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## MOHALI WEATHER 10:30 AM

Temperature 31°C

Sunset: 7:18 PM

Thursday, 01.08.2024  
Sunrise 5:41 AM (IST)

Next Full Moon  
19 Aug 2024  
Next New Moon  
04 Aug 2024

## "Tax On Life's Uncertainties": Nitin Gadkari's Letter To Nirmala Sitharaman

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

New Delhi : Amid criticism of Budget 2024 from several quarters, Union Minister and senior BJP leader Nitin Gadkari has written to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, requesting her to withdraw the GST imposed on premiums for life and medical insurance plans. Mr Gadkari has said in his letter that he is writing to the Finance Minister following a memorandum from the Nagpur Divisional Life Insurance Corporation Employees Union.

"Main issue raised by the Union is related to withdrawal of GST on Life and Medical Insurance Premium. Both life insurance and medical insurance premiums attract a GST rate of 18 per cent. Levying GST on life insurance premium amounts to levying tax on the uncertainties of life," the Road Transport and Highways Minister has written.

"The Union feels that the person who covers the risk of life's uncertainties to give some protection to the family should not be levied tax on the premium to purchase cover against this risk. Similarly, the 18% GST on medical insurance premium is proving to be a deterrent for the growth of this segment of business, which is socially necessary. Therefore, they have urged withdrawal of GST as mentioned above," he has added.

Mr Gadkari said the union that met him also raised points related to differential treatment to savings by way of life insurance, re-introduction of IT deduction for health insurance premium and consolidation of public and sector general insurance companies.



"In view of the above, you are requested to consider the suggestion of Withdrawal of GST on Life and Medical Insurance Premium on priority as it becomes cumbersome for the senior citizens as per rules with due verification along with other relevant points raised," the former BJP has said in his letter to Ms Sitharaman. Mr Gadkari's letter to the Finance Minister comes amid criticism from several quarters over the first Budget of the third Narendra Modi government, presented last week. While the Opposition has accused the Centre of being generous only to states ruled by its key allies TDP and JDU, a section of social media users have pointed to high tax rates for the salaried class.

The Finance Minister has trashed the Opposition's charge, saying the Centre has provided funds to all states. She has said that if the name of a state is not mentioned in the Budget speech, it does not mean it is not covered. The BJP has said policy priorities of the Budget suggest that it has a long-term goal of 'Viksit Bharat' -- making India a developed nation -- by 2047.

## SC refuses urgent hearing of Gawli's parole plea

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

New Delhi : The Supreme Court today refused an urgent hearing of the gangster-turned-politician Arun Gulab Gawli's parole application, saying convicts undergoing life imprisonment have a right to premature release but society also has a right to live peacefully. Gawli has been serving life imprisonment for the 2007 murder of Shiv Sena corporator Kamlakar Jamsandekar.

A bench of justices Surya Kant and Dipankar Datta said that they are conscious of the rights of prisoners and have granted indulgence in the past. "We would not be able to grant you any interim relief. As your matter requires in-depth consideration, we would like to decide the appeal itself. We cannot be unfair to you and we cannot be unfair to the state as well."

Senior advocate Nitya Ramakrishnan, who appeared for Gawli, said that her client is 72 and has been released 15 times on parole. She added Gawli suffered from a severe breathing disorder. "For a moment keep aside Gawli. Let this court not be driven by this case. There is a 2006 remission policy which provides relief to prisoners aged over 65 who have completed 14 years of imprisonment."

The bench called for the need to be conscious of the factual situation. "That old movie 'Sholay' reminds us of the famous dialogue - Gabbar aa jayega [Gabbar will come]. Everybody knows Arun Gawli." Senior advocate Raja Thakre, who represented Maharashtra, pointed out Gawli faces 46 cases. He added Gawli was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in 2012 under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA). Thakre said MCOCA convicts are governed by a 2010 policy, which requires a convict to



undergo 40-year imprisonment to be considered for premature release.

The court asked Thakre whether Gawli committed any offence in the recent past considering the cases against date back to an earlier point in time. Thakre said Gawli has a propensity to commit crimes. "As head of the crime syndicate, his name is sufficient in Maharashtra for builders to fear as he operates an extortion racket." The court asked how would society know if he had reformed or not. "You may have your agencies to find out if he is still active in crime," the bench said.

The Bombay high court's Nagpur bench rejected the state's objections while ordering Gawli's premature release, citing the 2006 policy. The order came even as the state submitted that the revised remission guidelines issued in 2015 exclude MCOCA convicts. The state said that Gawli turned 65 in 2018 and was ineligible for remission even under the 2006 policy.

Today, the issue was again argued before the Supreme Court. Gawli's legal team pointed out that the Code of Criminal Procedure Section 432 allowed the state to pass a special order in the case of old and infirm prisoners.

## Preeti Sudan, ex-Union Health Secretary, appointed UPSC chairperson



### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

New Delhi : Preeti Sudan, former Union Health Secretary, has been appointed as the UPSC chairperson.

A 1983 batch IAS officer, she will replace Manoj Soni, who resigned earlier this month, ahead of the end of his tenure. He had resigned for "personal reasons".

Preeti Sudan will take charge as the UPSC chairperson starting August 1.

In a letter addressed to UPSC secretary Shashi Ranjan Kumar by Additional Secretary Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, Preeti Sudan's appointment came after it was accepted by President Droupadi Murmu.

The letter added that after taking charge tomorrow, she will continue as the UPSC chairperson till "further orders" or till April 29, 2025 - "whichever is earlier".

Manoj Soni resigned, almost five years before his tenure was to end in 2029. His resignation came amid the ongoing controversy surrounding probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar, who allegedly used fraudulent disability and caste certificates to get selected. However, sources had told India Today that Soni's resignation was not related to the row.

According to the letter by Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, Soni had resigned on July 4 and his resignation was accepted by the President with effect from July 31.

Manoj Soni became an UPSC member in 2017. On May 16, 2023, he took over as chairperson of the commission, which conducts the civil services exam (CSE) to hire candidates into top government services such as IAS, IPS, IFS.

## Sonia Gandhi warns Congress leader against complacency

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

New Delhi : Ahead of Assembly elections in four states, including Maharashtra and Haryana this year, former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi has asked party leaders to not become "complacent" and "over-confident" despite the 'mahaul' (situation) being in their favour.

She made the remarks during the Congress Parliamentary Party meeting held today.

Congress put up a stellar show in the Lok Sabha elections, bettering its seat share to 99 from 52 in 2019. The INDIA bloc, led by the party, won 30 of 40 seats in Maharashtra and 43 of 80 seats in Uttar Pradesh. The BJP is in power in both these states, but failed to make inroads in the general elections.

Sonia Gandhi urged Congress leaders to sustain the "momentum and goodwill" that was generated in the Lok Sabha elections, and work "unitedly with a sense of purpose".

"In a few months, elections will be held in four states. We must sustain the momentum and goodwill that has been generated for us in the Lok Sabha elections. We must not become complacent and over-confident. The 'mahaul' does favour us, but we have to work unitedly with a sense of purpose. I dare say that if we perform well, reflecting the trend that we witnessed in the Lok Sabha elections, national politics will undergo a transformation," the former Congress chief said.

The 77-year-old also had a special message for the first-time MPs, asking them to be "fully prepared", not miss a Parliament session, and take committee assignments "seriously".

"Many of you are first-time MPs. We had an orientation programme yesterday. There will be more such occasions. All I wish to reiterate is the need for each and every one of us to be fully prepared. We must be present in Parliament regularly, remain vigilant at all times and take our committee assignments seriously," she told the first-time MPs.



The former Congress chief also said that the Congress Parliamentary Party requires "more extensive research support and back-up".

"We do have a system in place, but with our increased numbers, this system must get strengthened soon," she said.

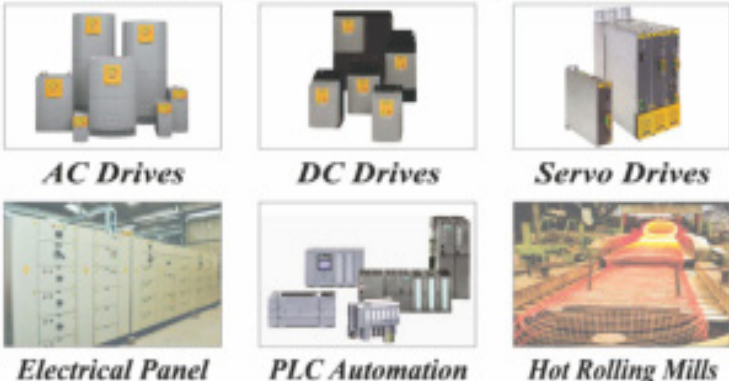
Maharashtra, Haryana, Jharkhand and Jammu and Kashmir are slated to go to polls by the end of this year.

During the meeting, Sonia Gandhi mentioned the Wayanad landslides triggered by weeks-long heavy rain, which has so far killed over 150 people. She also highlighted "railway accidents" caused by mismanagement in the aftermath of the Mumbai-Howrah Mail derailling in Jharkhand, in which two died, and 20 others were injured.

The 77-year-old slammed Prime Minister-led Narendra Modi government over the delay in conducting a national census, which has been due since 2021.

"It is clear that the government has no intention whatsoever to conduct the census that was last due in 2021. This will prevent us from having an up-to-date estimate of the population of the country, especially of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. It also means that at least 12 crore of our citizens are denied the benefit of the National Food Security Act of 2013 - now repackaged as PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana," she said.

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## Wayanad landslides linked to warming of Arabian Sea, says climate scientist

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

Warming of the Arabian Sea is allowing the formation of deep cloud systems, leading to extremely heavy rainfall in Kerala in a shorter period and increasing the possibility of landslides, a senior climate scientist said.

Extremely heavy rain triggered a series of landslides in the hilly areas of Kerala's Wayanad district early on Tuesday, leaving at least 156 people dead and nearly 200 others injured. Many were feared trapped under the debris.

S Abhilash, director of the Advanced Centre for Atmospheric Radar Research at Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT), said Kasargod, Kannur, Wayanad, Calicut and Malappuram districts have been receiving copious rainfall due to the active monsoon offshore trough affecting the entire Konkan region for the last two weeks.

The soil was saturated after two weeks of rainfall. A deep mesoscale cloud system formed off the coast in the Arabian Sea on Monday and led to extremely heavy rain in Wayanad, Calicut, Malappuram and Kannur, resulting in localised land-



slides.

"The clouds were very deep, similar to those seen during the 2019 Kerala floods," Abhilash said. He said scientists have noticed a trend of very deep cloud systems developing over the southeast Arabian Sea, and added that sometimes, these systems intrude into the land, like in 2019. "Our research found that the southeast Arabian Sea is becoming warmer, causing the atmosphere above this region, including Kerala, to become thermodynamical-

ly unstable," Abhilash said. "This atmospheric instability, allowing the formation of deep clouds, is linked to climate change. Earlier, this kind of rainfall was more common in the northern Konkan belt, north of Mangalore".

