

## Trump, **Tariff**, Tyranny

### US President Donald Trump slaps 50 per cent tariffs on India

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
WASHINGTON, AUGUST 6

**D**ONALD TRUMP, the president of the United States, said on Wednesday that India would have to pay an extra 25 per cent trade tax on top of the 25 pc tax it already had to pay. This has brought the total tax to 50 pc.

Trump signed an Executive Order on Wednesday that added a 25 pc tariff on commerce with South Asia. This was in response to the country's continued purchase of Russian oil. On Wednesday, Trump signed a nine-part order that went into the depth of a number of things, such as the backdrop, the tariffs, the scope of levies and stacking, and more.

"To deal with the national emergency described in Executive Order 14066, I determine that it is necessary and appropriate to impose an additional ad valorem duty on imports of articles of India, which is directly or indirectly importing Russian Federation oil," the order read.

Expanding further on the background, Trump spoke about various legislations in effect in the US restricting the import of Russian goods, including energy and oil, for waging a war against Ukraine, and adversely affecting America's foreign policy.

The development comes a day after Trump threatened to raise duties on India for buying oil from Russia, saying it would happen in the next '24 hours'.

### INDIA STANDS ITS GROUND

**NEW DELHI:** The United States has in recent days targeted India's oil imports from Russia. We have already made clear our position on these issues, including the fact that our imports are based on market factors and done with the overall objective of ensuring the energy security of 1.4 billion people of India. It is therefore extremely unfortunate that the US should choose to impose additional tariffs on India for actions that several other countries are also taking in their own national interest. We reiterate that these actions are unfair, unjustified and unreasonable. India will take all actions necessary to protect its national interests.

Stressing that he found that India was directly or indirectly importing Russian oil, the order said Indian imports into the US should be subject to the additional tariff 21 days after the date of the latest order. Goods that were already in transit on the final mode of transit prior to entry



A file photo of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump.

into the US have been exempted from the deadline.

In its official statement, the Ministry

of External Affairs has called the additional tariffs and targeting of New Delhi 'unfair, unjustified and unreasonable'.

## NO DEBATE ON BIHAR SIR, MATTER IN SC: RIJITU

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

THE CENTRE on Wednesday declined the Opposition's persistent demand to initiate a debate on the revision of electoral rolls in Bihar, with Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijitu stating that the matter is currently sub judice before the Supreme Court and therefore cannot be discussed in Parliament.

Resuming proceedings at 2 pm after repeated adjournments earlier in the day, the Lok Sabha was again disrupted by Opposition MPs demanding a detailed discussion on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls being conducted by the Election Commission in the poll-bound state.

Rijitu, addressing the House, pointed to Constitutional provisions and rules of procedure that explicitly prohibit the discussion of matters under judicial consideration.

"The government has been very open to taking up discussion on any matter. However, any discussion in the Parliament has to be in accordance with Constitutional provisions and also in accordance with the rules as prescribed in the procedure and conduct of business in the Lok Sabha," he said.

Referring to the Opposition's protests, Rijitu said, "On the issue of intensive revision of electoral rolls in Bihar for which they are disturbing the House from the first day of the session, we all know that the matter is under consideration of the Supreme Court and as such it is sub judice and hence a discussion cannot be held on the subject."

## To strengthen ties, Doval in Moscow

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

NATIONAL SECURITY Adviser Ajit Doval is in Moscow for a visit focused on strengthening India's defense and energy ties with Russia. Notably, US president Donald Trump has been criticising India for buying Russian oil and also remaining neutral on the conflict in Ukraine.

The purpose of the visit, according to a TASS report, was to strengthen defense cooperation between the two countries and was part of a prearranged schedule. A source cited, "The current escalation of the geopolitical situation will also be discussed. Apart from that the topics will



include such pressing matters, such as supplies of Russian oil to India."

Earlier, India's Ministry of External Affairs released a statement rejecting the criticism from the US and EU regarding

its imports of Russian oil, calling it 'unjustified'. The ministry pointed out that Western countries had previously supported such trade to help stabilise global energy markets and continue to engage in trade with Russia themselves.

During his time in Moscow, Doval is expected to hold discussions on defense industry cooperation. These talks may cover the potential purchase of additional S-400 missile systems, the establishment of maintenance infrastructure in India and the exploration of options for acquiring Russia's Su-57 fighter jets. The visit is widely viewed as part of India's commitment to its independent foreign policy, which prioritises national interests and maintaining its partnerships.

Adding to the high-level engagement, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is also scheduled to visit Russia on August 27 and 28. His visit will focus on defense, energy and trade discussions. Jaishankar is slated to meet Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to discuss bilateral and international issues.

He will also co-chair the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Technical and Economic Cooperation with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Borisov.

The Ministry of External Affairs has emphasised that India's relationship with Russia is based on a foundation of mutual understanding and should not be subject to judgement by other countries.

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## Uttarakhand flash flood: Two more bodies found

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
UTTARKASHI, AUGUST 6

RESCUE EFFORTS are underway in Dharali village of Uttarkashi district after Tuesday's devastating flash floods swept away homes and vehicles, leaving many people missing. On Wednesday, two more bodies were found and as many as 150 people have been rescued so far. However, search teams are facing major challenges due to continuous rain and blocked roads. Officials say 60 people are still missing.

One of the bodies has been identified as that of 35-year-old Akash Panwar, according to the Disaster Control Room in Uttarkashi. The disaster was caused by a cloudburst on Tuesday afternoon. The sudden downpour brought massive



Rescue operations in flood-hit areas were affected after a portion of a road collapsed near Bhatwari in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand on Wednesday.

amounts of mud, debris and water, burying nearly half of Dharali village.

Among the people missing are 11 Army personnel from the Harsil camp and a group of 28 tourists. Most of the tourists are from Kerala and Maharashtra. The group was on a 10-day tour of Uttarakhand, arranged by a Haridwar-based travel agency. Family members said they have not been able to contact them since Tuesday, most likely due to poor mobile network and dead phone batteries in the affected area.

The Uttarakhand State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) confirmed that 51 tourists from Maharashtra, who were stranded in the area, were safe. Eleven of them are from Nanded and the rest are from other districts.

Over 100 personnel from the ITBP, BRO, and SDRF are already working on the ground. Colonel Harshvardhan, Commanding Officer of the 14 Rajputana Rifles, is leading a 150-member Army relief team. Despite their own camp being hit and some of their soldiers still missing, they are pushing ahead with courage and determination, according to Defence Spokesperson Lt Col Manish Shrivastava.

A bridge over the Limaccha River near Gangnani on the Gangotri highway has been washed away, making things harder. More than 200 rescue workers are stuck at Bhatwari, waiting for the route to open.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Wednesday and assured full support.



Women in uniform battle permanent commission bias in SC

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

THE SUPREME Court on Wednesday commenced hearings in a batch of over 75 petitions filed by women Army officers of the Short Service Commission (SSC), who have alleged discrimination in being denied permanent commissions (PC) despite a binding 2020 apex court ruling in their favour.

A three-judge bench comprising Justices Surya Kant, Ujjal Bhuyan and N Kotiswar Singh heard arguments from both serving and retired officers, who contended that systemic bias against women continues to pervade decision-making in the armed forces.

Senior advocates Huzefa Ahmadi, Menaka Guruswamy, V Mohana and others, appearing on behalf of the petitioners, argued that the denial of permanent commission stemmed from unfair assessment practices, including the “casual grading” of annual confidential reports (ACRs) and denial of postings and opportunities available to male counterparts.

“There has been consistent discrimination in not granting permanent commission,” counsel for the officers said, urging the court to enforce transparency and accountability in evaluations. Guruswamy, appearing for Colonel Geeta Sharma, referred to the exemplary service of Colonel Sofia Qureshi, who was among the few women officers to brief the media on Operation Sindoor in May.

The bench, while hearing the grievances, indicated the need to evolve uniform guidelines for the grant of PC but also acknowledged that factors such as specialised training must be considered. “What, according to you, should be the basis for assessing permanent commission?” the bench asked the petitioners.

The court clarified that following the Army cases, it would proceed to hear similar petitions filed by women officers in the Navy and the Air Force, many of whom have alleged denial of PC on similar grounds.

The hearing remained inconclusive and is set to resume on August 7. Interim orders previously passed—restraining the Union Government from releasing the women officers until the matter is resolved—will remain in force.

During an earlier hearing on May 9, the court had directed the Centre not to release from service any SSC woman officer who was challenging the denial of permanent commission. “Do not bring their morale down in the prevailing situation,” the bench had cautioned.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, representing the Centre, submitted that the decisions were administrative in nature and aligned with a policy aimed at keeping the armed forces “young.”

The petitioners have placed strong reliance on the Supreme Court’s landmark judgement of February 17, 2020, which had ruled that blanket exclusion of women from command and other critical roles was “indefensible” and legally unsustainable.

PM Modi to attend SCO summit in China

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi will travel to Tianjin, China, from August 31 to September 1, to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, marking his first visit to the country since the Galwan Valley clash in 2020. His last trip to China was in 2019.

Before the SCO summit, Modi will visit Japan on August 30 for the annual India-Japan Summit with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. From Tokyo, he will head to China, according to sources.

The visit comes at a time when US President Donald Trump has intensified criticism of the BRICS nations for purchasing oil from Russia and for what he claims is their challenge to the dominance of the US dollar.

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the US tariff war, which saw duties rise to triple digits, the Trump administration has rolled back most tariffs to 30 per cent amid ongoing negotiations. At the same time, Trump has targeted India over its trade with Russia, imposing a 25 per cent tariff and threatening further measures.

In the lead-up to Modi’s trip, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and National

Security Advisor Ajit Doval visited China for SCO-related meetings, followed by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar’s trip to Beijing, where he met Chinese President Xi Jinping.

In June, Singh attended the SCO Defence Ministers’ meeting in Qingdao, China, where he declined to sign a document that, according to sources, would have weakened India’s position on terrorism and the Pahalgam terror attack, which killed 26 people.

