepal's challenging Himalayan terrain. Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah has reportedly deployed 14 military and disaster-response helicopters, but strong winds and dangerous flood conditions have prevented aircraft from landing in some of the worst-hit areas.

Rescue teams on the ground are also facing major difficulties because roads, bridges and communication infrastructure have been damaged or washed away.

The Embassy of India in Nepal said it remained closely engaged with Nepalese authorities to facilitate the rescue and relief of Indian nationals affected by the floods.

"The Embassy of India has remained engaged with the relevant

authorities of the Government of Nepal for early rescue and relief for Indian nationals affected by the flash floods that took place in Nepal today. Rescue and relief efforts continue to be strengthened in coordination with the Government of Nepal," the Embassy said.

It also issued emergency helpline numbers for Indian nationals affected by the disaster and their families seeking information: 977 985 131 6807 and 977 970 910 7500.

India is mobilising emergency assistance and coordinating closely with Nepalese authorities as the scale of the disaster continues to emerge. The response reflects the close geographical, cultural and humanitarian ties between India and Nepal, which share an open border and have repeatedly extended assistance to each other during natural disasters.

The disaster has also triggered concern in India because Himalayan rivers flowing through Nepal eventually connect with river systems in northern India. The Bhote Koshi is linked to downstream networks feeding

into the Gandak and Kosi systems, leading authorities in Bihar to place vulnerable downstream and border districts on heightened alert and closely monitor water levels.

Nepal is highly vulnerable to natural disasters because of its rugged Himalayan geography, fragile mountain slopes and extensive network of fast-flowing rivers. Flash floods, landslides, earthquakes and glacial events can rapidly trigger humanitarian emergencies, particularly in remote mountain areas where evacuation and rescue operations are difficult.

With hundreds of people still missing, including Indian citizens and other foreign nationals, the immediate focus remains on search and rescue operations, restoring access to isolated communities and preventing further casualties. As adverse weather and damaged infrastructure continue to hinder relief efforts, India and Nepal are expected to maintain close coordination in the coming days while authorities work to determine the full scale of the tragedy.

When Democracies Become Autocratic

In the twenty-first century, democracy rarely disappears through a single military takeover. More often, it is weakened gradually by elected governments. Constitutions remain in place, elections are held, parliaments meet and courts continue to function, but the contest for power becomes increasingly unequal. Ruling parties capture public institutions, influence the media, restrict civil society and use investigative agencies, security laws or regulatory powers selectively against opponents. Political scientists describe such systems as “illiberal democracies,” “competitive authoritarian regimes” or “electoral autocracies.” Whatever terminology is used, the central contradiction is the same: electoral legitimacy is retained while democratic accountability is steadily removed.

BY MATHEW MATTAM

Freedom House’s Freedom in the World 2026 report captures the scale of this danger. Assessing developments during 2025, it found that global freedom declined for the twentieth consecutive year. Political rights and civil liberties deteriorated in 54 countries, while only 35 recorded improvements. The report measures more than elections. It examines political pluralism, government accountability, freedom of expression and association, the rule of law, personal autonomy and whether rights can be exercised in practice. Its findings therefore ask a deeper question: not merely whether people vote, but whether they can organise, criticise, seek justice and replace those in power.

The most severe declines occurred in Guinea-Bissau, where a coup disrupted the electoral process, and Tanzania, where opposition exclusion, disappearances, media restrictions and violence surrounded the election. Burkina Faso, Madagascar and El Salvador followed. Georgia and Togo also suffered major setbacks. Bulgaria, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Serbia and the United States each lost three points. Burundi, Guinea, Haiti, Italy, Kenya, Maldives and Tunisia lost two.

The remaining one-point declines occurred in Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium,

Belize, Cambodia, Colombia, Comoros, Cuba, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, India, Iran, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Mexico, Montenegro, Panama, Peru, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Sudan, Taiwan, Thailand, Tonga, Turkey, Uganda and Zimbabwe. These countries differ greatly in history, wealth and political system. Their presence in the same list demonstrates that democratic erosion is neither confined to poor states nor limited to openly authoritarian regimes.

Some cases illustrate how elected authority can be converted into concentrated power. Hungary remains a leading example. Under Viktor Orbán and Fidesz, constitutional amendments, judicial appointments, media concentration and electoral-rule changes have tilted the political field towards the government. Turkey’s shift from parliamentary government to an executive presidency under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has been accompanied by extensive pressure on journalists, judges, academics, civil-society activists and opposition politicians. Tunisia, once the strongest democratic hope to emerge from the Arab Spring, moved towards presidential dominance after Kaïs Saïed suspended and dissolved Parliament and secured a constitution that weakened institutional checks.

Serbia displays a slower form of institutional capture: elections and opposition parties survive,



but media dominance, state resources and pressure on critics undermine genuine competition. Georgia’s restrictive legislation, pressure on civic organisations and disproportionate policing of protests have accelerated its decline. Thailand still holds civilian elections, yet military influence, court interventions and restrictive monarchy-related laws limit democratic choice. In the Philippines, the legacy of Rodrigo Duterte’s violent “war on drugs,” attacks on journalists and impunity continues to burden democratic accountability, even though the country’s aggregate score did not decline in the 2026 edition.

El Salvador demonstrates why popularity cannot substitute for constitutional restraint. President Nayib Bukele’s campaign against gangs has attracted substantial public support, but prolonged emergency rule, mass detention, weakened due process, attacks on independent media and judicial restructuring have concentrated power. In 2025, the legislature abolished presidential term limits, opening the way to indefinite reelection. A government may deliver security and still damage democracy when courts, legislatures and

constrain it.

India presents a more contested picture. It conducts elections on an extraordinary scale; turnout remains strong, opposition parties govern some states, courts sometimes restrain the executive, and the 2024 general election denied the Bharatiya Janata Party an outright majority. These are genuine sources of resilience. Nevertheless, Freedom House reduced India’s score from 63 to 62 and continued to classify it as “Partly Free.” Concerns include pressure on independent journalism, internet shutdowns, restrictions on protest, criminal or national-security cases against dissenters, tighter control of foreign funding for civil-society organisations and the alleged selective use of tax and investigative agencies.

The government rejects many international assessments as biased or methodologically flawed and argues that its actions protect national security, transparency and legal compliance. That response deserves acknowledgment, but it does not remove the need for scrutiny. Democracy depends on equal political opportunity, minority protection, independent

challenge authority without fear. India has not ceased to be democratic; rather, its democratic institutions are engaged in a serious struggle between centralisation and resistance.

The United States shows that established democracies are not immune. It remained “Free,” but lost three points because of increasing executive dominance, legislative dysfunction, pressure on expression and weakened anticorruption safeguards. Election denial, the January 6 attack and extreme polarisation had already exposed institutional vulnerabilities. Australia, Belgium, Cyprus and Italy also recorded declines, while Bulgaria’s three-point fall was among the sharpest within the “Free” category. Europe still contains many resilient democracies, but setbacks in Georgia, Serbia, Slovakia and Montenegro show that geography and formal membership in democratic institutions offer no automatic protection.

Across the Middle East, authoritarian rule remains widespread. Iran continues to be classified “Not Free,” with severe restrictions on meaningful elections, dissent, independent media, women’s rights and civil

declined, while Israel’s score remained unchanged but its democracy continued to face pressures arising from war, polarisation and disputes over judicial and executive power. Syria, by contrast, gained five points following the collapse of Bashar al-Assad’s regime and the release of political prisoners, although its score remained extremely low and its transition uncertain. Progress after repression must be judged by whether new authorities build accountable institutions rather than simply replace one concentration of power with another.

The report also contains reasons for guarded hope. Improvements were recorded in Afghanistan, Albania, Austria, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Fiji, Gabon, Ireland, Jamaica, Kosovo, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Malawi, Malta, Mauritius, Mozambique, Romania, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Syria, The Gambia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay. Bolivia, Fiji and Malawi moved from “Partly Free” to “Free.” Sri Lanka and Syria achieved the largest gains, while competitive elections, stronger courts, peaceful transfers of power and institutional reforms supported progress elsewhere.

Brazil and Poland demonstrate that backsliding can be resisted. Brazil endured attacks on institutions and election denial under Jair Bolsonaro, but constitutional transfer after the 2022 election and accountability for the January 2023 assault helped restore safeguards. Poland’s government, elected in 2023 after years of judicial and media politicisation under Law and Justice, began rebuilding institutional independence. Recovery is difficult because democratic repair must itself respect law; a reforming government cannot defend institutions by adopting the shortcuts of its predecessor.

Events after the Freedom House assessment period underline the continuing risk. On 24 August 2026, Zambia’s Supreme Court premises, which also accommodate the Constitutional Court, were

closed for stated security reasons on the effective final day for challenging the disputed presidential result. Opposition leader Brian Mundubile was seeking to contest President Hakainde Hichilema’s reelection amid observer concerns and arrests of opposition associates. The government denied directing the closure. Yet the incident illustrates a fundamental principle: a constitutional remedy is meaningless if citizens cannot reach the court before the deadline. Democracy depends on access, not promises written on paper.

Across these countries, five warning signs recur: executives accumulate powers belonging to legislatures, courts and regulators; independent media are captured or intimidated; civil society, universities and unions face funding restrictions or punitive laws; elections continue on an unequal field; and minorities, migrants, independent journalists or opposition parties are portrayed as enemies of the nation. Each step may be defended as legal, temporary or necessary. Together, they transform government from an accountable public trust into an instrument of partisan control.

The decisive test of democracy is not whether a government can win an election, but whether it can lose one—and whether its opponents have a fair opportunity to defeat it. Democratic recovery remains possible, as developments in Brazil, Poland, Bolivia, Fiji, Malawi, Sri Lanka and South Korea demonstrate. But improvement is fragile unless it is secured through independent courts, free media, credible elections, protected minorities and active civic institutions. Democracy survives not through elections alone, but through a political culture in which power accepts limits, citizens can question authority and the Constitution serves the people rather than the ruling party.

Sources: Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2026: The Growing Shadow of Autocracy; Freedom House country assessments; Reuters reporting on Zambia, 24 August 2026.