With climate change, that rain-bearing belt with deep clouds is extending southward and this is the main reason behind such extremely heavy rainfall, he said.

Research by Abhilash and other scientists published in Climate and Atmospheric Science journal in 2022 found that rainfall over the west coast of India is becoming more convective. Another study by Abhilash and scientists from IITM

and IMD, published in Elsevier in 2021, found that one of the hotspots of heavy rainfall in the Konkan region (between 14 degrees north and 16 degrees north) seems to have shifted southward with likely fatal consequences.

"An increase in rainfall intensity may suggest a rising probability of landslides in the high to mid-land slopes of the Western Ghats in eastern Kerala during the monsoon seasons," the study said.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), several automatic weather stations in Thirsur, Palakkad, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur, Malappuram and Ernakulam districts recorded rainfall be-

tween 19 cm and 35 cm. "Most automatic weather stations of the IMD in the region recorded rainfall above 24 cm in 24 hours. Some stations installed by farmers recorded more than 30 cm of rain," Abhilash said.

The IMD said very heavy rainfall could occur in some places in the state over the next two days.

Roxy Mathew Koll, a climate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, however, said it is too early to understand the specifics of the Kerala landslides.

In general, monsoon patterns have become erratic and more rainfall is occurring in a short period. As a result, there are frequent instances of landslides and floods along the Western Ghats, from Kerala to Maharashtra, he said.



Astro Speak by:  
Rajesh Kumar

Birth Date  
01 st Aug

**Born on 01 st Aug :** They can read the motives of others and are good judges of character. These ambitious, career-oriented people have a pragmatic nature yet dream large. They possess a generous soul and the desire to be part of the crowd but may be unwilling to show these aspects of their personality.

They are consistent, dependable, and loyal. They often have more than their share of emotional ups and downs in romantic love. Finding the right person can be a chore, but when they do, they want that person with them for a lifetime.

This could relate to a difficult childhood or feeling left out of the family. They are sometimes unsure in their parenting role. They believe in strict discipline but don't want to restrict their children the way they themselves may have been.

The people born on this date are worriers and often suffer from worrier's ailments: headaches, backaches, upset stomach, and sleeping disorders.

**WISHING YOU A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY.**







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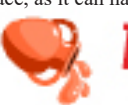

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Atul Sharma

 <b>Aries</b> (March 21 - April 19) <b>Aug 01 st 2024 :</b> Your personality will act like a perfume today. Today, your account will be credited with the money from your debtor without any prior notice, which can surprise you and make you happy. Visit to a religious place or to a relative seems likely on your cards.	 <b>Taurus</b> (April 20 - May 20) <b>Aug 01 st 2024 :</b> Be careful not to neglect yourself when it comes to health matters. Invest wisely. Good day to give some of your time to others. Today your beloved would find it extremely difficult to deal with your erratic behaviour. You have the ability to achieve lots- so go after the opportunities that come your way.	 <b>Gemini</b> (May 21 - June 20) <b>Aug 01 st 2024 :</b> Health will be perfect today. Finances improve later in the day. Avoid arguments and confrontation and needless fault finding in others. May be disappointed in love but don't lose heart as lovers are ever sycophantic. Your mastery in profession will be tested.
 <b>Cancer</b> (June 21 - July 22) <b>Aug 01 st 2024 :</b> Your personal problems may ruin mental happiness but involve yourself in some mental exercise by reading something interesting to cope up these pressures. You will make some extra cash today if you play your cards well. Your witty nature would brighten the environment around you.	 <b>Leo</b> (July 23 - Aug 22) <b>Aug 01 st 2024 :</b> Refuse to worry about your health. It is a powerful vaccination against illness. Your right attitude will beat the wrong attitude. Investment concerning your residence will be profitable. Your brother will be more supportive to your needs than you had thought.	 <b>Virgo</b> (Aug 23 - Sep 22) <b>Aug 01 st 2024 :</b> Today you will have ample of the time to do things to improve your health and looks. You need to talk to your family members today regarding money investment and savings. Their advice will prove to be helpful in improving your financial situation. People close to you will create problems at personal level.
 <b>Libra</b> (Sep 23 - Oct 22) <b>Aug 01 st 2024 :</b> You need to control your emotions and get rid of your fear as early as possible, as chances of instantaneously affecting your health and a stumbling block in your way of enjoying good health are high on the card. Your witty nature will make you popular at social gatherings.	 <b>Scorpio</b> (Oct 23 - Nov 21) <b>Aug 01 st 2024 :</b> You are likely to enjoy some sporting activity which will maintain your physical fitness. Today, you can get into a fight with someone close, and things can escalate to the court. Because of this, your hard-earned money will be spent. Avoid romancing around within the office space, as it can hamper your image.	 <b>Sagittarius</b> (Nov 22 - Dec 21) <b>Aug 01 st 2024 :</b> Health will remain fine despite a busy schedule. You need to keep an eye on where your money is being spent, otherwise you may face problems in the coming times. Friends will come to your aid if needed. Love will show positive vibes. The day looks very smooth in the context of work.
 <b>Capricorn</b> (Dec 22 - Jan 19) <b>Aug 01 st 2024 :</b> You may get rid from prolong illness. Today's formula for success is to put your money on the advice of people who are innovative and hold good experience. You need to take a break from your monotonous schedule and go out with your friends today.	 <b>Aquarius</b> (Jan 20 - Feb 18) <b>Aug 01 st 2024 :</b> Maintain your mental health-which is prerequisite for spiritual life. Mind is the gateway of life because everything whether it is good/bad comes through mind. It helps in solving life problems and endows one with requisite light. You will have difficulty trying to make your mate understand your position.	 <b>Pisces</b> (Feb 19 - Mar 20) <b>Aug 01 st 2024 :</b> Your enormous confidence and easy work schedule brings you enough time to relax today. Real estate investment would be lucrative. Domestic issues need immediate attention. Try harder you will definitely be luckier as it is your day today. Bold steps and decisions would bring favourable rewards.

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## Plantation Drive along entire western front- 2024

**THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES**

**Chandigarh :** Prof Renu Vig, Vice Chancellor of Panjab University was conferred the honorary rank of Colonel in NCC here today in a pipping ceremony held at NCC Group Chandigarh. On the occasion, Maj Gen Manjeet Singh Mokha, Additional Director General (ADG), National Cadet Corps (NCC), Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh & Chandigarh Directorate, Brig Harpreet Singh, Group Commander, NCC; Mr Rupinderjeet Singh Brar, Director Higher Education, Chandigarh, Faculties and NCC Cadets from various Colleges and Schools. The solemn ceremony included the pipping of ranks by presentation of folder and mementos to Prof Vig.

The Government of India has granted Vice Chancellors (VCs) of as many as 19 Indian universities for the honorary rank of Colonel in the National Cadet Corps. These



19 VCs will serve as the Colonel Commandant of their respective Universities. Their honorary ranks will be valid for as long as they hold the post. Honorary military ranks are occasionally awarded to civilians in recognition of their outstanding performance in a specific field or for their contribution towards nation-building.

On being honored with the honorary rank, the Vice Chancellor Prof Renu Vig expressed her gratitude and added that the prestigious title is not merely a personal accolade but a testimony to the shared commitment and hardwork of Panjab

University and National Cadet Corps to uphold the basic tenets of 'Unity & Discipline'.

The ADG NCC also addressed the audience and urged the NCC Cadets to continue giving their best for excellence in all shares of NCC activities. He further congratulated the Vice-Chancellor Prof Renu Vig for her honorary rank and said that the appointment of Colonel Commandant of NCC shall bring her in close contact with NCC units that shall enable greater interaction with officers and Cadets of educational institutes under jurisdiction.

## 4 Dancer students Bring Home Top Honors from UK

**THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES**

**Chandigarh :** In a remarkable feat, a team of young Indian dancers from Brookfield International School has secured the first prize in the highly competitive Children Folk Dance Competition held in the BST Hyde Park, UK. The talented quartet, comprising Ranvir VII Gamma, Sparsh VII Beta, Niyamat VIII Gamma, and Tanishka IV Alpha, mesmerized the judges and audience with their impeccable performance.

Competing against twenty eight teams from around the world, our students showcased the rich heritage of Indian folk dance with unparalleled grace and energy. Their



vibrant costumes and synchronized movements perfectly captured the essence of the traditional dance form.

"We are immensely proud of our students' extraordinary achievement," said Manav Singla, President, Brookfield International School. This victory is a testament to their dedication, hard work, and the exceptional guidance of

their mentor, Narrotam Singh. Pattern Neelam Singla said that Brookfield International School is committed to providing students with opportunities to excel in various fields, including arts and culture. This prestigious win is a significant milestone in the school's journey towards fostering holistic development among its students.

## CGC Jhanjeri Campus Joins South Asia Green Campus Program

**THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES**

**Mohali :** While taking a significant step towards environmental sustainability by partnering with The Climate Reality Project India and South Asia., Chandigarh Group of Colleges Jhanjeri Campus took an initiative which aims to make the campus more environmentally friendly, inspiring students to take care nature and engage in its preservation.

CGC Jhanjeri Campus is committed to not only providing quality education but also teaching students the importance of conserving natural resources. MD Arsh Dhaliwal emphasized that it is the duty of educational institutions to instill the habit of



natural resource conservation in students.

The collaboration was formalized with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between CGC Jhanjeri's MD, Arsh Dhaliwal, and Aditya

Pandher, Director of The Climate Reality Project India and South Asia. Following the MoU signing, an orientation program was held, and a tree plantation drive was conducted on campus to kick start the campaign.

## Rs 14.01 crore released to 2748 beneficiaries under Ashriwad scheme-Dr.Baljit Kaur

**THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES**

**Chandigarh :** The Punjab Government, led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, remains committed to the welfare of all societal sections, with a particular focus on the backward classes and economically weaker sections.

As part of this effort, the state has released Rs 14.01 crore to 2,748 beneficiaries received on the Ashriwad Portal under the Ashriwad scheme for Backward Classes and Economically Weaker Sections for the fiscal year 2023-24. This allocation has been made from the budget provision of 2024-25.

Minister of Social Justice, Empowerment and Minorities, Dr. Baljit Kaur, provided details that the beneficiaries from the districts of Amritsar, Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala, Ludhiana, Moga, Sri Muktsar Sahib, Patiala, Pathankot, Sangrur



and Malerkotla have been released financial assistance.

She explained that 224 beneficiaries from Amritsar, 38 from Fatehgarh Sahib, 111 from Fazilka, 182 from Gurdaspur, 181 from Hoshiarpur, 24 from Kapurthala, 760 from Ludhiana, 18 from Moga, 33 from Sri Muktsar Sahib, 883 from Patiala, 37 from Pathankot, 155 from Sangrur and 102 from Malerkotla have been

covered. Dr. Baljit Kaur emphasized that to eligibility for the Ashriwad scheme requires applicants to be permanent residents of Punjab, belong to families below the poverty line and be members of Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes, or other economically weaker families and have a family below Rs. 32,790 annually.