Due to differences over the issue, the SCO did not release a joint statement.

Sources said China, which currently holds the SCO chair, and its ally Pakistan sought to divert the focus from terrorism in the draft document, omitting mention of the Pahalgam attack.

Instead, the document referred to Balochistan — a move seen by India as a veiled attempt to accuse it of fomenting unrest in the Pakistani province.

Kartavya Bhavan set to replace ageing govt buildings

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Wednesday inaugurated Kartavya Bhavan at Kartavya Path in New Delhi. He was joined by Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Manohar Lal Khattar, as he inspected the new facility.

Kartavya Bhavan-03 is the first of several upcoming Common Central Secretariat buildings that are part of the broader Central Vista redevelopment project. These new buildings are intended to improve inter-ministerial coordination, expedite administrative procedures, and create a more effective and responsive governance ecosystem, according to a press release from the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO).

Many important ministries now function out of antiquated and ineffective structures, including Udyog Bhawan, Krishi Bhawan, and Shastri Bhawan, which were constructed between the 1950s and 1970s. It is anticipated that the new, contemporary facilities will improve overall service delivery, increase productivity, lower repair and maintenance costs, and improve employee well-being.

By uniting numerous ministries and departments that are currently dispersed throughout Delhi, Kartavya Bhavan-03 is intended to promote efficiency and cooperation. The office complex spans approximately 1.5 lakh square meters over two basements and seven levels (ground plus six floors). It will house the offices of the Ministries of Home Affairs, External Affairs, Rural Development, MSME, Petroleum & Natural Gas, DoPT, and the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA).



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs Manohar Lal Khattar and Union MoS for Housing and Urban Affairs Tokhan Sahu during the inauguration of Kartavya Bhavan-3 in New Delhi on Wednesday.

The new building is an example of modern governance infrastructure. It features IT-ready and secure workspaces, ID card-based access controls, integrated electronic surveillance, and a centralised command system. It is also designed with a strong focus on sustainability, with the goal of achieving a GRIHA-4 rating. Rainwater harvesting, solar water heating, double-glazed facades, sophisticated HVAC systems, and rooftop solar panels are some of the key features.

Since the campus is zero-discharge, a large amount of its water requirements are satisfied by treating and reusing its wastewater. By utilising recycled construction and demolition waste in its paving blocks and masonry, as well as lightweight dry

partitions to lessen structural load, it also encourages environmental consciousness. An in-house solid waste management system and charging stations for electric vehicles are also included.

Kartavya Bhavan-03 is designed to be 30 per cent more energy-efficient than older buildings. It uses special glass windows to maintain a cool indoor temperature and reduce outside noise. LED lighting, motion sensors that switch off lights when a room is empty, and power-saving smart lifts are examples of energy-saving features. More than a quarter of the building’s daily hot water needs will be met by solar water heaters, and the rooftop solar panels are anticipated to produce more than 5.34 lakh units of electricity annually.

BIHAR SIR: SC SEEKS EC REPLY ON DELETION OF NAMES

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

AT A TIME when political controversy surrounding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar is at its peak, a petition has been filed before the Supreme Court seeking directions to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to disclose details of the 65 lakh names recently removed from the state’s electoral roll, published on August 1.

The matter was mentioned on Wednesday morning before a Bench comprising Justices Surya Kant, Ujjal Bhuyan and NK Singh by Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). The Court has sought a response from the ECI.

“Draft roll says 65 lakh names have been omitted. But no list of those 65 lakh names has been given. It says 32 lakh migrated, but no other details. They should disclose who the 65 lakh are, who have migrated, and who are dead. Apparently, the BLOs have recommended whether a person be removed or not... they have published that for two constituencies... but what about other areas? We seek disclosure in these two IAs,” Bhushan submitted.

Justice Kant observed that, as per the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) followed by the ECI, representatives of political parties are to be provided with such information. The ECI, in response, said it would demonstrate that this information had been shared with the parties concerned. The Court then directed the ECI to place this on record.

“Give a list of political parties who were supplied with it. We will hear the case on August 12. File your reply by then,” Justice Kant told the ECI’s counsel.

Bhushan further argued, “The majority of those whose forms have been received have not submitted any of these forms.” “We will see that every voter likely to be affected gets the required information,” Justice Kant assured.

Addressing the ECI’s counsel, the Court added, “File a reply by Saturday and let Mr Bhushan look at it. Then we can see what is disclosed and what is not disclosed.”

In its application, ADR referred to the ECI’s press release dated July 25, in which the Commission stated that approximately 65 lakh voters had been removed from the electoral roll. According to the ECI, this was based on reports from Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and Booth Level Agents (BLAs), which found that 22 lakh individuals on the previous list were deceased, 7 lakh were registered in multiple locations, and approximately 35 lakh had either migrated or were untraceable. The Commission also noted that enumeration forms for 1.2 lakh voters were yet to be received.

Ellora Caves wall paintings face seepage threat

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
MUMBAI, AUGUST 6

WATER SEEPAGE at Ellora’s Cave 32 has sparked concern over the preservation of its rare ninth-century frescoes. Officials from the Archaeological Survey of India have acknowledged the issue and called for urgent conservation measures.

The Ellora caves, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located approximately 30 kilometres from Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar, house rock-cut monuments representing Buddhist, Hindu and Jain traditions. Cave 32 belongs to the



Jain group and is among the few at Ellora that contain ancient paintings.

“The seepage has developed naturally,” a local ASI official said. “We have written to the conservation section earlier to address this issue. A review will be conducted.” The official further noted that a previous inspection failed to locate the exact source of the seepage, citing the extensive spread of the area.

A tourist guide who visited the site recently said minor repairs had been carried out last year when the issue first surfaced. “But more work is needed to stop the seepage as it can damage the

paintings,” he added.

Heritage experts are equally alarmed. Swapnil Joshi, co-convenor of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), underscored the urgency. “Ellora is different from Ajanta caves. In Ellora, there are very few caves with such paintings... We have written to the ASI earlier. If water is still coming down, it has to be dealt with at the earliest.”

While ASI has not issued a formal statement regarding the timeline for repair, conservationists and local guides insist that any delay could further threaten the fragile artwork.



# Mamata hits out at Centre, ECI: I'll kill you like ants

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
KOLKATA, AUGUST 6

IGNITING A political firestorm during her visit to south Bengal's Jhargram district on Wednesday, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched a blistering attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party-led central government and the Election Commission of India (ECI), while invoking her combative political past to rally support ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections.

Addressing a public gathering, the Mamata declared in a defiant tone, "I survived the bullets of the CPM. If I could survive those, I will kill you like ants!"—accompanied by a dramatic gesture of crushing an ant between her fingers. The remark triggered criticism from opposition quarters, who slammed the language as unbecoming of a democratic leader.

Speaking from the soil of Jangalmahal, once marred by Maoist violence and political bloodshed, Mamata recalled the volatile days of her early political resistance. "This land once reeked of gunpowder. I have faced CPM guns. They tried to

blow me to pieces. But I stood my ground," she said, projecting herself once again as the 'fighter Mamata'—a theme that political observers suggest is central to Trinamool Congress' campaign strategy for the upcoming polls.

Mamata's ire was also directed at the ECI, which recently suspended two Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and two assistant EROs from Baruipur East and Maina constituencies over alleged voter list manipulation. A criminal case was also ordered against a data entry operator.

The Chief Minister did not mince words: "Elections are still eight months away, and you're already threatening officers? With whose power are you doing this? Are you Amit Shah's broker?"

Rallying support for the state's administrative machinery, she declared, "There is nothing to fear. It's our responsibility to protect the officers and employees. These spring cuckoos will vanish after two months. We are permanent."

The speech also saw Mamata leaning heavily into Bengali linguistic and cultural pride, accusing the Centre and the BJP of disrespecting the Bengali language. She



had led a protest in Kolkata last month and later took her campaign to districts, denouncing what she described as systematic "insults and harassment" of Bengalis and the Bengali language in other states.

Dismissing the Election Commission's neutrality, Mamata accused it of working hand-in-glove with the BJP. "If they try to cut Bengali names from the voter list, I will go around the world and expose them. A wounded tiger is more dangerous than a live tiger—don't provoke me!" she warned.

She further added, "I have tolerated

enough. But now if you try to erase the voices of Bengal, we will not sit quietly. We will rise up and resist."

During her two-day Jhargram visit, Mamata is also scheduled to meet with tribal organisations and local leaders. On Thursday, she will inaugurate the World Tribal Day celebrations at Jhargram Stadium, where several government schemes and development initiatives are expected to be announced.

Reacting sharply to Mamata's speech, Union Minister and senior BJP leader Sukanta Majumdar accused her of political desperation. "Threatening to kill like ants? This isn't rhetoric—it's delusion," he said, suggesting that Mamata's aggression stems from her growing insecurity ahead of the polls.

With more than a year left for the elections, Bengal's political battleground is already ablaze. Mamata's confrontational tone — against both Delhi and constitutional institutions — signals a no-holds-barred electoral campaign, one where identity, resistance and administrative power are likely to be at the centre of a high-voltage narrative war.

## SC orders states to reserve private school quota for orphans

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

IN A key order, the Supreme Court on Wednesday directed State governments to issue notifications allowing orphaned children to receive free education in private schools under the 25 per cent quota for children of weaker sections and disadvantaged groups.

A Bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and KV Viswanathan noted that States like Meghalaya, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, and Delhi have already issued notifications in this regard. Therefore, it ordered other States to do the same within four weeks.

"Delhi, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat... have already issued notifications to include orphans within the definition of Section 12(1)(c) of the RTE Act; other States shall also issue the same notification. Such exercise shall be completed within four weeks," the Court ordered.

Further, the Bench directed the States to undertake a survey of orphaned children who have been granted admissions to schools and those who have been rejected. The survey must record the reasons for denial of admission, the Court stressed.