Pune

The season of wild vegetables blossoms in the month of Shravan; A series of rare wild fruits in the Sahyadri Mountains

Ranjani / Ramesh Jadhav
Pune, Correspondent : The season of wild vegetables is currently in full bloom in the Sahyadri mountain ranges, on the slopes of the hills, and on the banks of the fields in the western tribal areas of Ambegaon taluka. This year, due to the earlier onset of the monsoons than usual, a large number of wild vegetables have become available in Shravan itself. These wild vegetables, which grow in the lap of nature without the use of any tillage, chemical fertilizers or pesticides, have revived the traditional food culture of the tribal areas. As soon as the rains begin to fall on the Sahyadri foothills, the young leaves of wild vegetables start to emerge. These vegetables grow naturally in forests, mountain slopes, farm embankments, marshes and bushes. The main season of wild vegetables is usually in



the month of Bhadrapad, i.e. August. It blooms in late September and early October. However, this year, the season has come almost a month earlier due to the early start of the rains. Rare vegetables are also found in abundance due to the fertile environment for wild vegetables. Fasting, traditional food and local cuisine have special importance during the month of Shravan. Wild vegetables are a natural gift - Wild vegetables are an important part of the biodiversity of the Sahyadris. For generations, the tribal community has preserved



their identity, uses and recipes. This year, due to the early rains, this natural gift can be enjoyed in Shravan itself. The tradition of hundreds of types of wild vegetables Wild vegetables include tubers, leafy vegetables, flower vegetables, fruit vegetables, legumes, and various types made from seeds. Math, Chavyacha Bar, Rukhalu, Kui, Sairathod, Chichurade, Chaitacha Bar, Kombal Tera, Kartuli, Sheul, Lothi, Satra, Halanda, Shevale, Korad, Tere, Kudachi Phule, Ghol, Yatalache Komb, Tembharan, Bhopa, Bondara, Chaiwal, Bharangi, Chichardi, Fandi,

Shewal, Sapkanda, Mhaisvel, etc. Many types are currently seen in the wild. The identity, harvesting, and cooking methods of these vegetables have been preserved in the tribal community for generations. Citizens living in the hills and valleys still collect these vegetables by traveling through the forests and surrounding areas. Traditional knowledge of medicinal properties Locals say that wild vegetables have various nutritional components and traditional medicinal uses. Vakli is used for colds, coughs, fevers and asthma, while Kuda is considered useful for stomach aches. Wild plantain shoots are traditionally used for coughs. The practice of applying a paste of Takla leaves on skin disorders is found in some areas. Kartuli vegetable is also a must in the traditional diet. However, accurate identification and proper

processing of each wild vegetable is important. Although some wild plants may look similar, some of them can be harmful. A unique combination of taste and health The leaves of the mahisavela are a vine and are made into a vegetable as well as a vada. The flowers of the chava bara are fried with onions and chillies and made into a vegetable. Although chichardi is bitter, it is processed locally and made into a vegetable. Rukhalu looks like aloo leaves; it is properly made into a vegetable with tamarind and jaggery. Kartuli looks like bitter gourd and is made into a soup or dry vegetable. These traditional recipes have given wild vegetables a different taste and identity. As the importance of nutritious and local food is highlighted in the changing lifestyle, there is a renewed interest in wild vegetables.

Pune Link Emerges In Rs 2,143-Crore Scam; Rs 200 Crore Transactions Under Probe

Pune, Correspondent : A Pune connection has emerged in an alleged Rs 2,143-crore financial scam involving the suspected misuse of fake certificates and shell companies, with the Income Tax Department reportedly investigating suspicious transactions worth around Rs 200 crore routed through a private bank in Pune. According to preliminary findings cited in the report, around Rs 200 crore was allegedly transferred overseas through the Pune branch using transactions linked to fake and shell companies. Investigators are examining whether senior bank officials and members of the board were aware of the transactions. The investigation follows a complaint filed with the police by a team from the Income Tax Investigation Department. The authorities

are examining the alleged role of chartered accountant Shyam Kalani, who is suspected of being a key figure in the alleged financial network. Kalani has reportedly surrendered before the Udgir police. Investigators are expected to question him about the financial transactions and the individuals and entities allegedly involved in the network. Pune Bank Transactions Under Scanner The investigation is expected to focus on the private bank branch in Pune through which the suspected overseas transfers were made. Authorities are examining the source and destination of the funds, the companies involved and the role of individuals who facilitated the transactions. Investigators are also

examining suspicious banking transactions in other major cities, including Bengaluru, Chandigarh and the Delhi-NCR region, as part of the wider probe. The alleged scam involves the misuse of certificates and financial mechanisms to facilitate large-scale transactions through shell entities. The exact nature of the transactions, the individuals involved and the extent of the alleged financial irregularities are expected to become clearer as the investigation progresses. Kalani's surrender is likely to provide investigators with further leads into the alleged financial network and the Pune connection. The role, if any, of bank officials and other individuals involved in the transactions will be determined through the ongoing investigation.

PMPML To Provide Financial Aid To Accident Victims, Property Owners

Pune, Correspondent : The Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Limited (PMPML) has approved a new policy to compensate property owners whose private or public property is damaged in accidents involving PMPML-owned buses. Under the revised compensation framework, the financial assistance for families of passengers who die in bus accidents has been increased from ₹2 lakh to ₹3 lakh, while assistance for injured persons has been raised from ₹50,000 to ₹1 lakh, Mayor Manjusha Nagpure said. The decision to introduce a separate policy for property damage was taken after the issue was raised during a special PMPML meeting at the Pune Municipal Corporation general body. Following an initiative by Mayor Nagpure, the PMPML Board approved the proposal unanimously. Property Damage to Be Assessed by Experts Under the new policy, the extent of damage to a property following a PMPML bus accident will be assessed by an external

agency or qualified experts. Compensation will then be determined based on the actual loss. Property owners will also be required to submit an affidavit as part of the compensation process. The policy will also apply to private bus operators supplying buses to PMPML. Two Shops to Receive Compensation The policy will also benefit two shops damaged in a bus accident near Appa Balwant Chowk and Prabhat Talkies on April 21, 2026. Following an assessment, Prakash Cards owner Vinod Pathange will receive ₹4,70,531, while Balaji Cards owner Akash Dhanasing Naikda will receive ₹45,962 as compensation. The meeting was attended by Pune Mayor Manjusha Nagpure, Pimpri-Chinchwad Mayor Ravi Landge, Pune Standing Committee Chairman Shrinath Bhimale, Pimpri-Chinchwad Standing Committee Chairman Abhishek Marane, PMPML Director Ajay Khedekar, Pune Municipal Commissioner Naval Kishore Ram, Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Commissioner Dr Vijay Suryavanshi, and PMPML Chairman and Managing Director Mahesh Awhad.

RPI calls for representation of marginalised communities in private sector: Dr Hulgesh Chawadi

Pune, Correspondent : The Republican Party of India (A) has called for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and other marginalised sections to be accorded adequate representation and equal opportunities in the private sector, in proportion to their population. The demand was raised during a meeting of the party's National Executive, RPI (A) State Vice-President and Bahujan leader Dr Hulgesh Chawadi said. He stated that the implementation of social justice and equal-opportunity policies should not remain confined to the government sector but must also extend to the private sector, stressing that marginalised communities should have equal participation in the country's economic and industrial development. Providing them with opportunities in education,



employment, industry, management and decision-making processes would help reduce social inequality. He stressed on the need for a concrete policy to ensure transparency in recruitment and promotion processes in private companies and to provide equal opportunities to socially disadvantaged sections. Social justice is not merely a political issue; it is an important constitutional value, he said. RPI (A) will continue to raise its voice for the rights of SCs, STs, OBCs

and other marginalised communities, Chawadi said, adding that the party's struggle for equality, representation and social justice would continue. He further stated that RPI (A) national president and union Minister of State Dr Ramdas Athawale had reiterated the party's commitment to these issues. According to Central government data for 2024-25, as of January 1, 2024, the representation of SCs in Central government services stood at 16.84 per cent, while STs accounted for 8.70 per cent and OBCs for 26.32 per cent. These figures reflect representation in the government sector, he said. However, the Centre does not have official state-wise or sector-wise data on the representation of these communities in the private sector, Chawadi explained. He suggested that such data

could be collected through the Census and made public, enabling the government to formulate appropriate policies to improve opportunities for marginalised communities in the private sector. On the issue of Maratha reservation, Chawadi said the RPI (A) fully supports reservation for the Maratha community, provided it does not affect the existing OBC reservation. Quoting RPI (A) National President and union Minister of State Dr Ramdas Athawale, Chawadi highlighted that reservation must be provided to underprivileged members of the Maratha community, stating that this has been the party's clear stand from the beginning. Further, adding to his statement, he said that the government is highly sensitive to the issue and is making sincere efforts to provide reservation to the Maratha community.

Prison-Made Products Exhibition And Sale Begins Ahead Of Raksha Bandhan

Pune, Correspondent : An exhibition and sale of products made by prisoners was inaugurated in Pune ahead of the Raksha Bandhan festival, with the initiative aimed at showcasing their skills and providing them with access to markets. The event was inaugurated by noted actress Pooja Pawar-Salunkhe in the presence of Dr Suhas Warke, Director General of Prisons and Correctional Services. Speaking at the event, Dr Warke said prisons should not be viewed merely as places of punishment but



as institutions focused on reform and rehabilitation. He stressed the need to provide prisoners with skill-based training to make them

employable and help them return to mainstream society. The "Reform and Rehabilitation" approach is the motto of the prison department. Under the Maharashtra Prison Industries initiative, inmates are provided with various skill-based training programmes. The exhibition features a wide range of products made by prisoners, including furniture, home temples, decorative items, eco-friendly Ganesh idols, rakhis, clothes, handkerchiefs, towels, bedsheets, blankets, bakery products

and biscuits, among other items. Dr Warke said such training can help prisoners become financially independent after their release and enable them to lead a dignified life in society using the skills they have acquired. Actress Pooja Pawar-Salunkhe praised the efforts of the prison administration and inmates and appealed to citizens to support their rehabilitation by purchasing products displayed at the exhibition. Vidya Mhatre, president of Maher Mahila Pratishthan, was also present at the event.

Pune Gets New Principal District Judge Anju S Shende

Pune, Correspondent : Shende has taken charge as the new Principal District and Sessions Judge of Pune. She assumed office on Monday, marking the latest phase in a judicial career spanning several important courts and judicial institutions across Maharashtra. Shende entered the judicial service as a District Judge in 2010. Over the years, she has served as a judge at several specialised courts, including the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Court

in Amravati, the Family Court in Mumbai, the court dealing with offences against women, the POCOS Court and the Special SEBI Court. She has also served as Additional Chief Judge of the Small Causes Court in Mumbai, a member of the Industrial Court in Nagpur and a Special POCOS Judge in Wardha. Shende previously served as Registrar at the Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court. She has also held the post of Principal District

and Sessions Judge in Beed, Bhandara and Osmanabad. Before entering the judiciary, Shende worked with SEARCH, a voluntary organisation, where she was involved in tribal women's health initiatives in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). Following her appointment as Pune's Principal District and Sessions Judge, Pune Bar Association president Kaluram Bhujbal and other office-bearers welcomed her.

Pune Division Completes SIR House-to-House Survey; Administration Begins Preparations For Draft Electoral Roll

Pune, Correspondent : The Pune division has completed the house-to-house survey under the first phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls within the stipulated timeline, including the extended period, officials said. Chief Electoral Officer S. Chockalingam reviewed the progress of SIR work across the Pune division at a meeting held at the Divisional Commissioner's Office and directed district administrations to prepare for the next phase, including publication of the draft electoral roll, processing of objections and hearings, and further action. Chockalingam praised the district collectors and their teams for completing the first phase despite geographical, social and administrative challenges. The meeting was attended by Pune District Collector Jitendra Dudi, Solapur Collector S. Karthikeyan, Satara Collector Santosh Patil, Sangli Collector



Mainak Ghosh, Kolhapur Collector Dr Vijay Rathod, Ratnagiri Collector Manuj Jindal and Sindhudurg Collector Trupti Dhodmise, along with election officials and other concerned officers. First Phase Focused on Residential Verification During the first phase, officials verified whether registered voters were residing at their respective addresses. The exercise included the use of enumeration forms, available electoral records, required documents and mapping based on records available from the past 20 years. Chockalingam said

the first phase focused primarily on verifying voters' residential status, while the next phase would involve the draft electoral roll, objections, hearings and further verification. He directed officials to ensure that citizens are not subjected to unnecessary difficulties and that field officials and Booth Level Officers (BLOs) are not placed under avoidable pressure. Separate Verification for Unmapped Voters Officials have been instructed to conduct separate verification of unmapped voters after obtaining the

required documents and to follow applicable legal provisions and Election Commission guidelines. Chockalingam also suggested studying best practices adopted by other states for issuing notices, collecting documents and conducting preliminary verification. Available mobile numbers, photo identity cards and other valid identification documents can be used to make the contact and verification process more efficient, he said. Draft Electoral Roll Publication to Be Closely Monitored Chockalingam said the initial days after publication of the draft electoral roll would be particularly important. District-level social media teams, media coordination mechanisms and election officials should remain active and provide citizens with accurate information about the process. Officials were asked to clearly communicate information regarding

different voter categories, subsequent action, and the procedure for filing objections and attending hearings. Special care should also be taken to prevent confusion regarding absent, migrated, deceased and duplicate voters, among other categories. Daily Data Analysis Ordered Officials were directed to analyse detailed data available on the dashboard every day and allocate work accordingly. Clear daily targets should be set for disposing of cases within the prescribed timelines, while pending technical work should be completed on priority. Chockalingam said the first phase of SIR had helped improve the accuracy and integrity of electoral rolls. Although the next phase would be more challenging, he stressed that proper planning, daily data analysis, adherence to legal procedures and transparent communication with citizens would be essential for its successful completion.