Additionally, up to two daughters from such families are eligible to benefit from this scheme. She said that the Punjab Government continues to work diligently to uplift the Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes and Economically Weaker Sections.

The financial assistance is deposited directly into the bank accounts of beneficiaries.

## PIC OF THE DAY

Who Cares...?

MC fails to avoid rain pain



**THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES**

**Mohali :** We all are aware that problem of waterlogging during monsoon has been continuing year after year in the Mohali despite that the present situation shows that inadequacies in the drainage system of flood-prone has not been taken care by the Municipal Corporation Mohali and other concerned authorities and residents demanded that all areas falling under the jurisdiction of Municipal Corporation Mohali must be reviewed.

Residents added that Municipal Corporation must ensure to Clean drains, repair roads and clear vegetation from nullahs before monsoon. SOPs must be followed to complete preventive works before the onset of monsoon.

During a visit to several areas in Mohali it was found that there is complete lack of accountability in the civic body due to various reasons like political patronage, job security, non-linking of salaries with performance, lack of supervision and corruption. There is dire need to overhaul the working of the MC to save money and increase efficiency

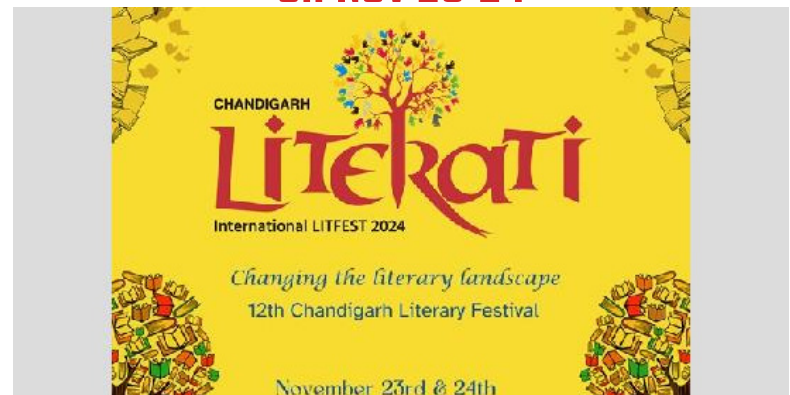
Concerned authorities must ensure daily lifting of garbage and its right disposal. Ensure daily lifting

of garbage and its right disposal. Choked drains cause waterlogging on roads in just an few hours of raining, particularly in low-lying areas.

The increased area under paver blocks has harmed the green cover and stopped the seepage of rainwater, which floods roads and houses. Roads are damaged and precious household items destroyed in the stagnant rainwater. Instead of pavers, priority should be accorded to increasing the green cover, water conservation and rainwater harvesting, which would control floods to some extent besides improve the level of groundwater. MC officials should be given the responsibility and accountability for keeping the road gullies clear. Workers should be on duty during rain to clear blocked road gullies.

All the concerned authorities should focus on dealing with problems faced by residents, government must promote rainwater harvesting system to tackle the twin problems of waterlogging and falling water table. It should make sure that good drainage system is in place. All drains should be cleaned before monsoon. **But Who Cares???**

## 12th Edition of Literati 2024 to be held on Nov 23-24



**THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES**

**Chandigarh :** The upcoming 12th edition of Literati, the trilingual Chandigarh International Literature festival, promises to be a literary delight for the Tricity.

Scheduled for November 23rd and 24th, 2024, at the Lake Club, Chandigarh, the Festival Director and Chairperson of the Chandigarh Literary Society, Dr. Sumita Misra, announced the event today.

Literati 2023 was a resounding triumph, lauded for its exceptional organization and vibrant atmosphere. The festival showcased an impressive roster of several distinguished guests, including International Booker Prize winner Geetanjali Shree, renowned authors Amish Tripathi and Ashwin Sanghi, and the celebrated actor and bestselling author Kabir Bedi. We were also honored to host prominent figures such as Meeran Chadha Borwankar, Bhavna Roy, and Chef Harpal Singh Sokhi.

Their presence added significant depth and diversity to the event, and their collective praise highlighted the festival's success in delivering a truly remarkable platform for intellectual exchange and creative expression.

Dr. Misra said "We have proudly marked a decade of hosting some of the most distinguished literary figures from India and beyond in the City Beautiful. As one of the country's enduring literature festivals, Literati convenes a diverse array of voices on a singular platform, committed to igniting dialogue, fostering discourse, and exploring creativity across a spectrum of genres and

expressions." The two-day festival, organized by the Chandigarh Literary Society proudly unveils the theme for its 12th edition: Celebrating Creativity.

"Our goal and aspiration have consistently aimed to establish Chandigarh as the preferred hub for literature enthusiasts, ensuring that the festival embodies the contemporary and dynamic essence of our city. This year, we will continue to feature celebrated authors and personalities for exclusive performances, dynamic debates and discussions in various languages, and book launches," added Dr. Misra.

With regard to the theme of 'Celebrating Creativity', Dr. Misra spoke about the importance of innovation and imagination coming together, "This year at Literati, we invite you to join us in embracing 'Celebrating Creativity' as more than a theme, but as a guiding ethos. Creativity, the spark that ignites minds and fuels artistic expression, serves as a beacon guiding us through the vast landscapes of literature and beyond. It is through creativity that we reimagine narratives, challenge conventions, and cultivate deeper understandings of ourselves and the world around us. Let us come together to celebrate the boundless possibilities of creativity, forging connections that transcend borders and inspire generations to come." Literati is a non-aligned, not for profit festival that is open to all and aims to encourage young minds to read and participate.

## Delhi Chief Secretary's Big Charge On AAP Minister After Basement Deaths



### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**New Delhi :** In his report on the basement tragedy at Delhi's Rajinder Nagar that left three IAS aspirants dead, Delhi government's Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar has blamed the coaching centre for encroachment that blocked drains and accused minister Saurabh Bharadwaj of sitting on a key legislation to tackle waterlogging in the national capital.

This is the Chief Secretary's response after Mr Bharadwaj, who holds multiple portfolios including flood control, sought an explanation about the bureaucrat's claims of pending decisions.

The Chief Secretary has said that a meeting was convened after heavy rain last year led to waterlogging in the city to come up with a comprehensive strategy to prevent flooding, according to sources.

The meeting found that there was a need to consolidate drainage management in Delhi for 18 years and emphasised on the requirement for a Storm Water and Drainage Act with penal provisions for encroachment and dumping of waste into these drains. The meeting also called for a Master Drainage Plan for Delhi.

These findings, he has said, were submitted to the minister in August 2023 and remained with him for consideration till February this year. It was only after that gap of five months that the minister asked for a presentation, the senior official has said.

He has added that the Irrigation and Flood Control Department has not taken any decision yet on bringing a Storm Water and Drainage Act. On the Master Drainage Plan, the Chief Secretary has said that an IIT Delhi report on this was not accepted by Aam Aadmi Party government. It was then decided that three separate drainage plans would be prepared, but no substantive work has taken place so far.

The report says that the draft of the Storm Water Drainage Act is still pending with the minister and pointed out that such a legislation would impact the rainwater management in the national capital.

The storm water drainage system in Delhi, the Chief Secretary has said, cannot be con-

trolled without a proper legislative framework and this situation leads to flooding in several areas whenever there is heavy rain. On the Rajinder Nagar incident, the Chief Secretary has pointed to the findings of the probe conducted by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. The construction of ramps in violation of norms has blocked the entry of drains through which rainwater can be drained out, the report says. Manholes and drains in the area have been covered by granite or marble or kota stones, and this has made cleaning of drains impossible.

So every time there is heavy rain, water accumulates on the road along which the coaching centres are located. This water, which should have been disposed off through drains, moves towards the parking area and the basements.

At Rau's IAS Study Circle, where Saturday's tragedy took place, the drainage system has been blocked completely and no safeguards to meet any eventuality are in the place, the report says.

This Chief Secretary's report is the latest episode in the blame game in the aftermath of the basement tragedy. The deaths of Tanya Soni, Shreya Yadav and Nevin Dalwin have sparked massive protests by students who blame civic negligence for the tragedy. The Opposition BJP has targeted the ruling AAP, which also controls the MCD. AAP has hit back, alleging a big conspiracy and corruption in desilting work in the national capital. Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said that the work of removing silt from drains and sewers was not done properly due to the negligence of officers of PWD, MCD and Irrigation and Flood Control Department. He said that Delhi government can neither transfer these officers nor take any action against them and only Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena can do so.

AAP's Rajinder Nagar MLA Durgesh Pathak has questioned why no work on Delhi's drainage system was done in the past 15-20 years. "The BJP should have shame. We demand action against all officers, including the senior officers who are found responsible."

## Tribute to Kargil War Martyrs Held at DCSA, Panjab University



### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**Chandigarh :** The Department of Computer Science and Applications at Panjab University held a solemn event to honor the brave soldiers who were martyred in the Kargil War. The tribute included a series of activities designed to remember the sacrifices made by these heroes and their families.

Chairperson Anuj Sharma and Co-ordinator Kavita Taneja addressed the gathering, emphasizing the importance of remembering the valor and dedication of the soldiers who laid down their lives for the nation. "Their courage and sacrifice are the bedrock of our nation's freedom and security," said Chairperson. Coordinator added, "It is our duty to honor their memory and teach the younger generation about their bravery."

The event featured a quiz and a series of quotes related to the Kargil War, engaging students in a thoughtful reflection on the significance of the conflict. Additionally, a 20-minute video was presented to both faculty and students, vividly showcasing the sacrifices of

the soldiers and their families. The video resonated deeply with the audience, highlighting the personal stories of courage and loss. Alumni who made significant contributions to the Indian Army were also showcased, celebrating their dedication and service.

To recognize the efforts and achievements of participants, winners of the quiz were awarded trophies and certificates. All participants received participation certificates as a token of appreciation for their involvement. Furthermore, volunteers who worked tirelessly to make the event a success were honored with medals, acknowledging their dedication and effort.

The event concluded with a message of gratitude and remembrance, reinforcing the importance of honoring those who have served the country with unparalleled bravery. The Department of Computer Science and Applications at Panjab University hopes to continue such initiatives, fostering a sense of patriotism and respect for the armed forces among students.

## Gulab Chand Kataria sworn in as Pb governor

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**Chandigarh :** BJP veteran Gulab Chand Kataria was today sworn in as the Governor of Punjab and Administrator Chandigarh.

Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Sheel Nagu administered the oath of office to Kataria at a ceremony in Raj Bhavan.

Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, former Punjab Governor VP Singh Badnore and several Punjab ministers, including Harpal Singh Cheema and Gurmeet Singh Khuddian, were also present.

The 79-year-old Kataria took the oath in Hindi.

Kataria replaces Banwarilal Purohit, who tendered his resig-



nation in February.

Before being appointed as the Punjab governor, Kataria was the governor of Assam.