# TRAI issues alert on scam calls by fake officials

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

THE TELECOM Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), the regulator of the telecommunications sector in India, has cautioned citizens against a surge in cyber frauds and financial scams carried out using forged identities, fake documents, and impersonation of TRAI officials.

Issuing a formal advisory, TRAI warned the public that several individuals have reported being targeted through fraudulent calls, deceptive messages, and counterfeit letterheads falsely bearing the regulator's name. These attempts, it said, are neither authorised by nor associated with TRAI.

A particularly worrying pattern cited in the advisory is the rise of the so-called "digital arrest" scam, wherein victims are falsely accused of telecom or financial violations. Impersonators, posing as TRAI or law enforcement officials, then issue threats of arrest or bank account suspension unless immediate payments are made.

"TRAI reiterated that it does not initiate communication with customers regarding mobile number disconnection through messages or otherwise," the advisory noted. "TRAI has also not autho-

rised any third-party agency to contact customers for such purposes."

The regulator clarified that it neither investigates individuals nor requests personal information or banking details. "No regulatory body conducts investigations or collects payments through phone calls, messaging apps, or video platforms," it stressed.

The advisory also highlighted other forms of fraud falsely carried out in TRAI's name—including threats of SIM deactivation, bogus offers of mobile tower rentals, and forged demands for payment under fake documentation.

Citizens have been advised to exercise vigilance by disconnecting suspicious calls, refraining from sharing sensitive information, and verifying any messages through official channels.

TRAI urged the public to report suspected cyber frauds either by dialling 1930 or visiting [www.cybercrime.gov.in](http://www.cybercrime.gov.in) website. Fraudulent numbers may also be reported via the Chakshu facility on Sanchar Saathi or the TRAI DND app.

The Ministry of Communications reiterated the regulator's commitment to public safety and digital integrity, calling on all users to remain alert to attempts at deception and manipulation.

# Air India to fully restore overseas flights by October 1

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

AIR INDIA has begun a phased restoration of its international flight schedule, with full resumption targeted for October 1, Chief Executive Officer Campbell Wilson said on Wednesday.

Speaking on the gradual reinstatement of services from August 1, Wilson said the approach would ensure "every verification is completed thoroughly" before flights resume in full.

"I acknowledge there have been operational challenges over the past few weeks that may have impacted your travel experience. Rest assured, we take this seriously and are committed to strengthening our internal processes to minimise inconvenience," Wilson said.

Five routes will see reinstated ser-

vices or increased frequencies. Key changes include the full restoration of 24 weekly Delhi–London (Heathrow) flights from July 16, Delhi–Zurich rising from four to five flights per week from August 1, and full weekly services on Delhi–Tokyo (Haneda) and Delhi–Seoul (Incheon) to be reinstated in August and September, respectively. Delhi–Amsterdam returned to seven flights per week from August 1.

A new three-times-weekly Ahmedabad–London (Heathrow) service will replace the current five-times-weekly Gatwick flights. Delhi–Nairobi will operate thrice weekly until August 31, before being suspended for September.

Over 15 routes will continue at reduced frequencies until at least the end of September. Bengaluru–London

(Heathrow) has been cut from seven to six flights weekly, further reducing to four from August 1.

Delhi–Paris drops to seven weekly from 12, starting August 1. Delhi–Milan reduces from four to three flights weekly from July 16, while Delhi–Copenhagen remains at three weekly from five. Delhi–Vienna remains at three weekly from four, and Amritsar–Birmingham operates two weekly until August 31 before returning to three. Delhi–Birmingham remains at two weekly.

North American services to Washington, Chicago, San Francisco, Toronto, Vancouver, and New York (JFK and Newark) remain reduced, with frequencies ranging from three to seven flights per week. Delhi–Melbourne and Delhi–Sydney continue at five weekly.

# Stray dogs deserve dignity, not garbage: Delhi High Court

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

THE DELHI High Court has emphasised the urgent need to rehabilitate stray dogs and minimise human-animal conflict, noting that "dogs are the most loved animals of the world" and should be treated with dignity, not left to scavenge on the streets.

Justice Mini Pushkarna, presiding over the matter, expressed concern that neither dogs nor humans were safe in the capital's current environment, and stressed that measures must go beyond sterilisation, which she described as ineffective despite being touted for decades.

"It should be ensured that dogs are protected and have to be given dignity," the court added, calling for compassionate yet practical steps by all stakeholders.

The court observed that dogs should either be kept at home or in shelter, not on the roads "eating garbage". "Humans and dogs both are suffering. Neither humans



are safe, nor dogs. Dogs are loved animals," the judge remarked.

Justice Pushkarna criticised the long-standing sterilisation policy, stating, "Sterilisation isn't working at all. It's not the solution." The comment came after it was suggested in court that sterilising 70 per cent of the stray dog population could address the problem.

The court was further informed that around 200 stray dogs, temporarily sheltered by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), may soon be released back onto the roads as the facility housing them is slated for demolition.

Noting the gravity of the situation, the judge highlighted that many animal birth control (ABC) centres were non-functional and that 78 veterinary hospitals were reportedly not operational in the city.

Describing the lack of progress as symptomatic of broader administrative inaction, the court observed that the only proposal discussed at a recent meeting chaired by the Delhi chief secretary was, again, sterilisation.

Earlier, the High Court had referred the matter to the Delhi chief secretary, noting the "magnanimity of the problem" and calling for coordinated efforts from the Delhi government, MCD, and the Animal Welfare Board of India.

The court reiterated its directive for an institutional-level policy for the rehabilitation of stray dogs and asked the chief secretary to convene a meeting of all stakeholders to frame concrete action steps.

The case has now been posted for hearing on September 17.



# Kanwar Yatra is a symbol of unity and devotion: CM Yogi

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
LUCKNOW, AUGUST 6

UTTAR PRADESH Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday said that attempts to defame the Kanwar Yatra have repeatedly failed due to the vigilance of society and the proactiveness of the administration.

Addressing a public meeting after inaugurating and laying the foundation stones of 545 development projects worth ₹2,264 crore, he also said that the yatra is now a symbol of unity and devotion.

Taking a swipe at the opposition parties, Adityanath accused them of indulging in appeasement politics. "Before 2017, Bareilly used to witness communal riots every third month. Today, it is known for the Nath Corridor and spiritual tourism," he said.

"Now in implementation of any scheme there is no discrimination on basis of caste, religion or area. This is new India which is progressing with the thought of 'sabka saath sabka vikas'," he added.

On the Kanwar Yatra, he said, "Attempts were made to hurt people's sentiments and defame the yatra, but the resolve of an awakened society and effective law and order crushed those



**UP CM Adityanath said, "Attempts were made to hurt people's sentiments and defame the yatra, but the resolve of an awakened society and effective law and order crushed those intentions...."**

intentions. Today, lakhs of devotees perform jalabhishek in Bareilly's Nath Corridor— this is becoming the new identity of the city."

Talking about development works,

Adityanath said, "The double-engine Bharatiya Janata Party government is linking heritage with development. Projects include Nath Corridor, flood protection works, road widening, a Unani medical college, drinking water schemes, and urban infrastructure." He also distributed appointment letters to over 6,000 youths selected through a rozgar mela and provided certificates and tablets to beneficiaries of various welfare schemes.

Adityanath praised the success of the "Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyami Yojana", saying, "Under this scheme, selected youths are provided interest-free and collateral-free loans up to ₹5 lakh. On

timely repayment, loans can be increased to ₹7.5 lakh and then ₹10 lakh." He further said, "Before 2017, government jobs were a free-for-all for political relatives. Chachas and bhatijas used to run recruitment like their private business. In the last eight years, over 8.5 lakh youths have been given jobs in a transparent manner."

Citing recruitment in the police force, he said, "We have completed recruitment of 60,244 police personnel, of which more than 12,000 are women of the state." Adityanath urged elected representatives to publicly honour these selected candidates and their families to inspire others in society.

Claiming that the state is now free from the mafia, he said, "Earlier, every district had its own mafia don. Today, Uttar Pradesh is known for 'One District One Medical College' and 'One District One Product'. We are preserving spiritual heritage while building a modern infrastructure."

Highlighting tourism development, Adityanath said sites like Ramnagar Fort and Akshat Parshvanath Digambar Jain temple will be developed with central government support.

"The double-engine government is working tirelessly to ensure prosperity and happiness in people's lives," he added.



## VANTARA TO ASSIST IN ELEPHANT MAHADEVI'S RETURN TO NANDINI MATH

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
MUMBAI, AUGUST 6

VANTARA WILL support the Maharashtra government's petition to return the Mahadevi elephant, Madhuri, to the Nandani Math in Kolhapur, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said on Wednesday.

In a post on X, Fadnavis said he held detailed discussions with senior Vantara officials in Mumbai, during which they assured him they would join the state's legal effort.

"I held a detailed discussion with senior officials of Vantara Management in Mumbai today. They assured me that Vantara has decided to participate in the petition that the Maharashtra government has resolved to file to safely return the Mahadevi elephant (Madhuri) to the Nandani Math," Fadnavis wrote.

He said Vantara had acted only under the orders of the Supreme Court and had no intention of taking possession of Madhuri. The organisation also expressed its willingness to help set up a rehabilitation centre for the elephant near the Nandani Math, at a location to be decided by the state Forest Department.

Vantara, in an official statement, acknowledged the deep religious and cultural significance Madhuri holds for the Jain Math and the people of Kolhapur. It stressed that its involvement was limited to following binding directions from the Supreme Court and the Bombay High Court, adding that it did not initiate or recommend the relocation.

The statement noted that Madhuri has been an integral part of spiritual practices and community life for decades, and the sanctuary respected the sentiments of the devotees and the Math leadership.

"In alignment with our commitment to lawful conduct, responsible animal care, and community cooperation, Vantara will extend full support to any application filed by the Jain Math and the Government of Maharashtra before the Hon'ble Court requesting Madhuri's return to Kolhapur," the organisation said.