Worm Found in Paul Bakery Food? Pune Man Shares Video on Social Media

Pune, Correspondent : A Pune resident has claimed that he found a worm in food purchased from a Paul Bakery outlet at Phoenix Mall in Viman Nagar, Pune. The man shared a video of the alleged incident on social media and questioned the quality of the bakery's products. According to the post, the customer had purchased food from the Paul Bakery outlet and taken the parcel home. He later claimed that he discovered a worm in the food. Sharing the video on X, the user criticised the bakery and wrote, "This Paul bakery products are pathetic." He further alleged that he had taken a parcel home from the Paul Bakery outlet at Phoenix Mall in Viman Nagar a couple of months ago and found a

worm in it. The user also attached a video to his post, which purportedly shows the alleged worm in the food. However, the post did not provide details about the exact food item purchased, the date of purchase or what happened immediately after the alleged discovery. The claim comes amid growing attention on food-safety concerns following other recent reports of alleged foreign objects being found in food served at restaurants. At present, the social media post itself does not establish the exact cause of the alleged contamination. Further details, including any response from the bakery or action by food-safety authorities, would be needed to verify the claim.

Wanowrie Man Duped Of ₹38,900 By Fake Cop In PhonePe Scam

Pune, Correspondent : A 28-year-old man from Wanowrie was allegedly robbed of ₹38,900 after an unidentified man posing as a police officer intimidated him and his two friends near Mamma Devi Chowk on Solapur Road, police said. According to the complaint, the incident took place at around 3:45 am on Sunday near Nalini Society. The complainant, Akshaykumar Kashiram Rao, was travelling with two friends when the suspect approached them on a motorcycle. The man allegedly claimed to be a police officer and intimidated the trio. He then

reportedly instructed Rao's two friends to transfer money from their respective PhonePe accounts to Rao's account. The suspect allegedly obtained access to Rao's mobile phone along with his PhonePe PIN. He subsequently transferred ₹38,900 from the account before leaving the spot, according to the complaint. Rao later approached the Wanowrie police and lodged a complaint. Police have registered a case and launched an investigation to identify and trace the suspect. The matter is currently under investigation.

Six Held For Allegedly Kidnapping, Robbing Zepto Delivery Worker In Pimpri-Chinchwad

Pune, Correspondent : The Pimpri-Chinchwad Crime Branch has arrested six men in connection with the alleged kidnapping and robbery of a Zepto delivery worker in the Gahunje area, police said.

The accused allegedly stopped the delivery worker while he was riding his two-wheeler, forced him into an auto-rickshaw and took him to an open ground near a graveyard in Mamurdi. Police said the victim was assaulted at the location and robbed of ₹90,000 in cash.

The incident came to light after the delivery worker completed an order at a housing society in Gahunje. While travelling near Gahunje Stadium and passing the Zepto store, an auto-rickshaw allegedly



blocked his two-wheeler. The suspects then reportedly forced him into the vehicle and drove him towards the Mamurdi graveyard.

A case was initially registered against unidentified persons at Talegaon Dabhade police station.

CCTV, Mobile Data Help Police Trace Suspects

The investigation was taken up by Crime Branch Unit 4, which examined CCTV recordings from the

area and analysed technical information linked to mobile phone numbers. Police also used information from informants to identify the suspected offenders.

The six arrested accused have been identified as Suraj Shankar Chawadi (24) of Mamurdi; Deepak Dayanand Bhandge (24) of Narhe, originally from Latur; Avinash Arun Wankhede (26) of Narhe, originally from Velhe; Prathamesh alias

Pratik Haribhau Kank (27) of Panvel in Raigad; Viraj alias Sunny Yuvraj Hirve (19) of Mamurdi, Dehu Road; and Isaak Raju Kajapuram (28) of Mamurdi, Dehu Road.

Police said the suspects confessed to their alleged involvement during interrogation.

Six Accused Have Previous Cases, Say Police

According to investigators, all six arrested men have previous criminal

records and have allegedly been involved in offences including robbery and dacoity.

Police recovered property valued at approximately ₹1.80 lakh, including the auto-rickshaw allegedly used in the crime and mobile phones.

The accused have been handed over to Talegaon Dabhade police for further legal proceedings.

The operation was conducted under the supervision of Pimpri-Chinchwad Police Commissioner Vinay Kumar Choubey, Joint Commissioner of Police Dr Shashikant Mahavarkar, Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime) Sarang Awad, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Rohidas

Pawar and Assistant Commissioner of Police (Crime-1) Dr Sudarshan Rathod.

The team was led by Senior Police Inspector Arjun Ghodapatil and Assistant Police Inspector Shridhar Bhosale. Police personnel Rajaram Lonkar, Mahesh Waybase, Amol Borate, Ganesh Mahadik, Santosh Asawale, Sachin More, Ganesh Sontakke, Anjanrao Sodgir, Ramdas Mergal, Shekhar Kharade, Amol Vetal, Amol Mate, Babaraje Mundhe, Dayanand Khedkar, Sandeep Sukhdane, Sachin Nagare and Prashant Sonaware were part of the operation.

Technical analysts Trinayan Balsaraf, Nagesh Mali and Nanaware also assisted the investigation.

Pune RTO To Launch New MH-61 Series; Applications Open For Fancy Registration Numbers

Pune, Correspondent : The Pune Regional Transport Office (RTO) is set to introduce a new vehicle registration series under the MH-61 code, with the new series primarily being launched for two-wheelers. The series will include registration numbers such as MH-61 B 0001.

According to the Pune RTO, citizens seeking fancy or preferred registration numbers from the new series can submit advance applications along with the prescribed fees. For four-wheelers, applicants will have to pay at least three times the prescribed fee, while the applicable prescribed fee will be charged for two-wheelers.

If more than one applicant seeks the same preferred registration number, the number will be allotted through an auction process. Applicants interested in bidding can submit a demand draft for an amount higher than the prescribed fee,

as per their preference. The RTO has clarified that only one demand draft should be submitted with the application.

To facilitate vehicle registration during the festive period, the Pune RTO will also accept applications for preferred registration numbers and demand drafts, along with related work, on Saturday, August 29, and Sunday, August 30, 2026, despite both being government holidays.

The RTO said the special arrangement has been made considering the Shravan month, Raksha Bandhan and the upcoming festive season, to ensure that vehicle registration procedures are completed on time and citizens do not face inconvenience.

The RTO has urged citizens interested in obtaining preferred registration numbers under the new MH-61 series to submit their applications within the stipulated procedure.

After 14 Years, Pune DEO Clears Defence Land Occupied In Lulla Nagar By MES Contractors

Pune, Correspondent : Nearly 1.2 acres of prime defence land in Lullanagar, allegedly occupied by private contractors since 2011, has been cleared by the Defence Estate Office (DEO), Southern Command.

The anti-encroachment operation was carried out on Tuesday using JCB machines, with hundreds of tin sheds and iron structures removed from the defence property. According to the information available, the entire operation was completed in around six hours.

The land, estimated to be worth crores of rupees, is located around 500 metres from the office of the Principal Director,



Defence Estates and is also close to sensitive defence establishments, including the Southern Command hospital.

The occupants were reportedly private contractors associated with the Military Engineering Service (MES). The prolonged occupation has raised questions over how the structures were allowed to remain on defence land for nearly 15 years despite the property being in

a strategically important area. Questions have also been raised over whether notices were issued to the occupants earlier, what action was taken against the alleged encroachment and whether the authorities responsible for monitoring the property were aware of the situation.

The DEO is now expected to fence the reclaimed land and initiate recovery of occupation

charges for the period of unauthorised use.

The action has also renewed concerns over other defence land parcels in Pune and Khadki that may be vulnerable to encroachment, dumping and unauthorised occupation.

While the land has now been reclaimed, the episode has raised broader questions about monitoring, accountability and the protection of valuable government defence property.

The key question remains: if nearly 1.2 acres of defence land could be cleared within six hours, why did it allegedly remain occupied for almost 15 years?

Pune Police Seize Banned Gutkha Worth 1.73 Lakh In Vadgaon Sheri

Pune, Correspondent : Pune City Police have seized banned gutkha, pan masala, flavoured tobacco and other tobacco products worth ₹1.73 lakh during an operation conducted under the ongoing "Mission Crackdown" in Zone 7.

Acting on a tip-off, the Zone 7 special team raided a house near Chetan Super Market in Mozeswadi, Vadgaon Sheri, under the jurisdiction of Chandannagar Police Station, at around 1 pm on August 24.

Police identified the person from whom the stock was recovered as Yallappa Triakappa Shetty, 35, a tea

vendor residing in Sachin Nagar, Vadgaon Sheri. The seized stock was found to contain tobacco products prohibited for sale in Maharashtra.

During the preliminary investigation, police reportedly found that the banned products had been supplied by Chandrakant Phulchand Patwa, a resident of Vadgaon Sheri. Patwa has been named as a wanted accused in the case.

Police have initiated legal proceedings under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), the Food Safety and Standards Act and other

relevant laws.

The seized material and the detained accused were handed over to Chandannagar Police Station for further investigation and legal action.

The operation was carried out by a team led by Assistant Police Inspector Gorakshnath Kharad and Police Sub-Inspector Nitin Rathod, along with police personnel Sushil Bendre, Vilas Kedari, Ganesh Ithape, Hariprasad Punde, Shubham Chinke, Amol Sartape and Lalu Kanhe.

Mission Crackdown Continues

Pune Police said enforcement under "Mission

Crackdown" will continue across Zone 7 against banned gutkha, narcotics, illegal liquor, gambling and other unlawful activities. Police said such operations will be intensified in the coming days.

Police have also appealed to citizens to share information about illegal activities, including gutkha sales, drug trafficking, illegal liquor, gambling, illegal possession of weapons and criminal activities.

Police said the identity of informants will be kept confidential and urged citizens to cooperate in making Pune safer and free from illegal activities.

Pune Police Crack Down On Late-Night Party At Airport Road Hotel; 30 Detained

Pune, Correspondent : Pune Police took action against a hotel on New Airport Road for allegedly operating beyond permitted hours and serving alcohol during a late-night party, as part of the ongoing "Mission Crackdown" in Zone 7.

The action was carried out by the Airport Police during a night patrol at around 4.30 am on August 24. Police Sub-Inspector Kshirsagar and his team reportedly found Back Bencher Hotel and Restaurant operating beyond



the prescribed closing time.

According to police, a party was being organised at the hotel where 30 people — 24 men and six women — were allegedly being served

beer and other alcoholic beverages.

During the operation, police detained the hotel owner and five employees. The liquor stock and music

system at the premises were also taken into custody.

The men and women found consuming alcohol underwent medical examinations and alcohol tests. Police subsequently initiated legal action under the applicable laws and registered a case in connection with the incident.

Mission Crackdown Continues

Pune Police said strict action will continue under "Mission Crackdown" against establishments violating permitted operating

hours, illegal sale of liquor and parties or activities conducted in violation of regulations.