Hailing from Udaipur, Kataria had served as Rajasthan home minister twice -- from 2004 to 2008 and 2015 to 2018--and had also served as Leader of Opposi-

tion in the Rajasthan Assembly. The BJP veteran had also served as education, public works pan-chayati raj, rural development and disaster management minister.

Kataria, an eight-time former MLA, became the Assam governor in February 2023.

## Delhi study centre survivor recalls last words of victim: No need to panic

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**New Delhi :** A civil service aspirant, who narrowly escaped from the flooded basement of the coaching centre in Old Rajinder Nagar area in Delhi, said one of the victims had told him not to panic. Recalling the words of Tanya Soni, who was among the three students who drowned in the basement of Rau's IAS Study Circle institute, Rishabh Pal, 21, said he would forever feel guilty for not being able to save his batchmates

Shreya Yadav (25) and Nevin Dalwin (28) were the other two IAS aspirants who died on July 27. The coaching centre had permission to use the basement only as a storage, but it was turned into a library.

Rishabh Pal, from Ghaziabad, said around 15 students managed to escape from the basement, but around 15 more were stuck there. Recounting the horrifying moment, Pal said the over 13-foot-high library was filled with water in just three to four minutes.



staff members of our institute brought a rope to pull the others who were stuck in the water," he told PTI. Rishabh said that he didn't notice Nevin in the library.

Praising the quick work of the employees, Rishabh said had they not acted swiftly, the number of casualties would have been more.

However, contrary to reports, he said there were no biometric locks in any part of the building. He also alleged that there was a delay in response to their distress calls.

"The NDRF officials who came at about 10 pm told us that they could not do anything as they did not have any equipment."

So far, seven people, including the owner and the coordinator of the centre, have been arrested in connection with the case.

## Prominent members of SAD wing join SOPU

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**Chandigarh :** Ahead of the student council elections scheduled for September, Student Organisation of India's (SOI) prominent faces from Panjab University have shifted to the Student Organisation of Panjab University (SOPU). The student leaders announced this during a press conference held at the Student Centre.

The SOI, the student wing of the Shiromani Akali Dal, has been witnessing a downfall for the past few years, especially after its leader Vikramjeet (Vicky) Middukhera was shot dead on August 7, 2021. Vicky was heading SOPU till he joined SOI in 2014 along with other prominent leaders, including Dalvir Singh Goldy Khangura, who was later elected Dhuri MLA in 2017. Middukhera had led the SOI to victory in 2015 and 2019. In 2015, the SOI's presidential candidate had won the election with a margin of over 1,400 votes. The other three council posts were also won by SOI's panel, which included Indian National Students Organisation (INSO), Himachal Students Union (HIMSU), National Students' Organisation (NSO), Youth Organisation of India (YOI), Gandhi Group Students' Union (GGSU) and Youth Welfare Association (YUWA). After 2015, the SOI has been able to win the top post of the council only once. In 2019,



Chetan Chaudhary had won as presidential candidate but with a margin of 479 votes. On the other hand, SOPU, a party established in 1997 which once held strong influence on the campus, registered its first win in 1998. It has not been able to win any post since 2012. In fact, the party had contested the 2023 election after a gap of three years and had lost the general secretary's post — the only seat they had fielded a candidate for. However, the party may see a revival in coming polls now.

During the press conference, the student leaders joining SOPU alleged that instead of being asked to work towards student interests, the parent party leaders pushed them towards political happenings outside the campus. Refuting the allegations, SAD general secretary and SOI national coordi-

nator Gurpreet Singh Raju Khanna said some people left the party to join SOPU solely for vested interests. "Many members were doing more harm than good to the party. It is a positive sign that some faces indulged in anti-party activities have left SOI," Khanna said.

"Some people have always shifted ideologies according to their immediate needs and switched sides, but such changes do not affect the party and its campaign," said SAD's national spokesperson Abhay Singh Dhillon.

Prominent among those who joined SOPU are Karanvir Singh Kranti, SOI's former Malwa zone president; Gurshan Dhaliwal, former campus president and general secretary of SOI; Angad Lubana, former general secretary, SOI, PU; Khushwinder Singh, former senior president, SOI, Patiala; Avtar Singh, Rimmy Khanna, Jashan Jawanda, Gurkaran Chahal, Mohit Rana, Sanjam Dhillon, Ravi Jhinjer, Karanvir Harika, Harman Gill, Shahdeep Singh and Sanyam Wadhwa. Apart from them, Indian National Students Organisation (INSO) leader Rohit Chaudhary also joined SOPU along with other students.

## Man gets life imprisonment in murder case

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**Chandigarh :** A local court has sentenced a person named Arjun to undergo life imprisonment in a five-year-old murder case of a woman in Mani Majra.

The police had registered the case against the accused after the body of a woman Deepa was found in a rented house in Mani Majra on February 5, 2019. She was found to have been murdered by strangulation.

Father of the woman Krishanpal in a statement given to the police said in January 2019, Arjun eloped with Dee-



pa from Chaprauli village. Her husband had filed a complaint with the police. Krishanpal alleged that Arjun had developed a grudge

against them when they had registered an FIR against him. After hearing the arguments the court also fined the convict Rs 25,000.

## 'The UP Files' director on making a film on Yogi Adityanath: Inspiring other leaders

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**New Delhi :** Director Neeraj Sahai, whose latest film 'The UP Files' is currently running in theatres, talked about making a film on the life and work of Yogi Adityanath, the current Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. In an exclusive interview with IndiaToday.in, he spoke about the need for making a political film, and the intention behind it.

Sahai said, "This is not about the life story of Yogi Adityanath ji. It is inspired by his work for a state. This shows his journey as the leader of Uttar Pradesh. We are not talking about his personal life, we are talking about his work here. The intention is to make a film which can inspire the other state leaders to show the same courage as him."

The director recalled the other films based in Uttar Pradesh. He said most of these films glorify UP as a criminal state and that irked him as a filmmaker and also as someone who belongs to the state. "Most of the films that are based in Uttar Pradesh show a negative side of the state. This is a positive film about its growth. We are not showing any criminal activities. We are saying there's



a leader who understood the essence of his state and worked towards growth," he said.

He added, "I am from UP. I know how the state was infested with crime, gang wars, crimes against women. Many Chief Ministers came before Yogi ji but none of them cared to fix the problem. It was always about politics. Yogi Adityanath is a saint. He only focussed on the transformation of this state. We felt there was a need to highlight the problem and to show how one man did the unthinkable."

For Neeraj Sahai, 'The UP Files' is an attempt to create cinema

which can inspire and help transform other leaders in the country. "The idea also is to make other state leaders feel guilty and ashamed of their work. We want them to watch our film and feel inspired to do better work for the people of their state," he concluded.

The film features National Award-winning actor, Manoj Joshi playing the role inspired by Yogi Adityanath. It also stars Milind Gunaji, Anil George, Manjari Fadnis, Ali Asgar and Aman Verma, among others. The film is produced by Kuldeep Umraosingh Ostwal.

## Manu Bhaker-Sarabjot Singh Clinch Bronze. Archer Bhajan Shines

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**New Delhi :** Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh shone bright on Day 4 of medal events at the Paris Olympics 2024 as they clinched the bronze medal in the 10m air pistol mixed team shooting event. The duo defeated South Korea. Bhaker became the first athlete in the history of independent India to win two medals in a single Olympics edition. In boxing, Amit Panghal (men's 51 kg - Rd of 16) and Jaismine Lamboria (women's 57 kg - rd of 32) and Preeti Pawar (women's 54kg Round of 16) lost. In archery, Bhajan Kaur reached Round of 16 in women's archery individual round event. Coming to rowing, Balraj Panwar finished 5th in the men's single sculls quarterfinal. India men's hockey team defeated Ireland 2-0. (India's Day 4 Schedule | Medal Tally) With that we come to the end of today's coverage! Do log on to sports.ndtv.com tomorrow to catch more live action from Olympics!



Preeti loses the match via a split decision. The last round judges gave a 4:1 verdict in favour of the Colombian boxer. With that we come to the end of India's campaign today!

Preeti has made a brilliant comeback. Three judges ruled in her favour and she has taken the second round. All to play for in the second round.

Preeti loses the first round 1:4 despite being at her attacking best. She rarely kept the guard and has been attacking full on. Women's 54kg Round of 16 - Preeti Pawar vs Yeni Marcela Arias (Colombia) match coming up next!

We are not done yet! One more Indian is still left to fight her battle today. It's boxer Preeti Pawar vs Yeni Marcela Arias (Colombia) and the match will start around 1:22 am.

That's a heart-break! B Dhiraj, despite a great start, loses in the shoot-off though both the archers hit a 10. Peters' arrow was closer to the center-point and hence advances.

The match will be decided in the Shoot-off as Eric Peters takes the fifth set with a 30-29 margin.

B Dhiraj takes a 4-2 lead by clinching the third set 29-27. The Fourth set is tied all the shots by the archers are 10s. This is incredible. B Dhiraj holds a 5-3 lead.

After Dhiraj B won the first set 28-27 to take 2-0 lead, the Canadian rival took the second set 29-28 to level scores 2-2.

B Dhiraj's 1/16 elimination round match against Canada's Eric Peters starts! If he wins he will move to the pre quarter-finals.

Dhiraj B wins the 1/32 elimination round by defeating Czech Republic's Adam Li 7-1. The Indian archer's 1/16 elimination round match will be held at 11:25 pm. He will face Canada's Eric Peters.

The Czech archer wins the first set by the narrowest of margins though the two archers were tied on points. The second set, however, belongs to Dhiraj. He has taken a 3-1 lead

Dhiraj B vs Adam Li (CZE) 1/32 Elimination Round Archery Match starts.

Jaismine has lost her bout quite comprehensively. Today has been a bad day for Indian boxers. Now, all hope lies with Preeti Pawar who will face Yeni Marcela Arias (Colombia) in Women's 54kg Round of 16 match

Jaismine has lost the second round too. This time all five judges ruled against her. Shee needs something miraculous to win this bout from here on.

The Philippines boxer in the blue corner has taken the first round 4:1. Despite having the height advantage, Jaismine has not been able to strike hard. Nesthy, on the other hand, has been more agile. Jaismine's 57kg Round of 32 women's

boxing bout vs Philippines Nesthy Petecio starts at Paris Olympics 2024

Jaismine's 57kg Round of 32 women's boxing bout vs Philippines Nesthy Petecio will start at 9:24 PM

Egypt reached the quarter-finals of the men's Olympic football after completing the group stage with a surprise 2-1 win over already qualified Spain on Tuesday, with Ibrahim Adel scoring both goals.

Adel gave Egypt the lead in Bordeaux with a superb strike late in the first half and added another on 62 minutes, pouncing to score after possession was given away by Spain's Jon Pacheco.

Samu Omorodion pulled one back late on for Spain, but Egypt held on for the win that allowed them to leapfrog their already-qualified opponents and snatch first place in Group C.