It pledged to provide complete technical and veterinary assistance for Madhuri's safe and dignified return, subject to court approval. It will also work with the state government and Jain Math to establish a satellite rehabilitation centre in the Nandani area, built according to animal welfare guidelines and international best practices in elephant care.

The proposed facility's location will be chosen in consultation with the Guru of the Jain Math and the Maharashtra government. Vantara said its team was ready to begin implementation once the necessary grants and permissions were secured.



## Ganga, Sone rivers flood homes in Patna locality

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
PATNA, AUGUST 6

HEAVY RAINFALL has caused the Ganga and Sone rivers to overflow, flooding residential areas and submerging roads in the Danapur area of Patna, Bihar. The rising waters have brought daily life to a standstill, with severe waterlogging preventing movement in the affected neighbourhoods.

The Danapur administration is closely monitoring the situation while carrying out relief and rescue operations. Subdivision Officer Divya Shakti told ANI that boats had been arranged to evacuate residents from inundated homes.

"We are monitoring the rising water level, and we have prepared the basic facilities in all the relief centres. Boats have been arranged for people who wish to leave their homes," Divya Shakti said. "Gandhi Park in Maner has been marked for cattle, and fodder is also being provided. There is no report yet of water entering the villages. We are in contact with the local public representatives of Danapur," she added.

In neighbouring Uttar Pradesh, parts of Varanasi have also flooded due to the rising level of the Ganga. Residents reported that drain water had entered their localities, raising concerns about diseases such as dengue.

"This is drain water, not water from the River Ganga. This causes dengue. We face a lot of difficulties. First, transportation was shut down, and then several diseases followed. We want these issues resolved as soon as possible," said resident Mandakini Prakash.

# Ex-UP minister Swami Prasad Maurya slapped near Rae Bareli

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
RAE BARELI, AUGUST 6

FORMER UTTAR Pradesh cabinet minister Swami Prasad Maurya, en route to Fatehpur on Wednesday, was slapped allegedly by a Karni Sena worker. The incident took place at Saras Crossing, where the Lok Morcha chief had stopped for a brief welcome event organised by local supporters.

According to police, an individual slapped him from behind while pretending to be waiting to garland him. His supporters immediately caught him and gave him a beating. Circle Officer (Sadar) Amit Singh told said that two people have been taken into custody in connection with the matter.

"In the crowd of the supporters, there were two people who held garlands in their hands and misbehaved with him," Singh said, adding, the two are being questioned.

Meanwhile, a video purported to be of the attack went viral on social media.

Maurya later said the act revealed the



kind of patronage Karni Sena gets from those in power.

"The goons of this organisation are wreaking havoc on law and order in the state under the patronage of the ruling regime," he said.

"A few insects from Karni Sena repeatedly trample over the law, but since they belong to the same community as Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the state government remains silent

against such mafia elements," Maurya told the media.

The former Samajwadi Party leader said the Karni Sena was anarchic and had no regard for law and order. "If goons can carry out such attacks in the presence of police, one can only imagine what they are capable of when police are absent." He announced Lok Morcha will contest the 2027 elections with the slogan 'BJP Hatao, UP Bachao' (Remove BJP, Save UP).

# Gujarat bridge collapse death toll rises to 22

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
VADODARA, AUGUST 6

THE DEATH toll in last month's collapse of a bridge over the Mahisagar river in Gujarat's Vadodara district has risen to 22 with an injured person dying at a hospital here, an official said on Wednesday.

Dilip Padhiyar (34), a resident of Borsad taluka of Anand district, died during treatment at the government-run SSG Hospital on Tuesday night, said Vadodara collector Anil Dhameliya.

"The death toll has reached 22. Other injured persons have already been dis-



charged from the hospital after recovery. One person, Vikram Padhiyar, remains missing," he said.

Padhiyar was returning home in a vehicle after finishing his night shift at a factory in Vadodara when a section of

the bridge collapsed, plunging several vehicles into the water.

According to doctors, he was admitted in a critical condition and later contracted an infection.

The 40-year-old bridge near Gambhira village connected Anand and Vadodara districts.

While five persons, including Padhiyar, were rescued by locals after the collapse, others could not be saved as they either drowned or died during treatment.

Four engineers of the roads and buildings department of the Gujarat government were suspended for negligence after the tragedy.



# CM Revanth Reddy leads dharna at Jantar Mantar

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

THE CONGRESS party on Wednesday organised a 'Mahadharna' at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi to seek the Centre's urgent passage of Telangana's outstanding bills with a view to increase reservation for Backwards Classes (BCs) to 42 per cent in education, jobs, and local body polls.

The protest, led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Telangana Pradesh Committee (TPCC) president Mahesh Kumar Goud, saw the active involvement of Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka and state ministers, MLAs and BC organisation's representatives from all over the nation.

The protest is part of the party's overall attempt to pressurise the Union government into putting the bills in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution.

The leaders of INDIA bloc allies such as Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Shiv Sena (UBT), Nationalist Congress Party (SP), and Samajwadi Party have offered support.

Also read: T'gana Cong seeks Prez's nod to pass 42 pc BC Reservation Bill

CM Revanth Reddy has also sought an appointment with President Droupadi Murmu on August 7 in order to directly present the matter. If the request is denied, the Congress has announced plans to rally at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

BC Welfare Association National President Jajula Srinivasa Goud pledged complete support to the Congress, stating that there would be more protests if the bills are not tabled in this session.



Telangana CM Revanth Reddy participated in a dharna in favour of 42 per cent reservation for backward classes at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Wednesday, along with other INDIA bloc leaders.

MP of Congress Mallu Ravi hoped for a Presidential appointment and criticised Bharat Rashtra Samithi leader KT Rama Rao, saying the party, since it did not keep poll promises, needed to be

**The protest, led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Telangana Pradesh Committee (TPCC) president Mahesh Kumar Goud, saw the active involvement of Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka and state ministers, MLAs and BC organisation's representatives from all over the nation.**

derecognised.

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar has severely criticised the Congress party's protest, calling it an attempt to seek Muslim reservations in the name of BC rights.

Sanjay accused Congress of planning to provide 10 per cent reservation to Muslims and deceptively bringing it as a 5 per cent boost for BCs. Sanjay also questioned Congress's track record on BC empowerment, questioning why BC was not promoted as Prime Minister or Chief Minister throughout the decades of Congress rule.

Sanjay pointed out that only the BJP has really empowered BCs, getting a BC Prime Minister, 27 Union Ministers, and several state Chief Ministers. He claims to support only a genuine 42 per cent BC reservation and not any communal quota disguised as BC.

# Former AIADMK MLA Karthik joins DMK

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
CHENNAI, AUGUST 6

FORMER AIADMK MLA VR Karthik Thondaiman on Wednesday switched over to the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in the presence of Chief Minister MK Stalin. Karthik Thondaiman justified that AIADMK is "not on right path" and blamed his erstwhile party for "promoting religious propaganda". "AIADMK not on the right path. I have a different opinion on how AIADMK is functioning. It has started to encourage religious propaganda," Thondaiman stated after joining DMK.

Thondaiman was inducted into the party in the presence of CM Stalin, DMK Principal Secretary KN Nehru, Organising Secretary RS Bharathi, Minister S Ragupathy and party spokesperson TKS Elangovan, a release said.

This is an important boost to the DMK's strength in Pudukkottai in the run-up to the 2026 state assembly election. Earlier, CM Stalin had a meeting with Vaiko, the chief of Marumalarchi DMK, to ensure that the coalition against the BJP and AIADMK is intact.

Vaiko stated his party was in favour of the DMK-front alliance in the State after meeting Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin.

He also claimed that Hindutva elements, such as Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), would never be permitted to impose their dominance over Tamil Nadu.

We stand by the alliance. In Periyar and Anna's soil, we shall never let the Hindutva forces-RSS and Bharatiya



Janata Party in Tamil Nadu. We shall fight till the last," Vaiko informed the media.

"There won't be a coalition government. Tamil Nadu will neither choose nor accept it. There will be a categorical majority for the DMK in the next assembly elections. DMK shall come to power on its own categorical majority.

Earlier, DMK leader TKS Elangovan trained guns at Tamil Nadu assembly LoP Edappadi K Palaniswami (EPS) calling him the "slave of the BJP".

Responding to the resignation of ousted All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) chief and former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister O Panneerselvam (OPS) from the NDA alliance, Elangovan explained that EPS does not want anything to happen to him or his family and believes that his leadership would be "diluted" if individuals like OPS stay in the party.

"The BJP should have assumed that since EPS is with them, he would never accept OPS or something like that. When the Prime Minister came, he did not meet OPS, which may also be the reason. He doesn't want them to come back to AIADMK. He feels that if these individuals come back, his leadership will be threatened." EPS is no longer a leader; he is now a slave of the BJP," the DMK leader said

## Odisha Cong to launch 'Nari Nyay Yatra' for women safety

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
BHUBANESWAR, AUGUST 6

ODISHA CONGRESS on Wednesday declared a series of demonstrations it will organise in different districts to condemn the surge in crimes against women in the state.

The 'Nari Nyay Yatra' will be launched on August 8 and will last till August 14, said state Congress president Bhakta Charan Das.

Members of Congress will gherao the office of DGP in Cuttack at 10 am on August 8, seeking the arrest of the three individuals who allegedly burnt a girl in Puri's Balanga, he added.

"We had issued a seven-day ultimatum to the police to arrest the culprits," said Das.

The Congress will hold a 'yatra' at Balanga village of the girl on August 10. The procession will begin from the village of the girl and proceed to Nimapada town, where a public meeting will be conducted.

Das appealed to women, students and youth to participate in the programme in large numbers.

The family of the girl had previously accused three miscreants of setting her ablaze on July 19. After her death on August 2, police said that no other people was involved in her killing.

Subsequently, a video statement was also released by her father, agreeing with the police, asserting that she took her own life out of emotional turmoil.