Police have also appealed to citizens to report information about criminal gangs, illegal gutkha sales, narcotics, illegal liquor, gambling, illegal possession of weapons or any other unlawful activities.

Police said the identity of informants will be kept strictly confidential and urged citizens to cooperate with the police in making Pune safer and free from crime.

Students Engage In Cooperative Governance, Environmental Sustainability Initiative



Pune, Correspondent : The Maharashtra and Pune District Cooperative Housing Societies and Apartments Federation Limited conducted a student engagement session on cooperative governance, environmental conservation and civic participation at Amanora School in Hadapsar on Tuesday.

The initiative aimed to introduce students to the principles of cooperative

governance and encourage their participation in areas such as student cooperatives, environmental sustainability and river rejuvenation.

The programme was conducted under the mentorship of Federation Chairman Suhas Patwardhan and Directors Charuhas Kulkarni, Vilas Thorat, Rajan Prasade, Avelino Noronha, Ar. Khadija Noronha and Brigitta Noronha. The

organisers said the initiative was designed to help students understand the importance of collective decision-making, civic responsibility and sustainable development while encouraging them to take an active role in community-oriented activities.

The school's management, under the leadership of Director Mira Nair, conceptualised and coordinated the educational programme.

Baner Police Recover 20 Lakh Lost In Cyber Fraud

Pune, Correspondent : Baner Police have helped recover ₹20 lakh lost in a cyber fraud case, following an investigation by the station's cyber team and sustained coordination with banks and merchants.

The financial fraud complaint was registered at Baner Police Station on April 16, 2026, under Crime Register No. 109/2026. After receiving the complaint, the cyber investigation team began tracing the transactions linked to the fraudulent activity.

Police examined the transaction trail and contacted the concerned banks and merchants through official correspondence and repeated follow-ups. Documents and supporting evidence were submitted to facilitate the recovery of the money.

Following the police investigation and subsequent legal proceedings, the entire ₹20 lakh was returned to the complainant on the basis of a court order, police said.

The recovery operation was conducted under the guidance of Additional Commissioner of Police Manoj Patil, Eastern Regional Division, Deputy Commissioner of Police Rajnikant Chilumula, Zone 4, and Assistant Commissioner of Police Brahmadev Gawade, Khadki Division.

The team worked under Baner Senior Police Inspector Chandrashekhar Sawant and Police Inspector (Crime) Vijay Khillare, along with Assistant Police Inspector Nandkumar Kadam and other members of the cyber investigation team.

Police Warn Citizens Against Online Scams

Baner Police have urged citizens to



exercise caution when receiving messages or links related to KYC updates, mobile services, bank account verification or other financial matters.

Citizens should avoid clicking on links received from unknown sources and should never share OTP, PIN, CVV, UPI PIN, bank account details or other personal information with strangers.

Police have also warned against investment scams involving fake apps, websites, social media groups and individuals promising guaranteed or unusually high returns from stock market investments within a short period.

Victims of cyber fraud have been advised to immediately call the 1930 cybercrime helpline and register a complaint on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal. They can also approach their nearest police station.

According to police, reporting the fraud without delay can help authorities freeze or place a hold on the transferred funds, increasing the possibility of recovering the money.

Pimpri-Chinchwad: 19 H1N1 Cases Reported In 2026; Civic Body Urges Citizens to Take Precautions

Pimpri, Correspondent : The Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) Medical Department has warned that changing weather conditions could lead to an increase in fever cases and may also contribute to a rise in influenza, including H1N1 (swine flu), cases.

The civic body has urged citizens not to panic but to take necessary precautions and seek medical advice promptly if they develop symptoms such as fever, cold, cough, sore throat or breathing difficulties.

Swine flu is a respiratory illness that can cause symptoms including

cold, cough, sore throat, fever and other respiratory problems. With weather conditions changing, citizens have been advised to pay particular attention to their health.

According to the PCMC Medical Department, 19 patients infected with influenza H1N1 have been reported within the municipal limits since January 1, 2026. No deaths have been reported during this period, with timely medical consultation and treatment helping in the effective management of the cases.

The civic authorities have appealed to residents to avoid

unnecessary fear and get themselves examined at the nearest municipal dispensary or hospital if symptoms develop. Early medical consultation can help in timely diagnosis and treatment.

Precautions advised by PCMC Citizens have been advised to: Avoid unnecessary panic about the H1N1 virus.

Consult a medical officer at the nearest municipal dispensary or hospital if they experience fever, cold, cough or sore throat.

Wash hands frequently with soap and clean water.

Maintain a nutritious and balanced diet.

Avoid smoking. Get adequate sleep and rest. Drink sufficient water to remain hydrated.

Include healthy foods such as lemon, amla, sweet lime, oranges and green leafy vegetables in the diet. Avoid crowded places as far as possible.

Use a mask when necessary. Cover the nose and mouth with a handkerchief or tissue while coughing or sneezing and maintain hand hygiene afterwards.

Pune Policy Researcher Sahil Deo Presents Electoral Reform Recommendations Before Parliamentary Panel

Pune, Correspondent : Sahil Deo, along with researchers from the Nation First Policy Research and Change Foundation (NFPRC), recently presented recommendations on electoral reforms before the Joint Parliamentary Committee examining the proposed 'One Nation, One Election' Bill in New Delhi.

Dr. Deo was part of an NFPRC delegation that included

researchers Ananth Krishna and Monalisa Nanda. The delegation presented its views and recommendations as the committee continued consultations with stakeholders on the proposed legislation.

The Joint Parliamentary Committee has been holding discussions with various stakeholders as part of its examination of the 'One Nation, One

Election' proposal. A series of meetings have recently been held, during which experts and organisations have presented their views on electoral reforms.

Dr. Deo said the NFPRC delegation placed its recommendations before the committee, focusing on electoral reforms and issues relevant to the proposed changes in the country's election framework.

The presentation was

made in the presence of Joint Parliamentary Committee Chairman P.P. Chaudhary and several MPs, including Priyanka Gandhi, Supriya Sule, Anurag Thakur and Manish Tewari, among others. The Nation First Policy Research and Change Foundation (NFPRC) is a Delhi-based public policy organisation that works on governance, legislative research and policy development. The

organisation undertakes research and policy analysis aimed at supporting evidence-based decision-making and improving the implementation of government initiatives.

The presentation comes amid the ongoing parliamentary examination of the proposed electoral reforms and the broader debate over synchronising elections across the country.

Maharashtra Govt draws hard lines: Protests to Azad Maidan restricted ahead of "Jarange and Hake" agitations

Mumbai, Correspondent : Facing a monumental flashpoint over competing reservation demands, the Maharashtra government has enforced stringent new regulations across the state capital, restricting all demonstrations exclusively to Azad Maidan while strictly banning indefinite hunger strikes, large marches, and heavy vehicle entries.

The swift crackdown by the Home Department comes on the heels of high-stakes warnings, issued by Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange Patil, who has announced an agitation starting August 29, and OBC leader Laxman Hake, who has called for a counter-march to Mumbai on September 1.

South Mumbai's Azad Maidan is declared the only permissible site for protests, cordoned off by specific boundaries (Bombay Gymkhana, BMC



Headquarters, Hazarimal Somani Marg, and the Metro rail project area).

Protests are restricted to working days between 9.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m.

Weekend and public holiday demonstrations are completely outlawed, posing an immediate hurdle to Jarange's Saturday timeline. Gatherings at Azad Maidan

are capped at a maximum of 5,000 protesters per demonstration. Rallies, processions, indefinite sit-ins (dharna), and overnight stays at the venue are explicitly prohibited.

Heavy transport, tractors, bullock carts, animals, and large banners exceeding 9x6 feet are barred from the protest zone.

With tensions scaling rapidly as both factions prepare to mobilize supporters from rural Maharashtra, the state administration has signaled that any violations of the new directives will invite direct legal action under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Maharashtra Police Act.

Reliance evaluating probable Aluminium metal production

Mumbai, Correspondent : The Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries Ltd has purchased tender documents for Odisha's 200-million-tonne Karlapat bauxite block auction, according to market sources.

Significantly, it was reported earlier on July 17 that Reliance and the Adani Group were among the companies that showed interest in the 3,100-hectare Karlapat bauxite block in Odisha, which is estimated to contain more than 200 million tonnes of bauxite.

Meanwhile, the Anil Agarwal-owned Vedanta Aluminium's subsidiary company BALCO has emerged as the preferred bidder for the Karlapat bauxite block, after it offered a record auction premium of 175 per cent.

According to sources, any potential entry by Reliance into aluminium is expected to help the company's coal gasification plans and integrate it with aluminium metal production.

Reliance plans to set up the coal gasification project in Andhra Pradesh, where it has already won two coal blocks through an auction at Recherla

and Chintalapudi.

However, a Reliance spokesperson refused to confirm or deny any potential foray into aluminium metal production.

According to sources, nothing has been confirmed yet and everything is still merely at the early evaluation stage.

The latest move by Reliance comes after it was reported on August 20 that it has proposed to invest Rs 2.73 lakh crore over 30 years, in order to develop India's first integrated underground coal gasification complex in Andhra Pradesh.

According to metals industry sources, aluminium and coal gasification are linked industrially since large-scale industrial complexes use coal gasification to power energy-intensive aluminium and alumina production from bauxite ore.

Coal gasification converts coal into synthesis gas (syngas), which can generate reliable, captive power for energy-heavy aluminium smelting and bauxite refining facilities.

Major industrial groups tend to pair capital-intensive coal gasification units directly with metals and mineral processing, in order to maximise profit

margins and utility across the entire manufacturing value chain, according to metals industry sources.

Metals industry sources also said that Reliance is likely to be playing its cards close to its chest, since the Gautam Adani-led Adani Enterprises announced its plans in July 2026, to invest about USD 11.5 billion to develop a 2-million tonnes per annum aluminium project in Odisha in partnership with UAE's International Holding Company.

The other big players already well established in the aluminium sector are the Anil Agarwal-led Vedanta Aluminium, which is India's largest aluminium producer, with an annual capacity of about 2.5 MT, followed by the Aditya Birla Group-owned Hindalco Industries, with an aluminium production capacity of 1.4 MT and NALCO, which has a capacity to produce 0.5 MT of aluminium. According to metals industry experts, new players with integrated access to bauxite, alumina, power, logistics and downstream manufacturing capacity could potentially build competitive positions across the entire value chain.

Healing Hands clinic to expand to 100 centres

Pune, Aug 25 (UNI) Healing Hands Clinic, a specialised proctology and anorectal care organisation, today announced its plans to expand its network from 40 to 100 centres across India over the next two years.

The expansion aims to bring specialised anorectal care closer to patients while strengthening the clinical, technological and operational systems required to deliver consistent, high-quality care across the network.

Supported by L Catterton's USD \$30 million investment, the expansion will focus on improving access to specialised anorectal care across Tier 1 and Tier 2 markets while supporting Healing Hands Clinic's development as a scalable specialty healthcare platform, said a release here today.

The organisation plans to open 60 new centres across



India, extending its presence to over 100 new pin codes.

Healing Hands Clinic began as a small outpatient centre in Pune and has since grown into a network of 40 centres, supported by a flagship facility and a team of over 800 people. It currently treats 50,000 new patients annually.

As part of this expansion, Healing Hands Clinic also plans to launch a dedicated super-speciality proctology hospital in Pune within the next 18 months. The hospital will provide dedicated infrastructure

for treating complex and recurrent conditions while supporting advanced procedures, clinical research, surgeon training and specialised patient care. Dr Ashwin Porwal, Founder and Anorectal Surgeon, Healing Hands Clinic, said, "Proctology deserves the same depth, dignity and scientific focus as every other medical specialty. Our work has always been driven by a simple goal to solve a patient's problem while preserving function and reducing treatment burden, release added.