Coco Gauff demanded the introduction of video replays at Roland Garros after being dumped out of the Olympic Games singles tennis tournament on Tuesday in a stormy defeat to impressive Donna Vekic of Croatia.

Vekic came through 7-6 (9/7), 6-2 to reach the quarter-finals after world number two Gauff became embroiled in a tearful, bitter dispute with the chair umpire over a line call in the sixth game of the second set.

The events are far from over for India today. Following are the events where Indians will be in action:

ARCHERY

Men's Individual

1/32 Elimination Round

Dhiraj Bommadevara (10:46pm)

BOXING

Women's 57kg Round of 32

Jaismine Lamboria vs Nesthy Petecio (Philippines) - 9:24 pm

Women's 54kg Round of 16

Preeti Pawar vs Yeni Marcela Arias (Colombia) - 1:22 am (July 31)

The Indian women's duo of Ashwini Ponnappa and Tanisha Crasto succumbed to their third consecutive defeat in Group C to finish fourth and crash out in the group stage. They endured defeat against the Australian duo of Setyana Mapasa and Angela Yu 15-21, 10-21 in straight games on Tuesday. The Indian women's duo struggled throughout their outing against the Australian team.

The women's trap shooters, Rajeshwari Kumari and Shreyasi Singh, were completely off target. Rajeshwari shot 68 out of 75 over three round of qualification on Day 1 to be placed 21st among 30 competitors, while Shreyasi was further down at 22nd. The two will play two more rounds of qualification on Wednesday before the top-six finalists are decided.

That is the end of Amit Panghal's journey as he is defeated by Patrick Chinyemba of Zambia in the men's 51kg boxing match.

A demotivating bout for Amit Panghal as his opponent was almost mocking him towards the end. By the end of the third round, it looked like the Indian boxer had no steam left and it is highly unlikely that Amit Panghal will win this.

## 'Raayan' box office Day 5: Dhanush's film inching closer to Rs 100 crore globally

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**Chennai :** Dhanush's second directorial venture, 'Raayan', is having a phenomenal run in theatres. The film crossed the Rs 50-crore mark nett in India and is marching towards Rs 100 crore gross worldwide. With this, 'Raayan' is on its way to becoming one of the highest-grossing Tamil films of 2024. The film is also holding well in theatres during the weekdays.

'Raayan' hit theatres on July 26 in Tamil and Telugu and received mixed reviews. The film faced on July 29 and passed with flying colours. July 30, the action drama is estimated to have earned Rs 4.50 crore nett in India. This takes the five-day total collection to Rs 52.95 crore nett. At this rate, 'Raayan' will successfully rake in Rs 100 crore gross worldwide.



The Tamil version of the film recorded an occupancy of 22.48 per cent, while the Telugu version registered 17.52 per cent on July 30.

'Raayan' is a milestone film for Dhanush, and it marks his 50th movie as a lead actor. He put together an ensemble cast including him, Sundeep Kishan, Kalidas Jayaram,

Dushara Vijayan, Selvaraghavan, SJ Suryah, Prakash Raj and Saravanan in pivotal roles.

Produced by Sun Pictures, 'Raayan' has music composed by AR Rahman. Cinematographer Om Prakash and editor Prasanna GK are part of the technical crew.

### It's story TIME

## The Eagle & the Beetle

A Beetle once begged the Eagle to spare a Hare which had run to her for protection. But the Eagle pounced upon her prey, the sweep of her great wings tumbling the Beetle a dozen feet away.

Furious at the disrespect shown her, the Beetle flew to the Eagle's nest and rolled out the eggs. Not one did she spare. The Eagle's grief and anger knew no bounds, but who had done the cruel deed she did not know. Next year the Eagle built her nest far up on a mountain crag; but the Beetle found it and again destroyed the eggs. In despair the Eagle now implored great Jupiter to let her place her eggs in his lap. There none would dare harm them. But the Beetle buzzed about Jupiter's head, and made him rise to drive her away; and the eggs rolled from his lap. Now the Beetle told the reason for her action, and Jupiter had to acknowledge the justice of her cause. And they say that ever after, while the Eagle's eggs lie in the nest in spring, the Beetle still sleeps in the ground. For so Jupiter commanded. Even the weakest may find means to avenge a wrong.



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## Delhi to bring law to regulate coaching centres. AAP won't wait for Centre

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**New Delhi :** Delhi minister Atishi said the AAP government would bring a law to regulate coaching centres amid outrage over the death of three civil service aspirants who drowned in the basement of a coaching centre in Old Rajinder Nagar. Addressing a press conference along with Delhi Mayor Shelly Oberoi, Atishi said the basements of 30 coaching centres have been sealed, and 200 institutes were served notices following the tragedy at Rau's IAS Study Circle coaching institute.

"We will listen to the demands of the students, we will hold a meeting with them soon and after that, we will bring the Coaching Institute Regulation Act," Shelly Oberoi said.

Atishi said the AAP government would constitute a committee comprising officials and students from coaching hubs to formulate the regulations.

Citing a preliminary report by the MCD, Atishi said the primary reason behind the incident was encroachment of the drainage area by coaching centres due to which the floodwater could



not recede. "The drain was encroached upon by all the coaching centres there because of which the water was not going down," Atishi said.

A preliminary probe has hinted that the drainage system in the area was heavily clogged with silt. Moreover, the basement of the building was used as a library despite having clearance from the authorities only for use as storage.

Atishi said the junior engineer responsible for preventing encroachments in the area was "permanently terminated" by the MCD. The Assistant Engineer

has also been suspended.

"The magisterial report will come in six days and for those who will be found responsible, strict action will be taken," she said.

She also said that in the past three days, illegal encroachments by coaching centres have been bulldozed.

Three IAS aspirants -- Shreya Yadav from Uttar Pradesh, Tanya Soni from Telangana, and Nevin Dalwin from Kerala -- died after the basement of the building housing the coaching institute was flooded following heavy rain on July 27.

So far, seven people have been arrested, including the owner and coordinator of the coaching institute.

The Union Home Ministry has also constituted a high-level committee, headed by an Additional Secretary, to probe the incident.

## JD(S) won't back foot march over MUDA 'scam'. HD Kumaraswamy slams BJP

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**Lucknow :** Janata Das (Secular) today pulled out of the proposed foot march against the alleged irregularities in the distribution of sites in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), which includes Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife, in what appears to be a crack in the NDA in Karnataka.

Speaking to reporters, Kumaraswamy - looking visibly angry - hit out at the BJP, saying the JD(S) was never taken into confidence regarding the foot march.

"When they (BJP) are not ready to take us into confidence, then why should we give support to them?" he told reporters.

Kumaraswamy, whose family remains embroiled in controversy due to the sex tapes case against his nephew Prajwal Revanna, lashed out at the BJP for choosing a leader from the Hassan district to be among those to spearhead the foot march.

Prajwal Revanna, a former Hassan MP, lost the constituency in the Lok Sabha elections.

Kumaraswamy ruled out the JD(S) extending "moral support" to the foot march, saying he was "hurt" to see the BJP picking Preethan Gowda to lead the protest, among others.

Preethan Gowda, a former Hassan BJP MLA, has been in the news in connection



with pen drives containing alleged obscene videos involving Prajwal Revanna, which were circulated before the start of the Lok Sabha elections in April.

"I'm hurt, it pains me. Who is that Preethan Gowda? Preethan Gowda ventured to finish off the family of Deve Gowda. They (BJP) call a meeting with him (Preethan Gowda) to discuss preparations for the march and ask me to sit next to him, the person who put poison in my family? Who is responsible for distribution of pen drives? There is a limit to my tolerance," the former Karnataka Chief Minister said.

An angry Kumaraswamy further asked if the BJP was at all aware of what happened in Hassan.

"Are they seeking support for this? Do they not know what happened in Hassan? Who is responsible?" he asked, while speaking to reporters.

The BJP decided to hold a foot march from Bengaluru to Mysuru from August 3 to 10 against the MUDA scam, wherein sites were allotted to land losers fraudulently, including Chief Minister's wife Parvathi. The party, which is at the opposition in the southern state, has demanded Siddaramaiah's resignation in the scam.

Kumaraswamy further said that it was not the "appropriate time" to hold the foot march when citizens are facing several problems due to heavy rain.

"Now, we have to respond to people's pain. I don't know who would appreciate (the foot march in these circumstances)," he said.

The JD(S), headed by former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda, joined the BJP-led NDA last year. The two parties fought the Lok Sabha elections in Karnataka together this year.

## Government in process of finalising various pillars of AI technology: MoS Jitin Prasada

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**Pune :** With the Cabinet approving the Artificial Intelligence Mission earlier this year, the government is in the process of finalising various pillars of AI technology, Union Minister Jitin Prasada said.

In March, the government approved the with an outlay of Rs 10,372 crore for five years to encourage AI development in the country.

The approved corpus will be used to build a high-end scalable in public-private partnership mode.

Speaking on the role of Artificial Intelligence, the Minister stated that the AI mission has been cleared by the Cabinet, adding "we are in the process of finalizing the various pillars of the AI technology".

Addressing a Ficci event, the Minister of State for Commerce & Industry and Electronics & Information Technology said, the PLI (production-linked incentive) schemes are aimed not only to enhance India's manufacturing capabilities and exports but also for the country to become a manufacturing hub.

"Even before the full disbursement of PLI scheme has happened, we are seeing a



good amount of investment happening in plant and machinery, creation of new jobs with increase in production", he added.

The minister shared that in spite of the PLI scheme, not incentivising exports and no disbursements happening for exports, exports to the tune of Rs 4 lakh crore have been achieved.

The PLI scheme has garnered over 1.28 lakh crore investment, exports got boosted by Rs 4 lakh crore, and resulted in employment generation of 8.5 lakh, the Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran said last week.

Prasada further said the government will give the necessary thrust and support to ensure India becomes a manufacturing hub.

Keeping in view India's vision of becoming 'Atmanirbhar', PLI schemes for 14 key sectors were announced with an outlay of Rs 1.97 lakh crore (over \$26 billion) to enhance India's manufacturing capabilities and exports.

"We ensure that we get the best technology transfer, we will ensure that the value addition in our products happens. In the next five years, I can assure you that in the air conditioner sector, 75 per cent of it will be indigenized, and India will be producing quality standard air conditioners," Prasada noted.

Highlighting the importance of the MSME sector, the minister said that it is one of the priority sectors for the government. He said that the recent Budget announcements also focus on the MSME as it has the potential to create more jobs.

## Lost dog travels 250 km to return home in Karnataka village. locals hold feast

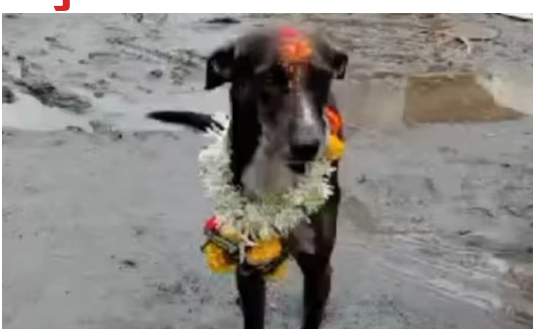
### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**Belagavi :** Yamagami village in Nipani taluk of Belagavi district recently witnessed a strange sight. A jubilant crowd paraded a black indie dog covered in garlands and held a feast in its honour. For the villagers, the return of the dog, which had been lost, is a miracle.