Das announced that an identical march will also be taken out in Balasore on August 14, seeking justice for the student who reportedly self-immolated herself after inaction on her sexual harassment allegation against a professor.

The march will begin near Fakir Mohan (Autonomous) College, he added.

# SC quashes order banning use of Stalin's name in TN govt schemes

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

THE SUPREME Court on Wednesday struck down a Madras High Court direction to the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam government not to deploy names and photos of current and former chief ministers in welfare programmes. A bench headed by Chief Justice BR Gavai and Judges K Vinod Chandran and NV Anjaria fined AIADMK leader C Ve Shanmugam ₹10 lakh for filing plea in Madras High Court.

The highest court said the plea against mentioning name of CM on Tamil Nadu's welfare schemes was unwarranted and abuse of process of the law.

The Madras High Court on July 31



restrained the Tamil Nadu government from including the name of any living person in any new or rebranded public



welfare schemes.

It also prohibited the use of images of erstwhile chief ministers, ideological lead-

ers, or of any DMK symbol, emblem, or flag in promotion schemes advertisements.

The order was passed by a division bench of Chief Justice Manindra Mohan Shrivastava and Justice Sunder Mohan while hearing a PIL petitioned by Shanmugam.

The MP had challenged the naming and promotion of the government's public outreach programme titled Ungaludan Stalin' (With You, Stalin), alleging that it violated established norms.

The bench has, though, made it clear that the order does not prevent the state from introducing, implementing, or operating any welfare schemes, it confirmed that the restrictions were only for the nomenclature and promotional material relating to such schemes.

## Assam Foreigners Tribunal summons WB panchayat head in NRC case

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
KOLKATA, AUGUST 6

A FRESH controversy has erupted between West Bengal and Assam after a notice from the Assam Foreigners Tribunal was reportedly sent to the office of the elected Panchayat Pradhan of Mathabhanga's Hazrahat-2 Gram Panchayat in Cooch Behar. The notice summons the Panchayat head to Nalbari district in Assam for verification of a citizenship certificate issued years ago in a NRC-related case.

The case in question dates back to 2015, when Minati Roy, originally from

Cooch Behar, got married in Nalbari, Assam. After settling there, she came under suspicion of being a foreign national. A notice was issued against her on suspicion of being Bangladeshi.

During the process of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), she collected various documents, including a citizenship certificate from her paternal home's Panchayat in Cooch Behar. Although her name was eventually included in the NRC, she filed a case citing a spelling error, which led to the tribunal now demanding a verification of the Panchayat-issued certificate.

## CPM seeks probe against IUML in Malappuram investment scam

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
MALAPPURAM, AUGUST 6

THE CPM has demanded that the state government initiate a probe into the multi-crore investment fraud in the Malappuram District Panchayat. At a press conference here on Wednesday, CPM leaders said that the scam had occurred in the district panchayat with the active patronage of Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) leaders.

It is alleged that local IUML leaders and district panchayat members amassed funds from gullible individuals and businessmen by making them believe they would be included in development schemes awarded

by the local body. Around 200 people reportedly lost money after being tricked into investing in a fraudulent scheme, with many stating that they handed over cash at the district panchayat office.

The CPM leadership alleged that the district panchayat vice president, Ismail Moothedam, is facing serious allegations related to this financial fraud. The party said that it has appealed to the government and state police chief, demanding a thorough investigation into the scam. Further, a complaint has been lodged with the Local Self-Governance Minister, MB Rajesh, seeking strict action against district panchayat secretary A Abdul Latheef.



# Divert Chenab to resolve SYL row, agree Punjab, Haryana CMs

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

FINDING COMMON ground, the Punjab and Haryana governments agreed on Tuesday that the diversion of Chenab river, a part of the now-suspended Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), is a solution to the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal dispute between the two states.

It is learnt that this agreement was reached at a meeting between the Punjab and Haryana chief ministers, which was convened by Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Paatil to resolve the vexed dispute over sharing of river waters.

Hearing in the SYL case before the Supreme Court is scheduled for August 13, where the Centre is expected to make an important statement on the issue. The apex court had asked the Jal Shakti Ministry to mediate between the



two states.

After the meeting, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann and his Haryana counterpart, Nayab Singh Saini, said the talks were “positive”. “Today, we have moved forward in a positive direction,” they said.

Backing the Centre-backed talks, they welcomed the PM’s remarks in Parliament on the Indus Water Treaty that the govern-

ment was aiming to utilise Chenab waters for regional sharing.

They appreciated Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s recent remarks in Parliament about how the now-suspended IWT with Pakistan could benefit Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. “The PM made a positive statement in Parliament and we are hopeful that Chenab waters can be

channelised to Punjab, which can build storage capacity and then share these waters with Haryana and other states. But right now, Punjab has no water to spare,” said Mann.

He said the diversion of the Chenab could bring 24 million acre feet (MAF) of water to Punjab, whereas the state’s current dispute with Haryana barely involved two-three MAF. “The SYL issue should be shelved forever and Haryana’s water needs should be met through the use of Chenab waters under the now-suspended IWT and also through the revival of the long-pending Sharda-Yamuna link project. The Punjab government will send these proposals to the Centre and the SC in writing,” the Punjab chief minister said.

The next meeting between Punjab and Haryana over the issue is likely to take place before the next hearing in the case in the Supreme Court on August 13.



## Bains appears before Akal Takht, declared ‘tankhaiya’

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
AMRITSAR, AUGUST 6

AKAL TAKHT pronounced Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains a ‘tankhaiya’ (guilty of religious misconduct) on Wednesday in connection with a controversial dance performance at an event organised in Srinagar to commemorate Guru Teg Bahadur’s 350th martyrdom day.

Bains was directed to perform a series of religious tasks as spiritual atonement for violating Sikh ‘maryada’ during the religious event.

The five Sikh high priests led by Akal Takht Officiating Jathedar Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargaj issued the directive, which requires the minister to go barefoot on a pilgrimage from the Golden Temple to Gurdwara Guru Ke Mahal, located about half a km away. He has also been asked to visit Baba Bakala, a holy town about 40 km from Amritsar, and Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib in Delhi.

As part of the atonement, Bains has also been asked to do two-day ‘sewa’ (voluntary service), including cleaning footwear and sweeping the premises of Anandpur Sahib. He is also required to offer ‘deg’ of Rs 1,100 and participate in ‘ardas’, seeking forgiveness.

Coming out of the Akal Takht secretariat, Bains said that as a devout Sikh, he humbly accepted the punishment. Language Department Director Jaswant Singh is expected to appear later as he has gone abroad.

He also issued an apology on social media, stating that as a Sikh Cabinet Minister, he accepted the mistake “committed knowingly or unknowingly” by the event organisers.



## SGPC chief for advisory panel to settle disputes between Takhts

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
AMRITSAR, AUGUST 6

SHIROMANI GURDWARA Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) president Harjinder Singh Dhami has recommended the formation of an advisory panel to prevent differences between the Akal Takht and other Sikh temporal seats.

Dhami said the panel should also have the mandate of resolving complaints concerning the Sikh community, which were now being handled by dharam parchar committees.

Talking to reporters after an SGPC meeting called to deliberate on the working of five Sikh Takhts, Dhami said that in the last general house meeting of the SGPC, a resolution was placed to form an advisory panel for the Akal Takht. The move comes in the backdrop of efforts aimed at defusing tension between the Akal Takht, the highest temporal seat of the Sikhs, and Takht Patna Sahib after a clash over religious punishment to Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) chief Sukhbir Singh Badal.

Talking about a resolution passed by the SGPC general house on Wednesday, Dhami said all members urged the Jathedars to uphold the Sikh traditions. He said Panthic issues must be resolved at the Akal Takht and interference in the affairs of other Takhts should be avoided.

On giving permission to an Akal Takht-constituted panel to hold polls to elect the SAD president at the SGPC headquarters on August 11, Dhami said their letter seeking approval in this regard had been forwarded to the Akal Takht.

**Dhami says the panel should also have the mandate of resolving complaints concerning the Sikh community, which were being handled by dharam parchar committees**

# Kinnaur Yatra: One pilgrim dies, over 700 rescued

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
SHIMLA, AUGUST 6

ONE PILGRIM lost his life, while more than 700 others were safely rescued from the Kinnaur Kailash Yatra route in Himachal Pradesh, officials confirmed on Wednesday.

On August 5, around 402 pilgrims who had started their yatra from Malling Khata village got stranded due to bad weather. Rescue teams managed to bring 177 of them back to Malling Khata village the same day. However, worsening weather conditions and rising water levels in a stream forced 225 others to take shelter in a cave.

A rescue team led by the Naib Tehsildar of Kalpa and Forest Department officials was sent through the Purvani route on Tuesday evening. A temporary shelter was set up at the Shongtong Army Camp, where 183 rescued pilgrims have already arrived.

“All of them are safe, and arrangements have been made for their meals. In addition,



they are being provided medical facilities at the hospital. The remaining stranded people are also being rescued and brought directly to the army camp,” said Kinnaur Deputy Commissioner Dr. Amit Sharma.

In another rescue, 417 pilgrims stranded at Malling Khata were rescued by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and Kinnaur Tourism Authority (KTA). They had been stuck after two bridges on the Kangrang nallah were washed away in a flashflood triggered by a cloudburst.

Rescue teams worked overnight to move everyone to safe locations.

Meanwhile, heavy rain has continued to disrupt life across Himachal Pradesh. A total of 617 roads, including four national highways, were closed due to landslides and flooding. Mandi district, already reeling from recent cloudbursts and landslides, accounted for 377 road closures, while Kullu district reported 90.

Key highways like the Chandigarh-Manali (NH-21), Old Hindustan-Tibet Road (NH-05), Mandi-Dharampur (NH-3), and Aut-Sainj Road (NH-305) have all been closed for traffic after the landslides. However, the Shimla-Kalka highway was cleared at Chakki Mor in Solan district.