Pune, Correspondent : Traffic congestion in Pune is not merely a result of inadequate infrastructure or poor traffic management; growing indiscipline among motorists and lack of civic sense are also contributing significantly to the problem, according to social commentator Jyoti Sawardekar.

Highlighting the ground realities of Pune's roads, Sawardekar said that motorists frequently create bottlenecks by stopping vehicles for just two minutes to buy medicines, drop passengers, wait for someone or park outside shops and houses. Such seemingly minor acts can hold up dozens of vehicles and turn short delays into prolonged traffic jams.

She particularly pointed to wrong-side driving, entering no-entry zones, jumping signals, squeezing through narrow gaps and creating additional traffic lanes on roads that cannot



accommodate them. According to her, a two-lane road cannot be turned into a four-lane road simply because motorists are impatient.

Sawardekar also criticised the practice of blocking junctions even when the signal is green. She stressed that motorists should enter a junction only when there is sufficient space to move ahead, rather than obstructing traffic from other directions.

Illegal and careless parking was identified as another major contributor to congestion. Vehicles parked outside shops, houses, on turning points, in narrow

lanes or while loading and unloading goods often reduce the effective width of already congested roads. She acknowledged that authorities must strengthen enforcement, towing facilities, parking management and road planning, but said citizens cannot shift all responsibility to the traffic police.

Referring to an incident in which a young woman allegedly left her two-wheeler in a position that obstructed traffic despite being asked to move it, Sawardekar said the incident reflected a larger problem of declining courtesy and civic responsibility.

At the same time, she said the government and civic authorities must also accept their responsibilities. Better road design, signal management, junction planning, footpaths, public transport, parking infrastructure and consistent enforcement are essential for improving traffic conditions in the city.

Sawardekar also addressed public anger over traffic restrictions during VIP movements, saying that while questions regarding inconvenience and proportionality are legitimate, disciplined driving by citizens could itself make traffic management considerably easier. The ultimate goal, she said, should be to create a city where citizens follow traffic rules without requiring a traffic policeman at every junction.

She called for civic responsibility to be taught from an early age, including respect for traffic signals,

pedestrians, queues, public spaces and emergency vehicles. Children, she suggested, could also play a role by encouraging their parents to follow traffic rules.

As the country observes Independence Day, Sawardekar linked civic discipline with the broader meaning of freedom, asking whether citizens are capable of controlling themselves and following rules even when nobody is watching.

She concluded with a simple message for Pune's motorists that the road does not belong to any individual. Every driver, rider, pedestrian, delivery worker, senior citizen and emergency vehicle user has an equal right to safe and orderly movement.

Pune, she said, needs not only better infrastructure and stronger enforcement but also a "civic reset" in which citizens examine their own behaviour before blaming others for the city's traffic problems.

Nana Patole raises questions over RSS funding and Bhagwat's US visit

Nagpur, Correspondent : Congress leader Nana Patole on Wednesday raised questions over the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's (RSS) organisational structure, funding sources and overseas operations, while also criticising RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's ongoing visit to the United States amid opposition from New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani to an RSS-linked event scheduled in the city.

Addressing reporters, Patole alleged that the RSS functions across the country through various non-governmental organisations despite not being formally registered in Maharashtra or elsewhere in India.

He further claimed that the organisation maintains bank accounts in several countries and called for greater transparency regarding its finances and activities.

Patole contended that the RSS's sources of funding and utilisation of



funds should be subjected to closer examination.

Referring to criticism of the organisation in the United States, he questioned the rationale behind Bhagwat's visit to the country despite objections being raised against the RSS event planned in New York.

"I have consistently maintained that the organisation, which is neither registered in Maharashtra nor elsewhere in the country, is operating nationwide through NGOs. It reportedly has bank accounts in 36 countries, yet there is no clarity

regarding the origin of these funds or how they are spent. Questions are also being raised internationally about the organisation, making this an issue that warrants scrutiny," Patole said.

Meanwhile, New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani said he did not support the RSS-related gathering scheduled in the city, though he acknowledged uncertainty over whether municipal authorities had the legal authority to stop a privately organised event.

"I don't support the rally, but I don't know if the city has any jurisdiction over cancelling a private event," Mamdani told a press conference.

Speaking about his Indian-American heritage, Mamdani said his understanding of India was rooted in the values of pluralism and secularism.

"I stand here as the first Indian-American mayor in our city's history.

Much of my family continues to live in India. The India I grew up learning about was a pluralistic and secular republic where every individual belonged, irrespective of background," he said.

Expressing concern over what he described as exclusionary political movements, Mamdani said he opposed any ideology that undermined inclusivity and equal belonging.

His remarks came a day after RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat arrived in New York, the first leg of a three-country tour that will also take him to Canada and the United Kingdom.

Bhagwat, who received a traditional welcome upon arrival, is expected to address members of the Indian diaspora at the "Universal Oneness Celebrations" at Madison Square Garden on August 29.

The programme is part of the RSS centenary-year outreach initiatives.

MPSC cancels FDA Drug Inspector Exam following massive paper leak scandal; Rohit Pawar slams state over systemic malpractice

Mumbai, Correspondent : In a massive victory for protesting aspirants, the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) has scrapped the entire recruitment process for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Drug Inspector (Group-B) posts following a high-level Crime Branch investigation that confirmed a security breach.

The decision comes in the wake of relentless pressure from student bodies and political leaders, spearheaded by Nationalist Congress Party (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar, who exposed how question sets were compromised prior to the offline examination.

The MPSC officially cancelled the screening

test held on March 22, 2026, after a police inquiry verified that at least one candidate had unauthorized access to the question paper beforehand. The commission announced that a re-examination will be conducted soon.

Previously registered candidates are exempt from paying additional fees or submitting new applications. Addressing a press conference in Pune, Rohit Pawar dismissed the commission's claim that only a single individual benefited, alleging instead that an active nexus of agents traded the question papers for hefty sums. Slamming the administrative leadership, Pawar demanded the immediate resignation of the MPSC Chairman

and Secretary, warning of massive protests outside the commission's office if they failed to step down.

Expressing deep distrust in hasty shifts toward online formats due to recurring security failures in past exams (including Talathi, Mhada, and Water Resources), Pawar maintained that aspirants demand strictly monitored offline examinations under transparent leadership.

Parents sacrifice their own needs and borrow money just to educate their children. Crushing these dreams through rampant paper leaks is a grave sin," Rohit Pawar stated, emphasizing the immense socio-economic struggles faced by common farming families preparing for public service.

Woman's body recovered from gorge in Tamhini Ghat; murder suspected

Mumbai, Correspondent : Mystery shrouded the recovery of the body of an unidentified woman from a deep gorge in the Tamhini Ghat area of Raigad district in Maharashtra, with police suspecting that she may have been murdered and her body disposed of at the isolated spot.

According to police, the body was noticed approximately 15 to 20 feet below the roadside in a gorge in the Tamhini Ghat area. The information was received at around 1230 hours on Tuesday, following which personnel launched an immediate search and rescue operation.

Given the difficult terrain and steep gorge, police sought the assistance of the

SVRSS Sagar Rescue Team from Kolad. The rescue personnel descended into the gorge and, using ropes, successfully brought the body to the roadside.

The identity of the deceased woman has not yet been established. Police are examining the circumstances in which she reached the gorge and are investigating both the possibility of an accidental fall and that of foul play.

However, preliminary indications have led investigators to suspect that the woman could have been murdered and her body subsequently thrown into the gorge in an attempt to conceal the crime. Police are awaiting the post-mortem findings to determine the exact cause and manner of death.

A panchnama of the spot has been conducted and the body has been sent for post-mortem examination. Investigators are also working to establish the woman's identity and ascertain whether she had recently gone missing.

The Tamhini Ghat, a mountainous route connecting the Pune and Raigad regions, has deep valleys, steep slopes and dense vegetation, making rescue operations particularly challenging. The area has witnessed serious accidents in the past owing to its difficult terrain.

Police are examining available evidence and other leads to determine the circumstances surrounding the woman's death. Further details are awaited.

Nashik : One killed in accident on pothole-ridden Ambad Link Road

Nashik, Correspondent : One person was killed in a road accident on Nashik's Ambad-Satpur Link Road after the two-wheeler he was riding slipped and came under a truck, at Chunchele Phata.

According to police, 54-year-old Sunil Borse was riding the two-wheeler, with Ishwar Jagtap travelling behind him, and was travelling from Papaya Nursery towards Exlo Point.

At around 1 p.m.,

while overtaking a truck from the left at Chunchele Phata, the two-wheeler lost balance and slipped on the road. The truck coming from behind then collided with the motorcycle.

Sunil Borse sustained serious injuries in the accident and was immediately rushed to the District Government Hospital. However, doctors declared him dead.

Ishwar Jagtap suffered minor injuries and is

undergoing treatment at the district hospital. A case has been registered at the MIDC Police Station.

The condition of the Ambad Link Road has reportedly deteriorated after excavation work was carried out a few months ago for laying a drainage line. Large potholes, mud and loose soil have developed at several locations after the road was dug up and not properly restored.

Residents say the poor

condition of the road has led to an increase in minor accidents every day.

Four people have reportedly lost their lives in separate accidents on the road over the past three months.

Local residents have urged the Nashik Municipal Corporation to take immediate action to repair the road and also demanded assistance for the family of Sunil Borse, who died in the latest accident.

LIBYAN WHO WAS CLEARED AFTER LOCKERBIE BOMBING TRIAL DIES AGED 70



AGENCY

Libya: A Libyan who was cleared after standing trial over the Lockerbie bombing has died aged 70. Al Amin Khalifah Fhimah was accused of murdering 270 people in the attack on Pan Am Flight 103 in December 1988. He was found not guilty but a second Libyan, Abdulbasset Al Megrahi, was convicted of playing a key role in the bombing of the American airliner. A Facebook post by Libyan Airlines announced Fhimah's death and expressed the company's condolences to his family. Fhimah worked for the carrier in Malta before the bombing of Pan Am 103. His funeral is set to take place on Wednesday in Tripoli, the capital of Libya. The charges against Fhimah and Megrahi were first announced by Scotland and the United States in 1991. Years of sanctions imposed on Libya by the United Nations led to the two men being handed over to stand trial at a Scottish court sitting in the Netherlands. In 2001, three judges convicted Megrahi of mass murder and

jailed him for life, but found Fhimah not guilty. Megrahi died from cancer in 2012, after being freed on compassionate grounds by the Scottish government. Fhimah always denied any involvement and was welcomed home to Libya by the country's late dictator Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. In 2022, the FBI revealed that he had been implicated in the case again, through an alleged confession made by another Libyan who is facing trial in the United States. Abu Agila Mohammad Masud Kheir Al-Marimi is said to have told a Libyan police officer that he took part in a plot to bomb the plane along with Fhimah and Megrahi, when all three were members of the Libyan intelligence service. Al-Marimi has denied making the bomb that brought down the jumbo jet and claims the confession is false and was made under duress. The contents of Al-Marimi's alleged confession and other new evidence which has emerged from Libya has led to speculation that Fhimah could have faced a second trial over the attack on the airliner.