Fondly called Maharaj, the animal which is well past its prime, was lost in the crowd in the pilgrimage town of Pandharpur in South Maharashtra, but made its way back to the village in Belagavi in North Karnataka, travelling nearly 250km on its own. In the last week of June, Maharaj had followed its owner Kamalesh Kumbhar when he went on his annual 'Wari padayatra' trip to Pandharpur.

Kumbhar, a 'Warkari', said he visits Pandharpur every year on Ashadha Ekadashi and Kartiki Ekadashi.

This time, the dog too accompanied him, he said.



"Maharaj has always liked listening to bhajans. Once, he had accompanied me on another padayatra trip to Jyotiba temple near Mahabaleswar," Kumbhar said.

For nearly 250 km, the dog followed the master, who walked with a group of his friends, chanting bhajans.

After the darshan at Vithoba temple, Kumbhar said he noticed that the dog was missing. When he went looking for him, he said people over there told him that the dog had left

with another group.

"I still searched for him everywhere and I could not find him. So, I thought maybe the people were right, that he left with someone else. I returned to my home town on July 14," Kumbhar said.

The very next day though, Kumbhar said, to his surprise "Maharaj was standing there in front of my house, wagging his tail as if nothing had happened. He looked well fed and perfectly fine."

Overcome with happiness, Kumbhar said, he and the villagers celebrated Maharaj's return with a feast. "It is such a miracle that the dog could find its way, although it was 250km or so away from home. We think it was Lord Panduranga who guided him."

## While you slept, Microsoft Office suffered glitch and went down

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**New Delhi :** As the world slept, Microsoft Office faced a major outage due to an unexpected spike in usage. The disruption brought down Azure network infrastructure, affecting users globally. Microsoft confirmed that the issue stemmed from Azure Front Door (AFD), its cloud Content Delivery Network (CDN), which struggled to handle the sudden surge in demand.

The outage first came to light when Azure announced a global impact across regions, including the Americas, APAC, Europe, and the Middle East. "We are investigating reports of issues connecting to Microsoft services globally," Microsoft stated. "Customers may experience timeouts connecting to Azure services. Multiple engineering teams are engaged to diagnose and resolve the issue."

As per reports, at 5:15 PM (IST) on July 30, 2024, some Microsoft customers started having trouble connecting to their services. This was because an unexpected surge in usage caused some parts of Microsoft's cloud system to slow down and act up.

To fix this, Microsoft made some changes to their network setup and redirected the traffic to other parts of their system, which helped things get better by around 7:40 PM (IST).

However, these quick fixes caused some new problems for a few services. Microsoft kept working on these issues, especially in Asia Pacific and Europe. They also used a step-by-step approach to fix things in the Americas, aiming to have everything back to normal by 2:00 AM (IST).



The outage also affected Microsoft 365 customers worldwide, prompting apologies on social media. "We're sorry to hear you're running into issues with our services," Microsoft's social team wrote on Twitter. "Our experts are currently investigating the situation to resolve it as soon as possible."

Although Microsoft has yet to release an official incident report, it acknowledged "access issues and degraded performance" affecting several services. Users on Reddit reported that nearly all Microsoft Online features were either down or significantly degraded.

A couple of days ago many Microsoft Windows 10 computers glitched across the world, leaving hundreds of thousands of people affected. On social media, people posted photos of their computer screens after their systems suffered BSOD with the classic blue screen on display. The glitch apparently impacted not just people who were at work in many offices around the world but also in critical places like airports where services were affected. It was reported that the glitch was likely a result of an update issued by CrowdStrike.

## 'There was no rash driving': Wife of SUV driver arrested in coaching centre deaths

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**New Delhi :** "My husband was only trying to reach a safe spot," said Shima Kathuria, wife of Manuj Kathuria, who was arrested in connection with the deaths of three civil service aspirants inside a flooded basement of a coaching centre in Delhi's Old Rajinder Nagar last week. She further said that the video clearly showed that there was no rash driving by Manuj Kathuria.

Manuj Kathuria, a businessman, was behind the wheels of an SUV which drove through the flooded street, causing the water to swell and breach the gates of the three-storey building of Rau's IAS Study Circle and inundate the basement.

Defending her husband, Shima said that the allegations levelled against Manuj are "completely wrong".

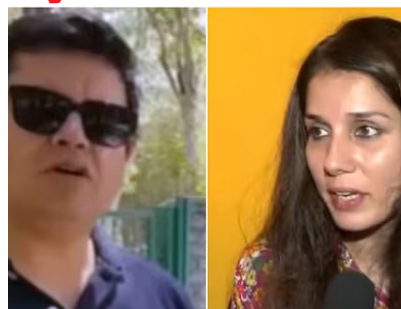
"There was no rash driving, the video is in front of everyone. My husband was not driving at a high speed. My husband was only trying to reach a safe spot."

Furthermore, Shima also blamed Rau's IAS Study Circle for running a library in the basement of the building without permission. She also wondered why the police didn't close the roads when there was waterlogging in the area.

"The authorities will figure out who is at fault. Why was the coaching institute owner running a library there when they had a NOC only for storage? When there was severe waterlogging on the roads, police should have cordoned off the roads," she said.

Shima also believed that her husband was a victim in the case and not an accused. "We are very positive. My husband has not done anything wrong. We have full faith in the judicial system and I am sure that the court will take the right decision," she said in a separate conversation.

Recalling her husband's dramatic arrest, Shima said police arrived at their residence and told the family that they had come to



question Manuj. "The police said there is no criminal liability and they were just taking him for questioning since his vehicle was visible in the viral video captured around that time (when the water gushed in). Around 30 minutes later, my father-in-law got a call from him saying he had been arrested. It created a state of panic among us," she added.

Speaking about the allegations of rash driving, Shima said that video which went viral on social media 'clearly' shows that the brake lights of the vehicle were switched on. "He was driving in first gear on the waterlogged road. The car cannot be driven at a speed of 5 km/hour in that situation. But it was not speeding either; it must have been somewhere at 15 km/hr or 20 km/hr. He was applying brakes constantly and not speeding his SUV," she said.

"The car would have stalled had he stopped. He did not know which buildings he crossed. He was making sure that he was driving straight and not hitting someone. We had never been to those institutes, nor knew they are operating," Shima added.

Three civil services aspirants -- Shreya Yadav, Tanya Soni, and Nevin Dalwin -- died on Saturday evening after water from a flooded drain gushed into the basement of Rau's IAS Study Circle in Old Rajinder Nagar where a library was set up.

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## Top Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh killed in Iran, outfit blames Israel

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

New Delhi : Top Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was killed after his residence was targeted in Tehran early today, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said in a statement, Reuters reported. Hamas, a Palestinian outfit engaged in a war with Israel in Gaza, said an "Israeli" raid killed Ismail Haniyeh and one of his bodyguards in his residence in Tehran.

In a statement, Hamas said Haniyeh was killed in "a treacherous Zionist raid on his residence in Tehran".

Haniyeh, who led Hamas's political operations from exile in Qatar, attended the inauguration ceremony of Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian. He also met Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Israel said its military was "fully prepared for any scenario", The New York Times reported. "We prefer to resolve hostilities without a wider war," said Daniel Hagari, the Israeli military spokesperson. Amid the Israel-Gaza war, Haniyeh act-



ed as a negotiator in the ceasefire talks. Hamas claimed in April that Israeli airstrikes killed three of Haniyeh's sons and four of his grandchildren.

The military wing of Hamas is led by Yahya Sinwar, believed to be the mastermind of the October 7 attack on Israel that ignited the war in Gaza.

The development comes a day after the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) claimed to have killed Fuad Shukur, a top commander of Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

Israel had claimed Fuad Shukur was behind a drone strike that killed 12 children in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

The 62-year-old was born in a refugee camp near Gaza City. He joined Hamas in the late 1980s and swiftly rose through the ranks to become a close associate of Hamas's founder and spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Haniyeh served several sentences in Israeli prisons. After Hamas's win in the 2006 legislative election, he became the Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority government. However, it was short-lived as the next year he was dismissed from his position by President Mahmoud Abbas in 2007.

Ten years later, in 2017, he was elected the head of Hamas's political wing. The same year, Haniyeh was named a "specially designated global terrorist" by the United States.

## Heavy Military Fortifications Near China's Now-Complete Pangong Lake Bridge



### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

New Delhi : China has completed the construction of a 400-metre bridge, connecting the northern and southern banks of the Pangong Tso. The high-resolution images of this bridge were first published on ndtv.com in January 2022. The new satellite images from July 22, 2024, show vehicles on the black-topped bridge and moving across the banks of Pangong Tso.

New satellite images accessed by show four structures on the northern side of the lake. The bridge lies in territory held by China since 1958 near the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh.

Khurnak Fort lies on the northern shore of Pangong Tso and has been in Chinese-held territory since 1958. Before 1958, the boundary between India and China was considered at the Khurnak Fort but the latter has wrested control since then. The construction at Khurnak does not represent an incursion being presently held by India.

The satellite image accessed by NDTV shows a Chinese fortification along with two helipads at Khurnak Fort. During the 1962 India-China war, the Chinese used the Khurnak Fort as its forward headquarters for operations in Ladakh.

Another satellite image shows an existing artillery site. The Chinese have also built interconnected protected trenches that run north to south.

A satellite image shows an open defensive position, a likely site of a Chinese surface-to-air missile launcher, erector and transporter. An

air defence site can also be seen in the image accessed. A road runs parallel to the bank of Pangong Lake to transport troops and equipment. The Chinese bridge has cut the travel distance between both banks by 50-100 kilometres, or several hours in travel time.

Asked to respond to the latest developments, the External Affairs Ministry directed to a previous statement: "This bridge is being constructed in areas that have been under illegal occupation by China for around 60 years now. As you are well aware India has never accepted such illegal occupation."

Beginning in May 2020, Indian and Chinese soldiers had a series of violent skirmishes along the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh. 20 Indian soldiers were killed in action in the Galwan Valley which lies to the North of the Pangong Lake region being described in this report. China claims four of its soldiers were killed in the fighting though investigative reports have indicated that the true number was closer to 40 dead.

Soldiers from both sides also violently clashed on the North bank of the Pangong Lake though India and China agreed to reduce tensions in the area by creating a demilitarised zone which saw China remove dozens of structures that they had created between "Finger 4" and "Finger 8" - spurs which protrude into the Lake which are used as geographical markers to identify parts of the Northern bank of Pangong.

## USCIS announces second round of H-1B lottery for FY 2025 regular cap

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

New Delhi : The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has announced that it will conduct a second round of H-1B lottery selections for the fiscal year 2025 under its regular annual 65,000 visa limit. The USCIS determined that it would need to select additional registrations for unique beneficiaries to reach the FY 2025 regular cap numerical allocation.