In many areas, traffic jams have added to commuter woes. Schools, colleges, and anganwadis remained closed in many subdivisions across Shimla, Mandi, Kullu, and Solan districts. Some schools in Shimla city opted for online classes. Many schools in Shimla city announced holidays or switched to online classes.

# Politics over calamity in Himachal

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
SHIMLA, AUGUST 6

IT IS all about politics over natural calamity in Himachal Pradesh. More so this time because the disaster-hit area is the home district and Assembly constituency of former BJP Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition, Jai Ram Thakur.

The BJP, which had allegedly backed out of supporting the Congress government’s demand for a disaster relief package in 2023, when unprecedented rains caused massive damage in Himachal, is now caught on the wrong foot. This time, it is actively moving the Centre to help Himachal Pradesh.

The Leader of Opposition has even called for ‘area-specific relief’ during his meetings with the Central BJP leadership, in view of the major damage in his constituency, Seraj in Mandi district, where more than 40 people were washed away in flashfloods (some bodies are yet not recovered). Houses, fertile land, and entire villages vanished in the furious waters within no time on the intervening night of June 30 and July 1.

All the BJP MPs and other leaders have also met National BJP President and Union Health and Family Welfare Minister, Jagat Prakash Nadda, for an assessment of the damage and to seek possible relief and



rehabilitation aid for the homeless.

Personally, Jai Ram Thakur toiled hard for days in July to reach out to the people who had lost family members and lifelong belongings in the flashfloods. “When I look back at the times when I entered electoral politics in Seraj, there were very few road links and development. When I became MLA in 1998 and won all the elections since then, I tried hard to bring basic development in Seraj and the area got roads, educational institutions and other infrastructure. It’s all back to square one. It will again take a long time now to re-build Seraj,” said Jai Ram Thakur, former CM and six-time MLA from Seraj. He is worried about the rehabilitation of affected people, especially with winters a few months away.

The state government, which is already under pressure since the beginning of its tenure, especially with the Central government allegedly not providing adequate relief in 2023 (despite damages pegged at Rs 10,000 crore), is in trouble again. Many people are now homeless in Mandi district and other parts of the state. According to the government, the estimated damage this monsoon is around Rs 1,700 crore, but the bigger problem in Seraj is that the land itself has been washed away.

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has urged the Centre to relax forest laws to allow the state government to rehabilitate those rendered homeless. He has also urged the Centre for a special relief package for Himachal Pradesh, which has repeatedly

suffered massive damage during monsoon over the past few years. Sukhu has appealed to BJP MPs and party leaders from the state to strongly plead Himachal’s case before the Centre.

““The state government is doing its best to provide immediate relief to the people. We want the Centre to liberally help the state with finances in terms of relief,” he said. He said he had urged the state BJP leaders in 2023 also to put forth the case of Himachal for relief package before the Centre, but they did not even support the resolution by us in the state Assembly, wherein we wanted the Centre to declare it a national calamity in Himachal in 2023,” the Chief Minister added.

The general public feels that in the worst-ever calamity in 2023, BJP leaders failed to represent Himachal Pradesh’s case before the Central leadership. But this time, when Jai Ram Thakur’s constituency has suffered the maximum damage, the opposition party is all geared up to bring relief money from the Centre. “They should get a good relief package to reconstruct Seraj. But the areas that suffered damage in 2023 were also part of Himachal Pradesh. Why were they given the cold shoulder,” some senior citizens remarked.



# J&K CM Omar writes to 42 parties for ‘statehood’ support

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
SRINAGAR, AUGUST 6

IN WHAT can be seen as raising the pitch at political level at the political level, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has written to the presidents of all national parties for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood. This is an essential course correction, he said in his letter, requesting that a bill be introduced in this regard during the ongoing Monsoon Session of the Parliament.

He said the promise of restoring statehood has been made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir in public meetings, in Parliament, and before the Supreme Court. He added that the issue should be raised in Parliament so that the bill is passed in the current session.

Omar said there is a Supreme Court hearing on the matter on August 8 and that statehood should be granted as soon as possible. He said several years have passed without progress, and that if the government does not act, the court should ensure the promise is fulfilled.

He said the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir were held because the Supreme Court had fixed a timeline for the process.

He added that a similar approach should be taken for restoring statehood. "I respectfully urge your kind indulgence in exhort-



ing the Government of India to bring forward legislation in the current session of Parliament to restore the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir," Omar Abdullah wrote in his letter.

In his letter, Abdullah said that restoration of statehood is not a concession to Jammu and Kashmir but a course correction by the central government. The very idea of India is undermined if statehood, which is a foundational and Constitutional right, is reduced to the discretionary favour of the central government, the letter read. "The restoration must not be viewed as a concession, but as an essential course correction-one that prevents us from sliding down a dangerous and slippery slope where the statehood of our constituent States is no

longer regarded as a foundational and sacred constitutional right but reduced instead to a discretionary favour bestowed at the will of the Central Government," the letter read.

Omar reminded the leaders that the precedent set by downgrading a state into an Union territory will have unsettling consequences for the country, and it is a red line that must never be crossed. "Federalism is anchored in the recognition of a State's right to exist and function with dignity, autonomy, and constitutional protection. If the Union were to assume and exercise the unilateral authority to downgrade a State to a Union Territory-regardless of the justification, it would mark a fundamental departure from the constitutional scheme. The circum-

stances may vary, but the precedent it sets is profound and unsettling. This is a constitutional red line-one that must never be crossed," read the letter.

Abdullah emphasised that it's a matter that should concern every citizen, not just the people of Jammu and Kashmir. "It is an issue that goes beyond regional interests and touches the very core of India's constitutional values and its democratic ethos. The act of reducing J&K from a State to a Union Territory in 2019 and the prolonged delay in restoring its status as a full State you would agree, has profound implications for the future of Indian polity," read the three-page letter dated July 29.

The Chief Minister also spoke about the people of Jammu and Kashmir reposing faith in democracy after an overwhelming participation in the assembly elections, and also rising against terrorism after the Pahalgam attack. He regretted that the centre didn't acknowledge it. "These were extraordinary opportunities to reinforce national unity and heal historical wounds. To allow such moments to pass-unacknowledged or unreciprocated due to narrow partisan calculations, will, without doubt, be a monumental mistake," the letter said. "The people of J&K have already waited long enough-statehood must be restored now," the letter said.



## Uttarkashi cloudburst raises Ganga's water level in Rishikesh

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
DEHRADUN, AUGUST 6

CONTINUES HEAVY rain in Uttarakhand has caused the River Ganga to swell dangerously. At Parmarth Niketan Ashram in Rishikesh, the water has risen so high that it is now touching the Shiva idol at the Aarti Sthal.

Pankaj Kumar Dwivedi, an employee at the ashram, shared that a cloudburst in Uttarkashi on Tuesday led to a sharp rise in the river's water level.

"Right now, the water level of the Ganga is rising all over Parmarth, and even the Shiva idol is starting to sink. Yesterday's accident in Uttarkashi has caused the water level here to go well above the danger mark. We need to be very careful and help others as much as possible. It's a big tragedy," he added.

He further said for safety, the ashram has closed all entrances to the river ghats and restricted access to the riverbanks. "We have also ordered that no one is allowed to go near the banks of the Ganges. All the entrances to the ghats have been locked to keep people safe," Dwivedi added.

Earlier, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami held a meeting with disaster management teams at the State Emergency Operations Centre to review the situation in Dharali, Uttarkashi, where the cloudburst struck.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also spoke to Chief Minister Dhami over the phone to check on the damage and the progress of rescue efforts. According to officials, the PM was briefed on the relief work being carried out in the affected areas.

Chief Minister Dhami assured the Prime Minister that rescue teams are working in full coordination. Despite ongoing rain and difficult conditions, the state is doing everything possible to help the affected people.

## HP revises rules to support deceased employees' kin

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
SHIMLA, AUGUST 6

THE HIMACHAL Pradesh government has approved key amendments to the existing Compassionate Employment Policy with a humanitarian and inclusive approach to support dependents of deceased government servants.

As per the revised policy, the annual income eligibility criterion per family has been increased from Rs 2.50 lakh to Rs. 3 lakh. This enhancement is expected to broaden the coverage of the policy and bring more families under its ambit.

# Army intensifies patrolling in J&K before Independence Day

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
SRINAGAR, AUGUST 6

AHEAD OF Independence Day (August 15), the Indian Army intensified its security measures in Jammu and Kashmir's Bhandarwah region.

Army's 4 Rashtriya Rifles is continuously aggressively patrolling operations across high-altitude meadows and vulnerable forested areas to thwart any potential threat. With the nation preparing to celebrate its 79th Independence Day, the Army has adopted a zero-tolerance approach toward any attempt to disrupt peace and security.

The patrolling teams, who have high-



tech surveillance equipment and intelligence support, are keeping a close eye on sensitive areas to make sure that no one can get in or do anything illegal. The Indian Army's presence has been visibly strengthened around key locations, including routes leading to remote hamlets and strategic heights, as part of proactive domination and area sanitisation drills.

This year's celebration will also be the 12th time in a row that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has spoken to the country from the Red Fort on Independence Day. This makes him the third Prime Minister to reach this milestone, after Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi.

## Dhami visits flood-hit Dharali, meets victims

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
DEHRADUN, AUGUST 6

A DAY after flashfloods hit Dharali village in Uttarkashi district, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami visited the area on Wednesday to check on rescue and relief work.

He met families affected by the disaster and promised them all possible support. "Met the families of those affected by the disaster in Dharali (Uttarkashi) and assured them of all possible help in this hour of crisis. This disaster has caused immense grief to many families, we understand their pain. Our government fully stands with the affected families," Dhami wrote on Facebook.

"Disaster management and relief operations are being carried out rapidly. Our priority is to search for every missing person and provide full support to the affected families," he said.