■ Flash flood on Nepal-Tibet border kills at least 95, with hundreds of foreign tourists missing

FAR-RIGHT ISRAELI LAWMAKER DAMAGES PALESTINIAN MEMORIAL WITH SLEDGEHAMMER

AGENCY

Gaza: A far-right member of the Israeli parliament has badly damaged a Palestinian memorial with a sledgehammer in the occupied West Bank while under military escort. The incident has drawn strong criticism from Palestinians and across the political spectrum in Israel. Video footage showed Zvi Sukkot, a member of the far-right Religious Zionism party, and several others striking the stone memorial in the Palestinian village of Madama. In the video, Sukkot - who has a history of provocative anti-Palestinian acts - says: "This is something we cannot leave standing here, because any place that glorifies terrorism, we must remove it." Rami Nasar, the head of the village



council in Madama, said that the monument was erected in 2008 to remember Palestinians killed in the battle of Karameh - a day-long military confrontation between Israeli forces and those of both the PLO and Jordan in 1968. It also memorialises Palestinians killed in the first and second intifada. Nasar said it was intended to honour those who had been killed in conflict with Israel, whatever their political affil-

iation. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said its soldiers had been present during the incident. The Israeli military said it had approved a tour of monuments in the area for Sukkot and was providing security. But the IDF said he and the others involved had acted deceptively and without authorisation. It said soldiers eventually stopped Sukkot and escorted his group out of Madama after reporting the incident to

their commanders. In a number of previous incidents involving settler violence, soldiers have been filmed standing by without intervening. The incident has further raised the temperature in the West Bank, where increasing attacks by settlers on Palestinians in recent months have drawn international condemnation. Madama itself has been the target of several attacks by settlers. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office has issued a statement criticising Sukkot's actions. It read: "Taking the law into one's own hands, especially when it involves public figures, is a reprehensible practice that prevents the IDF from focusing on its missions of combating terrorism and incitement to violence."

Heart, hope and a steely determination: Dolly Parton's musical legacy



AGENCY

Hollywood: In 1980, Dolly Parton was filming her first Hollywood movie, 9 To 5, and between scenes she had an idea for the tune that would become the movie's theme song. But her guitar was banned from the set - so she made the beat by strumming her acrylic nails together. The sound, she realised, was just like the typewriter used by her character, a married secretary who is constantly belittled and sexually harassed by her boss. Excited, she ran over and sang the song to her co-stars Lily Tomlin and Jane Fonda, who was also the film's producer. "Lily and I looked at each other and we had goosebumps," Fonda said. "And we knew, this is not just a movie song, this is an anthem." Released in November 1980, 9 To 5 became Parton's only US number one as a solo artist, and earned her an Oscar nomination for best song. She loved to tell the finger-nail story, but 9 To 5 has another legacy - for its powerful statements about working life and women's place in the corporate world. You can probably sing the hook off the top of your head. "Working 9 To 5 / What a way to make a living!" It's jaunty and catchy. The sentiment is universal. Work sucks. But dig deeper and Dolly's expressing real fury. "It's a rich man's game, no matter what they call it / And you spend your life putting money in his wallet," she sings. "They just use your mind and they never

give you credit." The lyrics tapped into real frustrations and gave working women a voice. But there's a reason why you might not have noticed the anger that fuels Dolly's song. She simply doesn't sing it that way - even though she had every right to, having navigated the sexism of the music industry from the age of 13. Her early breakthrough came in 1967 when she was hired as the "girl singer" on The Porter Wagoner Show, a TV showcase for country singer Porter Wagoner that reached millions of viewers each week. Together, they released 21 hit duets including Just Someone I Used to Know, If Teardrops Were Pennies and Please Don't Stop Loving Me. But as Parton's star rose, she began to outshine her co-star. Eventually, she realised she needed to strike out as a solo artist - writing I Will Always Love You as a letter of apology to her former mentor. He responded by suing her for breach of contract in 1979, demanding \$3m (£2.2m). Wanting to avoid a lengthy court battle, Parton settled for about \$1m. "I made up my mind that if he could live with it, I could live without it," she wrote in her autobiography. "I suppose Porter has done all right with it. I am neither his conscience nor his accountant." It was typical of the star's ability to radiate cheery goodwill that she never held a grudge against Wagoner, always crediting him with giving her a crucial career break, even after their relationship fell apart.

CANADA ANNOUNCES 'DOLLAR-FOR-DOLLAR' RETALIATORY TARIFFS ON US AS HIGH AS 50%

AGENCY

Canada has announced counter-tariffs as high as 50% on a range of US goods in retaliation to the latest wave of levies on Canadian imports imposed by President Donald Trump last weekend. The Canadian tariffs will apply to nearly C\$28bn (\$20bn; £15bn) worth of American products, ranging from steel to furniture, fresh tuna and cotton T-shirts, officials announced on Tuesday. The list of targeted products is designed to match Canadian goods hit by the US. The Canadian levies are set to come into effect on 8 September. It is the latest escalation after US-Canada trade talks collapsed late last week, with each side accusing the other of making last-minute demands that were unreasonable. Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne said that Canada's retaliation is in response to 50% tariffs imposed by the Trump administration on a range of Canadian goods after trade talks fell apart on Friday.



"Those tariffs will have real consequences for Canadian workers, businesses and communities across our nation," he said. "Canada must respond." Champagne characterised Canada's retaliation as "proportionate" and "strategic". He added that Canada will also offer businesses and workers impacted by US tariffs an additional C\$7.5bn for support programmes designed to minimise job losses and keep companies afloat. Placing taxes on trade between what are historically two of the world's closest trading partners will undoubtedly lead to pain on both sides of the bor-

der. Supply chains which have been developed over decades are set to see increased trading costs due to the latest tariff announcements made from both the US and Canada, ultimately hitting businesses of all sizes and consumers through potentially higher prices. Polls suggest the majority of Canadians support their government in holding firm against the US. But some questions remain on exactly why trade talks fell apart, with the Conservative opposition asking that the full text of the draft deal with the US be released. Businesses have also expressed con-

cerns about the impact of a prolonged trade war with Canada's largest trading partner. The White House released a statement after Canada announced its counter-tariffs, saying that the US was prepared to offer Canada "the most preferential market access of any country on Earth" in recent trade talks. "Instead of partnership, Canada chose unreasonable demands, walk-backs, and flat-out rejection," it said. In a series of Tuesday posts on Truth Social, Trump also accused Canada of "ripping off" the US for decades and of charging American farmers steep tariffs. "I deal with many countries, and Canada is easily the most difficult and unreasonable," Trump wrote. "They feel entitled, but they are not a State, and will be entitled no longer!" He suggested that he will change the name of Lake Ontario, one of the Great Lakes on the US-Canada border, to Lake America, writing: "We don't expect to doing much business with Ontario any longer."

Radiation link in flight attendant's breast cancer, French court finds



AGENCY

France: A French court has for the first time recognised cosmic radiation as a factor in the breast cancer of a long-serving flight attendant. Sophie Lainault, a 59-year-old former stewardess on Air France, sought to have her cancer recognised as an occupational disease, brought on by conditions at work. This has now been confirmed in a landmark court ruling in the southwestern town of Bayonne, which said that cosmic radiation was one of three carcinogenic hazards arising from her profession. The other two were passive smoking and prolonged night work. Smoking was authorised on Air France flights until 2000. The decision means that Lainault, who is in remission from her cancer, can take early retirement

with any further treatment fully reimbursed by the French health system. And by establishing breast cancer as an officially-recognised risk for flight crews, the court has also cleared the way for many other similar claims, lawyers say. "My dearest wish is that the decision encourages other women who up until now have not had the courage to take this step," Lainault said. As stewardess and later purser on Air France airliners, Lainault clocked up 12,600 flight hours between 1989 and 2019. More than half of these were at night. Many long-distance high-altitude flights from Paris would have taken her near the North Pole, where exposure to radiation from space - strictly speaking particles from the sun and other stars - is the most intense.

CHINA ADVISES ITS CITIZENS TO LEAVE TAIWAN ALLY ESWATINI OVER 'SECURITY RISKS'

AGENCY

Beijing: China's foreign ministry has told its citizens to leave the southern African kingdom of Eswatini over "security risks". The ministry cited "rampant cyber fraud and criminal activities associated with gambling" as among its security concerns, but did not give details. It suggested its citizens relocate as soon as possible to "relatively safer" countries such as neighbouring South Africa. Eswatini is one of 12 countries, and the only one in Africa, that has diplomatic relations with Taiwan, which China claims as part of its territory. On Tuesday, the privately owned Times of Eswatini news site reported that 40 Chinese nationals have been in detention since



last month after being arrested while trying to leave the country. They were first arrested - along with dozens of other foreign nationals - in March during raids on alleged illegal online gambling centres in the main city, Mbabane, and surrounding areas, the news site reported. The group's lawyers had written to the attorney general and home affairs ministry, stat-

ing that they had pleaded guilty to immigration-related offences and had paid fines imposed by the courts, the news site reported. The 40 were then released on the orders of the High Court, and their re-arrest was unlawful, the lawyers were quoted as saying. The Eswatini government has not yet commented. In its advisory to its citizens, China says those who insist

on travelling to or staying in the country will face "extremely high security risks, and the timeliness of assistance may be affected". It is unclear how many Chinese citizens work or live in Eswatini. China has for years pressured countries to end diplomatic relations with Taiwan. In April, Taiwan accused Beijing of trying to derail its President Lai Ching-te's travel to Eswatini by pressuring nearby countries to revoke overflight permits. The trip, originally planned for 22-26 April to mark the 40th anniversary of Eswatini's King Mswati III's accession, was cancelled following the development. Lai eventually travelled to Eswatini in May, without saying how he reached the country.



Door was locked at Pakistan hospital where fire killed 14 babies, witnesses say

GOR HAILS C-130J ROLE AS JV EYES 80-AIRCRAFT IAF DEAL

AGENCY

Mumbai: New Delhi, Aug 24 (PTI) The production of key structural components for the C-130J military transport aircraft in India underscores growing US-India defence cooperation and strengthens the shared commitment to a free and secure Indo-Pacific, US Ambassador Sergio Gor said on Monday, August 24. Gor made the remarks during a visit to the Tata-Lockheed Martin Aerostructures facility in Hyderabad. The joint venture is eyeing a multi-billion dollar contract to supply 80 medium transport aircraft to the Indian Air Force. Lockheed Martin's C-130J, Embraer Defence and Security's C-390 Millennium and Airbus Defence and Space's A-400M aircraft have emerged as top contenders for the mega contract. The IAF is currently operating 12 C-130J aircraft. "Lockheed Martin's partnership with Tata is making India a critical link in the global C-130J production network, strengthening defense



supply chains and advancing our strategic partnership," Gor said. Established in 2010, the joint venture focuses on complementing India's 'Make in India' objectives and has the distinction of being the single global source of C-130J empennage assemblies included on all new Super Hercules aircraft produced in the US. "The decades-long economic partnership between the United States and India continues to grow stronger through innovation, shared security interests, and economic cooperation," Gor said. 'Growing industrial, defence cooperation between

US, India' "The production in India of critical structures for the C-130J, a platform operated by both our nations, is a strong example of the growing industrial and defence cooperation between the United States and India. Partnerships like these support high-skilled jobs, strengthen resilient supply chains, and advance our shared vision for a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific," he said. Gor's reference to the Indo-Pacific comes amid increasing global concerns over China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the region.