However, the USCIS confirmed that there would be no second selection for the advanced degree exemption, also known as the master's cap. The first round had already met the required numbers for this category.

The H-1B visa cap for FY2025 is set at 65,000 for the regular cap and an additional 20,000 under the master's cap.

"Soon, we will select additional registrations for unique beneficiaries from previously submitted electronic registrations using a random selection process," stated the USCIS.

"We will notify prospective petitioners with selected registrations from this second round of selection that they are eligible to file an H-1B cap-subject petition for the beneficiary named in the applicable selected registration. We will announce when we have completed this second pro-



cess of selections and notifications, the agency added.

The H-1B visa, favoured by Indian professionals, is the main pathway for Indian IT companies to send their software engineers to the United States, with Indians consistently being the largest group of H-1B recipients.

In March, USCIS held a random lottery for the fiscal year 2025 H-1B visas, including those eligible for the advanced degree exemption. Only petitioners with selected registrations can file H-1B cap-subject petitions during the specified filing period noted in their registration selection notice.

The initial filing period for these selected registrations was from April 1 to June 30, 2024.

This second selection process is essential to meet the FY2025 regular cap numerical allocation.

However, USCIS confirmed that there would not be a second selection for the advanced degree exemption, also known as the master's cap, because the first round already met the required numbers for this category.

"We will not be conducting a second selection for the advanced degree exemption (the master's cap), as enough master's cap registrations were already selected and sufficient petitions were received based on those registrations as projected to meet the FY 2025 masters cap numerical allocation," said the immigration authority in the US.

"Registrations that indicated eligibility for the master's cap will be included in the second round for the regular cap," added USCIS.

The H-1B visa is highly sought after by US companies, particularly in the technology sector, for hiring skilled foreign workers. Those with selected registrations will be notified on the myUSCIS online account.

## UK bars Indian-origin lawyer from practicing over conviction in 'sham marriage'

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

London : A 44-year-old man who qualified as a lawyer in India has been struck off from practicing in the UK by the solicitors' watchdog after a tribunal heard of his conviction eight years ago for organising sham marriages for migrants to settle in Europe. Mathew Moghan Rajamohan Chellam faced charges of fraudulent applications by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) and a disciplinary tribunal concluded in its ruling that there was no doubt that he knew or ought to have known that his conduct was in material breach of the obligations to protect the public and the reputation of the legal profession.

In a judgment dated July 5 released recently, the tribunal notes that Chellam has since returned to India and that his current address in India was unknown.

"The Tribunal ordered that the Respondent, Mathew Moghan Rajamohan Chellam, solicitor, be struck off the Roll of Solicitors and it further ordered that he do pay the costs of and incidental to this application and enquiry fixed in the sum of GBP 4,058.00," reads the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal order.

"In assessing culpability, the Tribunal took account of the fact that the Respondent's



motivation for the misconduct was for monetary gain, the fact that the misconduct arose from carefully planned actions including by using sham marriages with a view to abusing applicable laws, and that the circumstances giving rise to the misconduct were under the direct control of the Respondent and concluded that Respondent's level of culpability was extremely high," it notes.

According to the order filed with the UK's Law Society, Chellam was admitted to the UK's Roll of Solicitors in February 2013 through the Qualified Lawyers Transfer

Test (QLTT) route as he was already a Legal Advocate in India. In 2015, he is said to have "self-reported" and confirmed that he had been charged with criminal offences under the UK's immigration legislation and that he was contesting those charges. In September 2016, at Snaresbrook Crown Court in London, he was convicted of assisting unlawful immigration into a European Union (EU) member state, five counts of providing immigration advice and one count of seeking to obtain leave to remain in the UK by deception and was sentenced to a total term of imprisonment of eight years.

As a result, the tribunal concluded that Chellam, who was not represented at its hearing last month, had "caused tremendous harm to the reputation of the legal profession" and his misconduct "constituted various criminal offences". He has now been struck off from practicing as a lawyer in the UK.

## How Russia-Ukraine war crossed into Africa, got 50 Russians butchered

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

New Delhi : Rebel fighters moved across the sand, their boots crushing through a macabre scene of fallen Russians. This was seen in a video which ended with a man begging for his life. This scene is not from the Russia-Ukraine war. It is from a battle where Russians were solely victims. It's from Northern Mali in Africa, where 50 Russian mercenaries were killed.

The Russia-Ukraine war has now crossed over to Africa.

A rebel group fought Russian paramilitaries helping the Malian government in West Africa. Now, reports say that information relayed by Ukraine to the Malian rebel group about the Russian mercenaries got them butchered. The toll of 50 Russians from the Wagner Group is the highest in recent times outside the Russia-Ukraine theatre of war.

What more? The rebels are planning to hand over the 15 captured Russians to Ukraine.

The Russian mercenaries of the Wagner Group were killed as they were with the Malian government troops on patrol last week near a region where only Jihadi and Tuareg rebel groups have been active for a long time, reports CNN.

Mali has been fighting an Islamist insurgency for years now.

Warner Group, is a private Russian paramilitary group active in Africa. It is a part of what Russia now calls the African Corps. They said they had inflicted heavy losses on the fighter rebels. It also played an important role in the Russia-Ukraine war, but its future was questioned after the death of its leader, Yevgeny Prigozhin, who was killed last August.

A Russian helicopter belonging to the Wagner Group was also destroyed in the battle, along with the capture of tankers and trucks. Nikita Fedyanin, the editor and owner of the Grey Zone Wagner Telegram channel, also died in the attack in Mali, reports The Telegraph of the UK. Fedayin had posted pictures as his last message. It had heavily armed Wagner fighters posing near a burning tree.

A Tuareg rebel group and the al-Qaeda affiliate in the Sahel region, JNIM (Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin) has claimed responsibility for initiating the attack against the Russians.

Around 50 Russians and Malian soldiers have died, claims JNIM. It has also released videos showing dozens of dead bodies in the area. A Tuareg militant group spokesperson told CNN how Malian troops and Russian fighters had been taken hostage during the battle.

According to unofficial Russian telegram channels, around 80 Russians were killed. This is the biggest loss for Russian paramilitaries in the region.

Russia has used them to challenge the Western influence in the area and in Central Af-



rica. Behind this ambush was a Ukrainian official who informed the rebels about the Wagner Group's whereabouts in the region.

The Kyiv Post also showed a photo where Malian rebels were seen holding a Russian flag, reports The Guardian.

Andriy Yusov, a representative of Ukraine's Security Service, said on Ukrainian television that "the rebels received necessary information which enabled a successful military operation against Russian war criminals."

"We won't discuss the details at the moment, but there will be more to come," Yusov said. The Russian paramilitary force said that Malian rebels had regrouped. The battle lasted for three days. The rebel groups continued massive attacks, "using heavy weapons, UAVs [drones] and suicide vehicles," said one Telegram account connected to the Wagner group.

"There are three of us left, we continue to fight," was the last message from Russian fighters, according to a Telegram channel. A former commander of the Russian fighters said at least 80 men were killed and 15 were taken hostage.

"They chased them and were drawn into the ambush. The number of enemies greatly exceeded ours. Almost all of our men were killed," said Anastasia Kashevarova, a Wagner supporter and military blogger with 250,000 subscribers, reported The UK Telegraph.

Others have said it was an unequal battle and, as a result of which, Wagner fighters and Malian soldiers died heroically.

In the video, a Tuareg fighter is also seen taunting a half-naked Russian-speaking fighter. A rebel Malian commander offered to send Russian prisoners, including a senior commander, to Ukraine to help its "struggle for justice and freedom", according to The Telegraph report.

The Wagner group and other mercenary groups are used to losses in Syria and the Central African Republic. But beyond Ukraine, Russian mercenaries have suffered almost no setbacks. The prominence in Africa is even more important to Russia since it's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 as in a battle to challenge Western control.

## Indian-origin woman jailed in UK for 10 years after convicted of shoplifting

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

London : An Indian-origin woman was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment by a court in south-west England after she was found guilty of conning retailers and other businesses out of thousands of pounds. Narinder Kaur a.k.a. Nina Tiara, 54, was previously found guilty of 26 counts of fraud, money laundering and perverting the course of justice in March 2023.

Prosecutors said she had shoplifted on an industrial scale and deceived shops into refunding her for items that she had never actually purchased. She was sentenced at Gloucestershire Crown Court for stealing from more than 1,000 shops across the UK. "This sentence today sends out a clear message that West Mercia Police will deal seriously with prolific fraudsters," said Steve Tristram, Fraud Investigator from West Mercia Police's Economic Crime Unit.

"Kaur is a calculated individual who committed offences across the country, dishonestly claiming refunds on items she had stolen. She showed no remorse for her actions and even thought she would get away with submitting false documents to the court with the intention of perverting the course of justice," he said.

The police force took ownership of the investigation into Kaur in 2018 and worked



with the UK's National Business Crime Solution, an organisation representing retailers, and other police forces as a "multi-agency approach".

"We were able to investigate further into her criminal activity and found fraudulent activity in her bank accounts which subsequently brought her to justice," added Tristram.

Kaur was found to have travelled extensively across the country to steal from well-known high street stores and then dishonestly claimed refunds on those items.

Between July 2015 and September 2019, it is estimated Kaur netted around GBP 2,000 worth of refunds per week, equating to over half a million pounds in fraudulent refunds and stolen goods.

Knowing that she was under investigation for these offences, she is then said to have embarked upon a scheme to defraud other businesses using the dishonestly obtained credit card details of members of the public.

In March 2023, she was convicted of fraud, possessing and transferring criminal property and perverting the course of justice at Gloucester Crown Court.

At the time, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) West Midlands said that working with the police it was able to use financial data, retail records, witness evidence and CCTV which proved Kaur's pattern of offending.

She was seen on CCTV entering stores, taking items from the shelves and taking them to the tills as if they had been previously purchased. Close examination of her accounts confirmed the pattern of purchases and refunds and that the same process seen on the CCTV was being repeated on hundreds of occasions.

## Death toll in Wayanad landslides reaches 156. rescue ops on war footing



### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**New Delhi :** At least 156 people have been killed, and over 180 were injured after massive landslides struck the hilly areas near Meppadi in Wayanad. According to government data, over 100 people are feared to be trapped under debris as multiple agencies and the Army race against time to save as many lives as possible.

Three landslides struck Wayanad within a span of four hours amid heavy rain, leaving a trail of destruction in Mundakkai, Chooralmala, Attamala, and Noolpuzha villages. Several people were swept away in the Chaliyar river.

In Wayanad, 45 relief camps have been established, accommodating 3,069 people. Visuals and videos on social media showed uprooted trees and damaged houses dotting the district, known for its picturesque locales and tea estates.

Wayanad district authorities have started collecting data to determine the number of people missing. The data on those missing is being collected by reviewing ration card details and other government documents.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who has declared a two-day state mourning, will chair a meeting with senior officials and ministers stationed in Wayanad to review the progress of rescue operations.