Before reaching Dharali, the Chief Minister also took an aerial survey of the flood-hit region and reviewed



**Before reaching Dharali, the Chief Minister also took an aerial survey of the flood-hit region and reviewed operations from the disaster control room in Uttarkashi.**

operations from the disaster control room in Uttarkashi.

On Wednesday, one body was found and around 150 people were rescued from Dharali. However, many remain missing, and rescue efforts are ongoing despite heavy rain and difficult conditions.

Among the missing is a group of 28 tourists from Kerala, who were visiting the area when the floods struck.

# Climate change redrawing India's flash flood hotspots, warns IIT

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

FLASH FLOODS are no longer confined to traditionally vulnerable regions, with changing climatic patterns now creating new risk zones across the Indian subcontinent, researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar have warned.

In a study published in the journal 'npj Natural Hazards', scientists analysed four decades of meteorological and disaster data to create a comprehensive hotspot map of India. Their findings confirm a disturbing trend -- the rise of flash floods in previously unaffected basins, driven by increasingly intense and frequent extreme rainfall.

"Flash flood hotspots are mainly centred in the Himalayas, West Coast, and Central India, with geomorphological factors driving flash floods in the Himalayas and hydrological factors (flashiness) in the West Coast and Central India," the researchers noted.

The study revealed that nearly three-fourths of flash floods across the country result from a combination of extreme pre-



cipitation and saturated ground, the latter caused by prolonged or recent rainfall. Only one-fourth of the events are triggered solely by extreme rain, the authors wrote.

"The combination of extreme precipitation and wet antecedent conditions triggers most (nearly 3/4th) flash floods while the remaining (nearly 1/4th) are solely driven by extreme precipitation," they added.

Using temperature records from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) for 1981-2020 and data from the Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT), the team was able to isolate flash floods from other forms of flooding and examine their specific

patterns and causes.

The study highlights that flash floods are hyper-local and rapid, often giving communities less than six hours between the onset of rain and peak flooding. Most of the flooding is driven by precipitation falling over just 18 hours, the researchers observed.

A critical insight, according to the team, is that several basins currently considered less vulnerable are now showing signs of emerging risk. "Extreme rainfall is becoming more common and intense in several basins not prone to flash floods, highlighting that the warming climate can lead to newer flash flood hotspots in the future."

The Indian Himalayas remain especially prone due to their steep terrain and fragile landforms. "The land surface features of the Indian Himalayas make the region particularly vulnerable to unusual and extreme weather events, such as cloudbursts, extreme precipitation, flash floods, and avalanches," the study noted. Scientists attribute the rise in such events to human-induced climate change.



# Set your house in order; suspend hostilities for a while

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
CHANDIGARH, AUGUST 6

SOMETIMES SERIOUS challenges crop up from unexpected quarters. That is precisely what has happened. The greatest challenge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his 11-year tenure has come from his cherished friend, US President Donald Trump. Both enjoyed good personal bonding. Both would describe each other as friends. In fact, Trump still describes both India and Modi as “friends”.

It is not that he should have made an exception for his friend in his ruthless implementation of “tariff” policy on imports from various countries. But he shouldn’t have mentioned and threatened India repeatedly and so uncouthly either. This is not just uncouth, but unexpected of the head of a state and that too about a democratic friendly country ruled by a democratic friendly leader. That certainly has left a bad taste.

Prime Minister Modi’s leadership is being tested now. So is that of Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi. Whether Gandhi and the Opposition parties like it or not, they have to accept that Modi is a democratically elected Prime Minister of the country. They will have to accept and acknowledge that. This is not the time to dispute his election by raising the bogey of “rigged seats” or “stolen elections”.

Conversely, Prime Minister Modi will also need to be more gracious towards the Opposition leaders, Gandhi in particular. The same people who elected him the Prime Minister have voted for Gandhi also, of course in lesser numbers that enabled him to become the Leader of the Opposition. The Opposition is an integral part of the democratic set up and the



government must also accept and acknowledge that.

There has been fierce bitterness from both sides over the last decade or so. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has not left any stone unturned to damn the Congress for all that is wrong with the country. Its standard and characteristic accusation against first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has now become exemplary. The Congress has hit back in the same measure, which is quite understandable.

This much acrimony and hostility is never required in a democracy. The

It is high time that Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a leaf out of Narasimha Rao’s book and got a unanimous resolution passed in both the Houses of Parliament that India would not accept any foreign interference about what it should do, what it should not and with whom it should trade, with whom it should not.

criticism currently is not restricted to policies, but has turned personal. This leaves hardly any scope for rapprochement. Added to all this acrimony is the “social media boost” provided from both the quarters against each other. At times, the social media “warriors” go extra mile in their abuse against the political opponents they are assigned to target. This holds true for both sides, ruling as well as the Opposition.

The country as a whole, not the Prime Minister alone, is faced with a serious economic challenge that the Trump tariffs will be posing. Moreover, Trump has also been objecting to India buying Russian oil and weapons. He is trying to bite more than he can chew. Like senior Congress leader Manish Tewari reminded him that India could not be deterred and intimidated with Seventh Fleet in 1971, India wouldn’t be deterred or intimidated even now.



Like Tewari, the Leader of the Opposition as also Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge should come out clearly and categorically against the US President’s statements against the country. This is not the time for the Opposition, particularly the Congress, to seek sadistic pleasure in Trump speaking against India. Of course it is a setback for Prime Minister Modi as he banked too much on Trump, but it is the entire country whose interests are at stake. The Congress can reserve its criticism against Modi for a later day.

Ideally, Prime Minister Modi should call an ‘all party’ meeting and make the initial move to reach out to the country’s

Opposition. The situation is similar to February 24, 1994, when the PV Narasimha Rao-government moved a resolution in both the Houses of the Parliament reiterating that entire Jammu and Kashmir was an integral part of India and the only unfinished agenda is return of the occupied territory to India.

A similar resolution should ideally be passed in the Parliament that India as a whole rejects any foreign interference about what it should do, what it should not and with whom it should trade, with whom it should not.

Particularly when the United States is itself buying fertilisers, uranium, palladium, certain chemicals and aircraft engine parts from Russia, it has no moral right to object to other countries buying things from it. Like it accused India of financing war against Ukraine, from the same argument, the US is also financing the war against Ukraine. In any case, India would not accept any such advice or suggestion.

It high time that the entire political establishment of the country, across the spectrum, takes a unified stand against the US President’s repeated tariff and penalty threats. India, after all, is the most populous country in the world; a country of 1.4 billion people. India has been there for millennia while America was discovered just a few hundred years ago and that too when Columbus wanted to discover India but ended up there.

India for sure cannot be threatened, intimidated or interfered into. This message must go from entire 1.4 billion people of the country, across the globe, across the Atlantic to reach Trump’s ears. Let both the Houses of the Parliament pass a unanimous resolution that India stands together and united against any attempt of foreign interference.

## Russia sneers at Trump’s deadline for Ukraine war

Hardly anything Trump says or does comes with the credibility of finality. Furthermore, spiralling sanctions, a dipping economy, and even a strengthened NATO has not been able to convince Putin to end the war.

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
CHANDIGARH, AUGUST 6

SANCTIONS AGAINST Moscow are nothing new for President Vladimir Putin. Much less for Russia, given its history. A fortnight ago, the EU approved one of its strongest sanctions against the country, hitting hard on its military, energy, trade and banking sectors in another bid to weaken Russia’s ability to wage the war. Even though the message was clear — Europe will not back down in its support for Ukraine, it was lost on the Russian President. Joining in a week later was Donald Trump threatening to impose tariffs in 10 days if Moscow showed no progress towards ending its three-year-long war in Ukraine.

Russia, however, maintains a stoic stubbornness. A day later, the Kremlin said it continued to monitor statements by US President Donald Trump regarding sanctions against Moscow. It went on to add that Russia has “acquired immunity” to such measures, courtesy long “experience.” Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters, “We have been living under a huge number of sanctions for quite a long time, our economy operates under a huge number of restrictions. Therefore, we have already developed a certain level of immu-

nity regarding sanctions. We also continue to note all statements coming from the US President and other international representatives in the matter.”

### Donald Trump, Ukraine war and the U-turns

Countless unsuccessful attempts at ceasefire notwithstanding, the Russia-Ukraine war has entered its fourth year. The Trump administration is still searching for or rather running out of ways to give an aggressive nudge to Russia to end the war. The earlier deadline of 50 days being advanced to a mere 12 days depicts Trump’s growing impatience with Putin at a personal level.

Even though the August 8-deadline given by him to Vladimir Putin to stop the war is right around the corner, hardly anything Trump says or does comes with the credibility of finality. He had promised to end the Ukraine war on his first day in office. Come February and he froze aid to Ukraine after the very public falling out with Volodymyr Zelensky in the Oval Office; only to resume supplies weeks later. At one point, he even accused Zelensky of starting the war, “When you start a war, you’ve got to know that you can win the war, right? You don’t start a war against somebody that’s 20 times

your size and then hope that people give you some missiles.”

In February, after a telephonic conversation with Putin, Trump said negotiations to end the Ukraine war will start “immediately after holding a lengthy and productive” call with the Russian President. He even pronounced the Russian leader as “desirous of peace.”

Fast forward to July and Trump’s frustration is more than palpable. “We get a lot of bulls\*\*\* thrown at us by Putin, if you want to know the truth. He’s very nice all the time, but it turns out to be meaningless.”

But from tactical shifts to sudden turn-arounds, they have all been hallmarks of Trump’s equations with world leaders. Is it a surprise that analysts term his recent move as more of a rhetorical escalation instead of an irreversible one? However, as an extension of him being serious this time, the sanctions have been imposed on countries that import Russian oil — 25 per cent tariffs on India, being a case in point. Indian goods now face 25 per cent tariffs in the US as a penalty for buying arms and energy from Russia. Last week, while offended by posts of former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Trump announced that he had ordered two nuclear submarines to unspecified “appro-



priate regions” as a response to the “highly provocative statements” from Moscow. Once again Russian news outlets have been dismissive of Trump’s statements.