META AGREES TO \$16.68 BILLION SETTLEMENT OVER CHILD SAFETY CLAIMS

AGENCY

NYC: Meta Platforms has agreed to pay up to \$16.68 billion to settle claims brought by 29 U.S. states accusing the company of designing Instagram and Facebook to encourage compulsive use among children, misleading consumers about the platforms' safety and improperly collecting data from underage users, according to court filings. The settlement was reached as a federal trial was underway in California, bringing an end to one of the most closely watched legal challenges over the impact of social media on children and teenagers. Under the agreement, Meta has committed to introducing daily usage limits and blocking nighttime access for teenage users. The company will also strengthen age-verification measures aimed at preventing children from accessing its platforms or age-restricted content. The settlement further requires Meta to develop additional



tools to help parents and guardians monitor and protect children online. The company, however, has denied the allegations and admitted no liability as part of the agreement. The court filing states that Meta "denies the allegations against it and that it has any liability to the Plaintiffs." The trial involved allegations by the attorneys gener-

al of California, Colorado, Kentucky and New Jersey that Meta violated state consumer-protection laws by intentionally designing its platforms in ways that fostered addictive use among young users. The states also accused Meta of violating the federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act by collecting personal information from children without

notifying or obtaining consent from their parents. They alleged that some of the information was subsequently used to develop machine-learning and generative artificial intelligence systems, Reuters reported. Meta has maintained that it has taken extensive measures to safeguard young users. The company has also argued that describing its platforms as

addictive could not constitute consumer deception because social media addiction is not formally recognised as a psychiatric disorder. The settlement comes as Meta, Snap, Alphabet and TikTok owner ByteDance face a broader wave of lawsuits over allegations that their platforms have contributed to worsening mental-health problems among young people. Meta has suffered several recent legal setbacks. In March, a New Mexico jury ordered the company to pay \$375 million after finding that it had misled consumers about platform safety. Earlier this month, another judge ordered Meta to pay \$567 million after concluding that the company's conduct created a public nuisance and imposing youth-safety measures. In a separate Los Angeles case, Meta and Google were found liable for harm suffered by a plaintiff, who was awarded \$6 million over claims involving depression and anxiety.

CHIP TRADE TURNS MIXED: SanDisk, Micron, Nvidia Fall Even As Marvel, Western Digital Rally Up To 3%



AGENCY

Mumbai: Chip stocks traded mixed on Wednesday as investors weighed broader technology-sector strength against company-specific catalysts, with Nvidia slipping ahead of its fiscal second-quarter earnings while Marvell Technology and Western Digital gained. Marvell Technology shares rose 0.30% to \$241.09 after gaining 1.01% in the previous session, while Western Digital shares advanced 2.72% to \$462.96. On the other hand, Intel fell 1.56% to \$86.12 and SanDisk declined 0.64% to \$1,471.27. The moves highlight the day-to-day volatility in the semiconductor space, which has witnessed a saw pattern in recent months as investors assess AI demand, memory pricing, chip valuations and the sustainability of the broader technology rally. The Nasdaq Composite was up 0.09%, while the S&P 500

gained 0.12%. The technology sector added 0.37%, with seven of the 11 major S&P 500 sectors trading higher. SanDisk In Focus SanDisk's decline appears to be linked more to broader market dynamics than to any company-specific headline. Investors are also watching whether the stock can resume its longer-term uptrend following its recent pullback. SanDisk's relative strength index (RSI) stands at 48.30. The neutral reading indicates that neither buyers nor sellers currently have a clear upper hand in determining the stock's near-term direction. The stock's recent movement comes after a period of significant gains, keeping investors focused on whether the current consolidation phase could provide a base for another leg higher. Western Digital Makes Case For Buy On Dips Western Digital has delivered exceptionally strong gains over the past several years.

SIX UNIQUE CAFÉS AND COFFEE SPOTS TO TRY IN DUBAI RIGHT NOW

AGENCY

Mumbai: Dubai's dynamic café culture continues to evolve, with a new wave of openings and experiences offering far more than just a great cup of coffee. From international specialty coffee names making their Dubai debut to homegrown concepts creating spaces for culture, community and creativity, these six spots are worth adding to your list. Cherry House, Al Safa 1: Newly opened in Al Safa 1, Cherry House introduces a new café concept from Emirati entrepreneur Mohamed Matar Al-Kus El-Falasi, founder of popular homegrown brands Saddle and Feels. The opening adds another exciting homegrown name to Dubai's thriving café landscape, reflecting the city's continued appetite for distinctive local concepts and innovative social spaces. ONA Coffee, Jumeirah: Australian specialty coffee brand ONA Coffee has opened its first international flagship in Jumeirah, marking an exciting addition to Dubai's specialty coffee scene. Known for its focus on quality, innovation and coffee craftsmanship, the opening reinforces Dubai's position as a leading global market for specialty coffee concepts and international culinary brands.



Gooder, Dubai: More than a café, Gooder is a skater-owned, community-driven facility redefining what a social space can look like in the region. Built around a concrete indoor skatepark, the concept brings together Habibi Skate Shop, Ollie's Pizzeria and DRVN café under one roof, creating a dynamic ecosystem where skate culture, food, retail and community come together. The Barrel, Vida Creek Beach: Located at Vida Creek Beach, The Barrel introduces a new neighbourhood dining and social concept centred around craft beverages, comfort food and live entertainment. Designed as a relaxed gathering spot, it adds another dimension to Dubai's diverse social scene, offering visitors and residents a vibrant new place to connect

and unwind. Julith Coffee, Al Quoz: Adding a literary twist to Dubai's café culture, Julith Coffee in Al Quoz has launched Bookends, a pop-up micro library described as Dubai's smallest. Set within the cosy café, the initiative invites visitors to browse, borrow and exchange books, creating a space where coffee, conversation and community connection come together. SEVA Dubai: One of Dubai's hidden gems, SEVA offers a holistic escape from the pace of the city. Set within a tranquil, zen-like garden with cobble pathways, rustic log tables and colourful décor, the dedicated wellbeing centre is also home to a plant-based café designed for slowing down, catching up on a book or connecting with friends over freshly brewed coffee. Health and wellbeing are at

the heart of the experience, with food free from gluten, sugar, dairy and artificial ingredients without compromising on flavour. The menu also takes an eco-conscious approach, featuring plant-based dishes and offering guests the opportunity to disconnect and reconnect in a WiFi-free environment. From discovering a global specialty coffee name and supporting homegrown concepts to spending an afternoon browsing books or switching off in a peaceful wellness retreat, these six spots highlight the diversity and creativity shaping Dubai's café culture. Whether you are a dedicated coffee enthusiast, a food lover or simply looking for a new space to unwind, connect and explore, Dubai's café scene continues to offer a fresh reason to discover the city.

ICICI PRUDENTIAL AMC BLOCK DEAL: PROMOTER EYES TRIMMING 2% STAKE FOR UP TO RS 3,122 CRORE



AGENCY

Mumbai: Prudential Corporation Holdings is set to sell a 2% stake in ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company (AMC) through a block trade, with the transaction estimated to be worth around Rs 2,964 crore to Rs 3,122 crore, sources told NDTV Profit. Around 98.85 lakh shares are expected to change hands in the block deal, with the offer price set in the range of Rs 2,998 to Rs 3,158 per share. The offer price represents a discount of around 2% to 7% to ICICI Prudential AMC's August 26 closing price. The proposed transaction is entirely a secondary sale, meaning no fresh shares will be issued by ICICI Prudential AMC as part of the deal. Prudential Corporation Holdings, a promoter of ICICI Prudential AMC, held a 34.59% stake in

the company as of the quarter ended June. The sale of a 2% stake would therefore reduce Prudential Corporation Holdings' shareholding in the asset management company, while the proceeds from the transaction will accrue to the selling shareholder rather than the company. ICICI Prudential AMC Q1 Results ICICI Prudential Asset Management Co. reported a strong set of earnings for the first quarter, with net profit rising 25.5% year-on-year to Rs 965 crore from Rs 769 crore. The asset manager's total income increased 20.2% to Rs 1,745 crore, compared with Rs 1,452 crore in the corresponding period last year, reflecting healthy growth in its business. Revenue from operations increased 17.6% year-on-year to Rs 1,564 crore, up from Rs 1,331 crore in the year-ago quarter.

TELANGANA WOOS JAPANESE FIRMS, VENKATASWAMY EXTENDS INVITE

AGENCY

Telangana Minister for Labour, Employment, Training and Factories, Mines, and Geology, Dr G. Vivek Venkatswamy, has invited Japanese companies to invest in the state. He was speaking at the chief guest at the 'Leveraging Indian Talent' India-Japan Workforce Roundtable in Osaka, Japan, on Tuesday, August 25. The event aimed at bridging the gap between Japan's workforce needs and India's skilled labour. The minister held extensive discussions with Japanese business leaders, industry representatives, and officials from government and educational institutions regarding investments, skilled human resources, employment opportunities, and talent mobility in Telangana. He noted the state's strong talent base in sectors such as IT, engineering, pharmaceuticals, and biotechnology, even as he urged Japanese companies to expand their operations in Telangana and to establish new industries and projects. The minister said



that Japanese companies were showing interest in establishing a new industrial park spanning approximately 600 acres in Telangana. The state government also aims to collaborate with Japanese companies to create employment opportunities for Telangana's youth in Japan

SKILLED TRAINING, LANGUAGE AND ORIENTATION

He emphasised that proficiency in the local language is crucial for seeking employment abroad. Therefore, through TOSS (Telangana Overseas Manpower Company - TOMCOM), the government is pro-

viding not only skill training but also language instruction and orientation on job-specific skills and work culture. The Telangana government has already established a partnership with Germany in the field of skilled human resources, he said. He noted that the German representatives praised the skill development initiatives being undertaken by the state. Similarly, the Telangana government aims to forge partnerships with Japanese organisations in recruitment, training, and employment of skilled human resources, he said. He remarked that workforce mobility is becoming a key

element in India-Japan relations. Minister Vivek Venkatswamy observed that this roundtable meeting would help further advance the India-Japan partnership across areas such as investments in Telangana, the creation of international employment opportunities, and skill development. The event was organised by Rohit Rao, founder and CEO of Career Consultz, and among the dignitaries attending it were Sandeep Kumar Sultania, Principal Secretary, Finance Department, Telangana, along with Japanese businesspeople, representatives from corporate entities.

FLIPKART MINUTES OVERTAKES SWIGGY INSTAMART IN DARK-STORE COUNT

AGENCY

New Delhi: Flipkart Minutes has overtaken Swiggy Instamart in dark-store count across India's top 10 quick-commerce cities, with 627 stores compared with Swiggy's 615, as competition intensifies in the country's fastest-growing delivery market, according to a CLSA report. The gap is narrow but significant, pointing to the rapid expansion of Flipkart's quick-commerce business even as established players continue to deepen their networks. The 10 cities together account for 3,536 dark stores, according to CLSA's Quick Commerce Map, with Blinkit leading at 969 stores, followed by Zepto at 828, Flipkart Minutes at 627, Swiggy Instamart at 615 and BigBasket at 497. Blinkit has the largest store footprint in six of the 10 cities - Bengaluru, Delhi, Pune, Gurgaon, Lucknow and Ahmedabad. Zepto leads in Hyderabad, Mumbai and Chennai, while Flipkart Minutes has the highest store count in Kolkata. "Quick commerce players are deepening their pres-



ence in existing markets while selectively expanding into new geographies. Eternal's Blinkit continues to lead this expansion. In newly entered markets, players appear to be adopting a measured rollout approach, with relatively smaller dark store footprints as they test local demand and unit economics before scaling. "At the same time, emerging players are increasingly targeting geographies that remain underpenetrated by incumbents, seeking to establish an early foothold and secure first-mover advantages," CLSA report said. "Within the top 10 cities, Flipkart Minutes has already surpassed Swiggy Instamart in both

dark store count and pin-code coverage." Bengaluru is the largest quick-commerce market in the sample, with 735 stores across the tracked platforms. Blinkit has 180 stores there, narrowly ahead of Zepto at 177, while Swiggy Instamart has 143 and Flipkart Minutes 119. Delhi follows with 531 stores, where Blinkit has a more substantial lead at 188, compared with 112 for Zepto, 102 for Flipkart Minutes and 69 for Swiggy. Flipkart Minutes' lead over Swiggy becomes particularly notable in markets such as Kolkata, where it operates 72 stores compared with 35 for Swiggy. In Delhi, it has 102 stores against Swiggy's 69, while in Mumbai the two

have 67 and 62, respectively, according to the CLSA report. Swiggy, however, is still expanding its network. According to the broader analysis, it added the highest number of dark stores among the top three players across the 10 cities over the past month, suggesting that the company is pursuing a densification strategy in established markets. The competitive picture is more fragmented beyond the largest cities. Blinkit's 969 stores across the top 10 give it a clear network lead, while Zepto's 828-store footprint puts it firmly in second place. But Flipkart Minutes' ability to move ahead of Swiggy at the aggregate level suggests that the contest for the next tier of scale is becoming increasingly close. The data also highlights the importance of store density rather than city presence alone. A larger network allows quick-commerce platforms to position inventory closer to consumers, potentially supporting faster deliveries, broader assortment and better utilisation of logistics infrastructure.