Units of the Army, NDRF, SDRF and other emergency services personnel resumed operations on Day 2 and are searching under collapsed roofs and debris of destroyed houses for victims

and possible survivors.

A total of 225 Army personnel have been deployed for rescue operations. Several companies of the Army have also been moved from Thiruvananthapuram and Bengaluru to Calicut.

The Army rescued over 1,000 people using a temporary structure after a major bridge connecting Chooralmala and Mundakkai villages in the district was washed away due to heavy rain.

An NDRF personnel was saying that there were chances of another landslide as heavy rainfall continued in the district. Helpline numbers 9656938689 and 8086010833 have been issued.

Meanwhile, Kerala Health Minister Veena George's car met with a minor accident while she was on her way to Wayanad. George was taken to Manjeri Medical College in Malappuram for first aid.

The weather department has predicted more rain for Wayanad and several other districts over the next couple of days. A red alert for heavy rain has been issued for Idukki, Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasargod districts.

Meanwhile, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi, who were scheduled to visit Wayanad today, cancelled their plan after authorities informed them that they would not be able to land due to incessant rain.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin has announced assistance of Rs 5 crore to the Kerala government. The Prime Minister's Office has announced a compensation of Rs 2 lakh for the families of the deceased.

## Congress moves motion against PM for backing Anurag Thakur's 'caste' remark

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**New Delhi :** Congress MP Charanjit Singh Channi moved a Privilege Motion against Prime Minister Narendra Modi for tweeting the expunged portions of BJP MP Anurag Thakur's caste remarks against Rahul Gandhi in Parliament.

In his complaint to the Lok Sabha secretary general, Channi said there were "many objectionable remarks" made by the BJP MP in Lok Sabha. Some of the remarks were later expunged from the records by Congress MP Jagdambika Pal, who was in the Chair during the proceedings.

However, the Prime Minister posted the entire speech on X, and said it was a "must hear" and a "perfect mix of facts and humour, exposing the dirty politics of the INDI Alliance".

The Congress was quick to hit out at the Prime Minister, accusing him of encouraging a "serious breach of parliamentary privilege" by sharing the speech.



Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said Anurag Thakur's speech was a "highly abusive and unconstitutional tirade".

During a discussion on the Union Budget on Tuesday, Anurag Thakur's apparent reference to Rahul Gandhi's caste triggered protests from the opposition.

"The one whose caste is not known is talking about the census," Thakur had said without naming anyone.

At this, Rahul Gandhi accused the former Union Minister of insulting and abusing him but asserted that he would not seek any apology from him.

"You can insult me as much as you want, but you should not forget that we will get the caste census bill passed in Parliament," Gandhi said, interrupting Thakur's speech.

The issue also created ripples on Wednesday as the Lok Sabha witnessed uproarious scenes, with Opposition members seeking an apology from Thakur over his remarks. Several Congress, DMK, Samajwadi Party and Shiv Sena (UBT) MPs trooped into the well of the House and raised slogans against Thakur, prompting adjournments.

## Puja Khedkar's candidature cancelled by UPSC, barred from future exams

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**New Delhi :** The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) today cancelled the provisional candidature of controversial trainee IAS officer Puja Khedkar and barred her permanently from appearing in all future exams conducted by the commission, officials said.

Puja Khedkar is accused of misusing the disability and Other Backward Class (non-creamy layer) quotas to secure her candidature in the civil services exam.

The announcement by UPSC comes after a detailed review of Puja Khedkar's eligibility and the circumstances surrounding her application. The commission found her guilty of violating the rules of Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2022.

"UPSC has examined the available records carefully and found her guilty of acting in contravention of the provisions of the CSE-2022 Rules. Her provisional candidature for the CSE-2022 has been cancelled and she has also been debarred permanently from all the future Examinations/Selections of the UPSC," an official statement by UPSC read.

The UPSC panel, in its statement, also highlighted that a Show Cause Notice (SCN) was issued to Puja Khedkar on July 18 for fraudulently availing attempts beyond the permissible limit provided for in the exam-



ination rules by "faking her identity".

However, the deadline was later extended by July 30 and the commission made it clear that it was the "final opportunity" and "no further extension in time" would be allowed. "Despite the extension in time allowed to her, she failed to submit her explanation within the prescribed time," the panel said.

Puja Khedkar was booked by the Delhi Police Crime Branch for misusing the disability and Other Backward Class (non-creamy layer) quotas to secure her candidature in the civil services exam.

A team led by the Assistant Commission-

er of Police (ACP) level of the Crime Branch was tasked to collect the documents from various government departments.

A case under section 420 (cheating), 464 (making a document in the name of a fictitious person), 465 (forgery) and 471 (passing off a forged document as genuine) of IPC and under sections 89 and 91 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act and 66D of the Information Technol-

ogy Act was registered against her. The 2023-batch IAS officer, previously serving as a probationary assistant collector at the Pune district collectorate, was transferred to Washim from Pune earlier this month amid allegations that she misrepresented herself under the physical disabilities category.

During her tenure in Pune, Puja Khedkar allegedly misused her power and privileges by demanding perks and facilities she was not entitled to. Even her mother, Manorama Khedkar, is currently in judicial custody in a criminal case linked to a land dispute.

## The UPSC coaching 'tazurba'. IAS aspirants are fighting to change

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**New Delhi :** "Kyon darein zindagi mein kya hoga, kuch nahi hoga toh tazurba hoga," read a poster quoting Javed Akhtar held by a protesting IAS aspirant in Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar.

However, the "tazurba" or "experience" that civil service aspirants got recently wasn't what they had bargained for.

Three civil service aspirants were killed due to flooding of an illegal basement library of Rao's IAS in Old Rajinder Nagar. The deaths and burial of dreams prompted anguished students to pour out in large numbers into north Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar, another prominent UPSC-coaching hub.

Students took out a candlelight protest and demanded justice for the victims of Old Rajinder Nagar. Soon more joined in. Students in Mukherjee Nagar marched and raised slogans in solidarity, demanding action against coaching centres, landlords, and officials responsible for letting the illegal basements function. These facilities are used by thousands of young people at exorbitant rates daily.

Later, hundreds of IAS aspirants gathered on the main road near Batra Cinema and marched to the Drishti IAS coaching centre. They then staged a sit-in protest in front of the residence of Vikas Divyakirti, the owner of Drishti IAS and prominent UPSC mentor. The protesters demanded that Vikas Divyakirti come out, speak to them, and show his support for the cause. The sight of the Javed Akhtar quote, "Why fear what will happen in life? If nothing works out, you'll gain experience," which Vikas Divyakirti famously referenced in a motivational reel, served as a poignant reminder for many.

Although the protests in Mukherjee Nagar did not see any violence, many on social media, including UPSC mentor Shekhar Dutt, flagged how "we dissipate our energies on immaterial concerns by targeting a famous teacher".

"Unreal targeting of Vikas Divyakirti sir," the Chandigarh-based educator wrote on X. However, on the flip side, for the aspirants taking to the streets, the UPSC preparation journey seemed to have left them with little but "experiences", mostly challenging ones.

That morning (29th July), the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) in Mukherjee Nagar had sealed a facility belonging to Drishti IAS for violating safety norms. A day later, reacting to the developments that unfolded after the three deaths on Sat-



urday, Drishti IAS chief Vikas Divyakirti, said that the problem is "more complicated than it appears".

Former civil servant Vikas Divyakirti also expressed his condolences to the families of the three victims of the basement tragedy.

"The anger among students is completely valid. It would be good if this anger is channelised in the right direction and the government lays down guidelines for coaching centres. We are ready to assist the government in this regard," said the 12th Fail-fame mentor in a press release on July 30.

In the meantime, the Union Home Ministry on Monday constituted a committee to enquire into the deaths of three aspirants to fix responsibility, and suggesting measures and recommending policy changes to avoid such incidents in the future.

The committee, which would comprise the Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Principal Secretary (Home), Delhi Government, Special CP, Delhi Police, Fire Advisor and Joint Secretary, has been asked to submit its report within 30 days.

Although the central committee is being seen as a timely intervention intended to extend a healing touch, protesting aspirants have flagged some issues with it for not accounting in their views. They requested a more comprehensive solution to curb the menace faced by students in the UPSC coaching hubs.

Given the committee is mandated to 'enquire into the deaths' and 'suggest measures and recommend policy changes to avoid such incidents in the future', Old Rajinder Nagar-based activist Porshiya, who has been participating in the protests since Saturday, says, "It is not fair unless the students are part of the decision-making".

"They should invite at least five aspirants to listen to our problems that we go through daily," she adds.

## Goods train wagon derails in New Jalpaiguri

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**Kolkata :** A wagon of a goods train derailed near Rangapani station in West Bengal's New Jalpaiguri Rail Division today, a senior official said.

There was no report of any injury or fatality, the North-East Frontier Railway (NFR) official said.

The empty petroleum wagon, which was part of the goods train, was headed for Rangapani siding when it jumped the tracks at 11:45 am, NFR CPRO Sabyasachi De.

He said there was no disruption in railway traffic movement in the region.



Railway personnel cleared the tracks by promptly hauling the derailed wagon, De said.

The spot is not far from the site where three coaches of

Sealdah-bound Kanchanjunga Express had derailed on June 17 as a goods train collided with it, claiming 10 lives.

## Flight ops to Leh airport disrupted due to high temperature

### THE AMAN SANDESH TIMES

**New Delhi :** High temperature at high altitude is disrupting flight operations to and from Leh, located at nearly 10,700 feet above the mean sea level.

Domestic airlines operate A320 and B737 planes to the Leh airport and some carriers have been cancelling their scheduled flights in recent days due to high temperatures, according to industry officials.

Details about the number of Leh flights cancelled could not be ascertained. "IndiGo flight operations to and from Leh have been impacted due to the prevailing high outside air temperature in Leh, which is beyond the airline's control," an airline spokesperson said in a statement.

The maximum temperature at which an A320 Neo aircraft can operate is 33 degrees Celsius. If the temperature crosses that level, then the plane cannot be operated at that elevation, a senior Airbus pilot said.



For Boeing 737 planes, the maximum temperature for operation at the Leh airport is 32 degrees Celsius, according to a SpiceJet official.

The pilot said the maximum temperatures are decided after taking into account various operational parameters, including the elevation of an airport and obstacles around it.

The Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport in Leh is at an altitude of 10,682

feet above the mean sea level.

Pilots are provided special training for operating flights to this airport, which is one of the highest commercial airports in the world.

In recent weeks, the temperature in the Leh area has been mostly high and above 30-degree Celsius, a situation that has resulted in the cancellation of some

flights. IndiGo, Air India, SpiceJet and Vistara have services to Leh.

Aviation industry officials said that high temperatures have been causing operational issues, including those related to payload of an aircraft.

At high altitudes like in Leh, the air has less density and combined with high temperature, it becomes difficult for an aircraft to take off, the officials said.