Not Virat Kohli Or Rohit Sharma, Gautam Gambhir's Treatment Of These 2 Stars Questioned: "Could've Been Better"

AGENCY

Mumbai: Gautam Gambhir has endured extreme highs and lows during his tenure as India's head coach. On one hand, he has guided the team to two ICC titles, winning the Champions Trophy 2025 and the T20 World Cup 2026. On the other hand, he has suffered ignominious Test series defeats at home to New Zealand and South Africa. Former India cricketer Wasim Jaffer pointed out that the biggest stains on Gambhir's coaching career are the Test series defeats and the way some players were treated. Jaffer said that when it comes to white-ball cricket, the way stalwarts like Suryakumar Yadav and Mohammed Shami were axed could have been handled better. "Some individuals could have gotten better treatment, like Surya (Suryakumar Yadav), who was axed after winning the (T20) World Cup. There



are other players as well, like Shami. Some things could have been better. But otherwise, I don't think in white-ball cricket any blame can be put on him," Jaffer said, speaking on his YouTube channel, as quoted by Times Now. He then spoke further on the devastating nature of the series defeats to New Zealand and South Africa at home. "The mark of those two whitewash series will always be on him, without a doubt. Not just on his CV, but also on the captain and other players. Coming to

India and beating them was a final frontier that not many teams had achieved. It was very bad for us to suddenly lose like that. He will definitely feel that had we won those series, we would be at the top of the WTC table. There is a lot of scope for improvement in Test cricket for him. Not just for him, but for the players also," Jaffer explained. India's 0-3 Test series defeat to New Zealand in October and November 2024 ended a run of 12 years without a home series loss for the team.



More Than Rs 50 Crore: US Open Singles Champions To Earn Record Prize Money In 2026

2ND TEST: Six-Down Sri Lanka Lead By 16 Runs At Stumps After Following On Against India

AGENCY

Mumbai: Pasindu Sooriyabandara top-scored with a 92 as Sri Lanka reached 229 for six at stumps in their second innings after being forced to follow on by India on the fourth day of the second Test in Colombo on Wednesday. India bowled out Sri Lanka for 290 in their first innings, shortly after Sonal Dinusha reached his century to gain a huge lead of 213 runs. India amassed 503 for nine declared in their first essay. Prasidh Krishna (3/32) and Manav Suthar (3/85) picked up three wickets apiece for India in the Sri Lankan first innings, with Saransh Jain (2/69) bagging his first wickets in Test cricket this morning. By stumps, which was called early owing to heavy rain, Sri Lanka managed to erase the



deficit of over 200 runs, but India remained firmly in control of the match and will fancy their chance of sweeping the series 2-0 on Thursday after their convincing victory in the opener at Galle. Kamindu Mendis chipped in with 55 in the home team's second

innings, as Sri Lanka went ahead by 16 runs with Sonal Dinusha (7) and Keshara Nuwantha (3) at the crease. India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal and Sri Lanka pacer Asitha Fernando came under severe criticism after the two were involved in an ugly on-

field brawl on Day 1 of the second Test in Colombo. Fernando had given Jaiswal a send-off, after which the latter turned back and confronted the pacer. The two proceeded to exchange words and clashed heads, before being separated by other players.

Former India cricketer Cheteshwar Pujara made it clear that an argument leading to body contact is unacceptable. "It's not an ideal visual. As a player, you need to control your emotions," Pujara said on Sony Sports network, as quoted by the Indian Express. "Sometimes you do get angry. I can understand that till the time he was disappointed, or he was when he was having a chat, at that time. I think that's acceptable till then." "The moment it got to a point where both of them were going against each other, there was a body contact, which is not acceptable on the field," Pujara stated. Former India wicket-keeper and reputed commentator Saba Karim also said that Jaiswal and Fernando had not been adequate ambassadors of the game.

India Women's Cricket Team Star Breaks Silence On Trolling Over Dance Reels: "Jealous"

AGENCY

Mumbai: Indian women's cricket team star Shreyanka Patil opened up about the trolling she faced over posting videos on her social media handles. The all-rounder, who plays for Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the Women's Premier League (WPL), shared a video of herself dancing to the song 'Babli Badmaash Hai' from the Bollywood film Shootout At Wadala. The video led to a lot of trolling on social media but the cricketer made it clear that she is not bothered by the chatter. At India Today's Karnataka Roundtable, Shreyanka said that she did not consider the attention negative and added that both appreciation and criticism mean that she remains a topic of discussion among the people. "I mean,



honestly, it gives me a lot of attention. People are actually seeing me and saying, 'Oh, she's doing so well.' Whether you troll me, criticise me or appreciate me, I think it's all for my good. I don't see trolls as trolls because I love what I'm doing. I love being on Instagram, I love dancing, and I love wearing the dresses I want to wear," Shreyanka said. Shreyanka went on to say that she is extremely comfortable with

her choices and is not impacted by the criticism. She made it clear that she will continue to express herself and added that she prefers to concentrate on things that make her happy. "I'm not shy about saying that because I'm comfortable with who I am. I'm comfortable dancing to any song and doing what makes me happy. I love doing what I love, and trolls are just going to remain trolls.

Afghanistan Premier League T20 Reveals First Three Teams And New 'Koh-E-Zafar' Trophy

The Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB), along with team owners and league partners, hosted a launch ceremony in Dubai to announce the debut of the Afghanistan Premier League T20 (APL T20). During the event, officials revealed the league's first three teams, their official identities, and the main championship trophy. The three founding franchises taking part in the inaugural season are Axcel United Kabul, Balkh Zwanan, and Kandahar Warriors. Each team aims to represent the passion of local cricket fans across different regions of Afghanistan. Team owners shared their vision for the league, focusing on building professional organizations.



Suryakumar Yadav Making A Comeback? His Meeting With Sri Lanka Great Gives Big Hint

AGENCY

Mumbai: Former Indian cricket team T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav had a hilarious conversation with Sri Lanka legend Sanath Jayasuriya during an event in Colombo. In a video on social media, Suryakumar was seen greeting Jayasuriya during the event as both of them had a brief conversation. The India batter joked that Jayasuriya looked fit and even jokingly asked whether he was looking to make an international comeback. "Getting fitter, trying to make a comeback? Looks like 100%," he said. The Sri Lanka legend smiled at the comment and the video has won the hearts of several users on social media. Earlier, a source in the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) told ANI that Suryakumar Yadav can still



make a comeback to the Indian side given he scores runs in domestic cricket consistently. Suryakumar Yadav and Sanath Jayasuriya during an event in Colombo. Sanath to Surya There is always an element of humour when suryakumar Yadav is around. Suryakumar, who led India to the 2026 T20 World Cup title, has been stripped of the T20I captaincy and dropped from the squad following a lean patch with the bat ahead of India's tour of Ireland and England. The

BCCI named Shreyas Iyer as the new T20I captain. However, India's fortunes have dipped under Iyer's leadership. The Men in Blue were whitewashed 2-0 by Ireland before suffering a 4-0 series defeat to England in the five-match T20I series, with the opening game ending in a no-result due to rain. As per a BCCI source, the apex cricket body has not ruled out a comeback for Suryakumar, and he remains in contention for selection if he consistently performs in domestic cricket.

Italy Latest Nation To Pull Support For Gianni Infantino's Reelection As FIFA President



AGENCY

Italy: The Italian soccer federation became the latest in a growing list of nations to withdraw its support for embattled FIFA President Gianni Infantino. The FIGC issued a statement on Wednesday saying it would no longer back Infantino's bid for reelection in March because of "the recent initiatives promoted by the FIFA president concerning governance and the development of international competitions." Infantino has come under increasing pressure to step down over his now-aborted plan to sell stakes in soccer's biggest tournament, the World Cup, to private equity investors. Three of the sport's continental confederations accused him of "deception" and European soccer body UEFA threatened a boycott of FIFA competitions. "We will continue to work alongside UEFA and the other European federations to promote a vision of soccer based on merit, solidarity, sustainability, and the centrality of fans," FIGC

President Giovanni Malago said. "We identify with a model of dialogue, listening, and shared responsibility that has, until now, allowed soccer to grow, innovate and at the same time defend its founding principles." The soccer federations in England, Wales and Ireland withdrew their support for Infantino's reelection earlier this month, while Norway has called on him to step down as well as issuing a statement with five other Nordic countries - Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Iceland and the Faeroe Islands - to say they had "lost confidence" in his leadership. Infantino has been FIFA president since 2016 and, until the backlash over his proposals, seemed sure to be reelected unopposed next year in Morocco. FIFA has set a Nov. 18 deadline for challengers to nominate. Some of FIFA's 211 member federations are supporting Infantino, including 2030 World Cup co-host Morocco as well as Qatar, where he lived before the emirate hosted the 2022 World Cup.

Manchester City Sign Lille's Ayyoub Bouaddi For 100 Million Euros

AGENCY

Manchester City moved for Bouaddi after selling Spain's World Cup winning captain Rodri to Barcelona and Tijjani Reijnders to Al-Qadsiah, with Nico Gonzalez also poised to leave the Etihad. Manchester City have signed teenage Morocco midfielder Ayyoub Bouaddi from Lille in a five-year deal the French club said Wednesday was worth 100 million euros (86 million pounds, \$117 million). City moved for Bouaddi after selling Spain's World Cup

winning captain Rodri to Barcelona and Tijjani Reijnders to Al-Qadsiah, with Nico Gonzalez also poised to leave the Etihad. The 18-year-old rising star was one of the stand-out players at the recent World Cup, helping Morocco reach the quarter-finals before they were beaten by France. Bouaddi will join England's Elliot Anderson in City's revamped midfield. "This is a very special day for me and my family," Bouaddi said in a statement on the City website. "Manchester City are, for me, the best club in the world. It's a

dream to be here and be able to call myself a City player. I have spent most of my life working hard to become the best player I can be and reach the top of the game. "I've watched City for many years, and I love their style of play. "City always try and play quality football. And they have shown they are winners - this Club feels like it's built to win." Enzo Maresca made central midfield a key area for new signings after replacing Pep Guardiola as City manager at the end of last season. City are also believed to retain an interest in Chelsea

midfielder Enzo Fernandez, but the Blues set a recent deadline for bids for the £120 million-rated Argentine that passed without a deal being done. City were thrashed 3-0 by Arsenal in the Community Shield, but they started their Premier League campaign with a 2-1 win at home to Bournemouth on Sunday. Manchester City moved for Bouaddi after selling Spain's World Cup winning captain Rodri to Barcelona and Tijjani Reijnders to Al-Qadsiah, with Nico Gonzalez also poised to leave the Etihad.