### Why Russia is in no mood to concede

But how hard can it be for Putin to declare ceasefire and victory, cut his losses, and stop the bleeding and sanctions in one go? Over the last three-and-a-half years, it has gained less and comparatively lost more. As per the CSIS (Centre for Strategic and International Studies) data, Russian military forces have “seized

limited territory, lost substantial quantities of equipment relative to Ukraine and suffered remarkably high rates of fatalities since January 2024.”

Hope still keeps Putin to stay at it — the hope of gaining new ground, wear out Ukrainian resolve and outsmart Kyiv’s defence strategies. Russia has paid a steep price for sustaining the war over the past three years and five months. Spiralling sanctions, a dipping economy, roughly one million battlefield casualties and the fear of a strengthened NATO couldn’t convince Putin to end the war. Donald Trump’s threats of looming sanctions are not nearly enough.





# NATO chiefs ‘do whatever I want’, claims Trump

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
WASHINGTON, AUGUST 6

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump has claimed that NATO leaders are fully aligned with his agenda, crediting his leadership for what he described as a remarkable turnaround in America’s global standing. In an interview on Tuesday, Trump said the United States had transformed from a “dead country” to “the hottest country anywhere in the world by far” within months of his inauguration.

“That was told to me by every leader of NATO; they do whatever I want,” he said, adding that he had received similar praise from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. “I’m very happy to help,” he remarked.

Trump has long pressed NATO members to increase defence spending, warning that the US would not defend countries falling short of the Bloc’s targets. At a NATO summit in July, members com-



mitted to raising defence expenditure to 5 pc of GDP by 2035, up from the previous 2 pc benchmark.

The US president also announced that the European Union would pay Washington “100 pc of the cost of all (American-made) military equipment” under a new funding agreement, stating that “much of it will go to Ukraine”.

During the summit, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte described Trump as “daddy, who has to sometimes use strong language” after the US leader compared Israel and Iran to children in a schoolyard fight, saying “they don’t know what they’re doing”. Trump was referring to the two countries trading accusations of violating a ceasefire in the 12-day war in June.

**“That was told to me by every leader of NATO; they do whatever I want,” he said, adding that he had received similar praise from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. “I’m very happy to help,” he remarked.**

The “daddy” remark sparked controversy in Western media, with critics accusing Rutte of “orchestrated groveling” and sycophancy, labelling the incident “one of the most shameful episodes in modern history”.

Rutte later defended his comments, saying Trump deserved praise and calling him a “good friend” who had “finally” convinced European NATO members to boost defence spending.



## Vance likely heir to MAGA

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
WASHINGTON, AUGUST 6

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump has suggested that Vice President JD Vance is “most likely” to be the heir apparent to his Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement, while Secretary of State Marco Rubio could also be part of the leadership “in some form”.

“Well, I think most likely. In all fairness, he’s the vice president,” Trump said on Tuesday when asked about his potential successor to the MAGA movement.

Trump, who has been in office for just over six months, said it was “too early” to discuss successors, but praised Vance as “doing a great job” and “probably the favourite at this point”. The president was quick to add that Rubio could also “get together with JD in some form.” Trump had previously declined to endorse any candidate for the 2028 presidential race.

In February, Trump described Vance as “very capable”, but said it was premature to name him as the leading contender.

Vance, 40, is a former US Marine and served as a senator from Ohio between 2023 and 2025. Since becoming vice president, he has taken on a prominent role in the second Trump administration.

Rubio, in an interview last month, dismissed speculation about a 2028 presidential bid, saying he was focused on his current role. However, he did not rule it out entirely, noting, “You never know what the future holds.”

Both Rubio and Vance had contested for the vice-presidential slot before working together to promote Trump’s agenda.

“Marco is incredibly competent and reliable, and he’s also one of my closest friends in the administration,” Vance claimed last month. This marks the first time Trump has publicly hinted that Vance could be his preferred successor. In May, he had named both Vance and Rubio as potential future leaders.

## ISRAELI ‘SPY’ EXECUTED IN IRAN

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
DUBAI, AUGUST 6

EXECUTION OF two men in separate cases – one convicted of spying for Israel’s Mossad and another accused of plotting sabotage as a member of the Islamic State group – was carried out in Iran on Wednesday.

The executed Israeli spy suspect has been identified as Rouzbeh Vadi, who was accused of passing classified intelligence to Israel’s Mossad, including information relating to an Iranian nuclear scientist, reportedly killed during airstrikes carried out by Israel in June.

According to reports, Vadi met Mossad operatives five times in Vienna, Austria, though the details regarding his arrest and the identity of the scientist were not disclosed.

**The execution of Vadi brings the number of people hanged by Iran on charges of espionage during this ongoing conflict to seven.**

Israel’s ambassador to France, Joshua Zarka, had earlier claimed that a 12-day Israeli offensive resulted in the deaths of at least 14 Iranian physicists and engineers associated with Tehran’s nuclear programme. The execution of Vadi brings the number of people hanged by Iran on charges of espionage during this ongoing conflict to seven, raising concerns among international rights groups about a surge in politically charged executions.

In a separate incident, authorities also executed Mehdi Aghazadeh, accused of being an Islamic State member involved in a sabotage plot against the state. Aghazadeh had allegedly undergone military training in Syria and Iraq before illegally entering Iran with a four-member group, all of whom were later killed in a clash with Iranian security forces.

The judiciary asserted that due legal process had been followed, with both executions being upheld by Iran’s Supreme Court after verdicts delivered by lower courts. Although Iran maintains that its legal process is fair and rigorous, critics contend that espionage and terrorism charges are often used to silence political dissent or enforce national narratives in times of crisis.

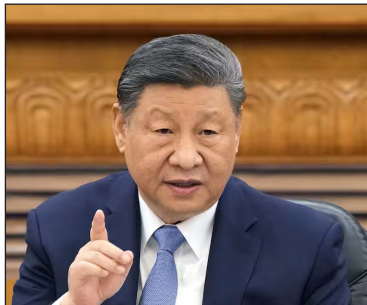
## US-Pak ties do not bother China

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
BEIJING, AUGUST 6

THE US under Donald Trump’s administration is strengthening ties with Pakistan, which is traditionally a steadfast ally of China. But Beijing’s strategic experts are quite confident about Pakistan knowing its limits in diplomatic closeness with the US.

Last month, Pakistani Army Chief, General Asim Munir, made his first official visit to China since assuming office as Field Marshal. His visit came shortly after a rare five-day trip to Washington, where he attended a private luncheon with Trump. That meeting culminated with the US President Trump announcing enhanced US-Pakistan cooperation in various fields, including an oil deal between the two nations. This visit of Munir led to alteration in American foreign policy, with implications not only for India but also China and the Middle East.

During his time in Beijing, Munir met with Vice President Han Zheng, Foreign Minister Wang Yi and senior members



China President Xi Jinping

of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), though not with President Xi Jinping. This contrasts with his predecessor, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, who met Xi during his 2018 trip to China.

While official readouts from Munir’s meetings emphasised diplomatic niceties and reiterated strong bilateral ties, Beijing’s perception of the Trump-Munir rapport remains unclear, especially given Trump’s overt strategy to curb China’s rise as a global power. China has its

concerns considering the decades-long investment fostering relationship with Islamabad on all fronts.

Two Chinese senior strategic experts, for the first time, underscored China’s view on the evolving Washington-Islamabad strategic paradigm in the broader context of Trump’s geopolitical strategy.

“Pakistan will not develop its relations with the US at the cost of its relation with China. Pakistan will not be that easily hooked by Trump,” Hu Shisheng, Director of the Institute for South Asian Studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, stated.

Jesse Wang, a research fellow at Huaxia South Asia Economic and Cultural Exchange Centre of China, said, “On the surface, Trump’s candy to Pakistan looks like a disturbance to China, but, actually, cannot affect the structural stability of the Sino-Pak relationship. US intervention has created short-term geopolitical noise, but is unlikely to shake the foundation of China-Pakistan dependence.

## Online coding classes for Afghan women

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
KABUL, AUGUST 6

IT HAS been a tough journey for women in Afghanistan. One after the other, opportunities have vanished. Like so many other Afghan women, Sodaba could do little but watch as her country’s new Taliban government imposed a stranglehold on women’s lives.

The Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in 2021 and quickly set about implementing a dizzying array of restrictions for women — no visiting parks or gyms, no eating in restaurants, no working, except in very few professions. But one of the cruellest blows for the pharmacology student was the ban on education beyond primary school.

Pushed by necessity, she went online. And there, she found hope: a free computer coding course for women in Afghanistan. Taught in her own language, Dari, by a young Afghan refugee living half a world away, in Greece!

“I believe a person should not be awed by circumstance, but should grow and get their dreams through every possible way,” Sodaba said. She began learning



computer programming and website development.

The courses are part of Afghan Geeks, a company created by Murtaza Jafari, now 25, who arrived in Greece on a boat from Türkiye years ago as a teenage refugee.

While living in a shelter in Athens, Jafari received help from a teacher to enrol in a computer coding course. He knew nothing about computers — not even how to switch one on—didn’t know what coding was and didn’t speak a word of English, essential for computer programming.

“I had no idea about English. No idea, like zero,” he said. “And I was trying at the same time to learn Greek, learn English and then also learn computers. ... It was super difficult for me.” But several months later, he earned his certificate. Coding opened up a new world. A couple of years ago, he set up Afghan Geeks.

Jafari said he started providing online courses last December to help women in his homeland, and as an expression of gratitude for the help he received as a youngster, alone in a foreign country.

“The main goal was to give back to the community, especially to the Afghan women, what I had received from the other people for free,” he said, sitting in his sparse one-room flat in downtown Athens. Jafari now has 28 female students in Afghanistan in three classes: beginner, intermediate and advanced.

Aside from teaching, he also mentors his students in finding online internships and jobs using their new skills. For women in a country where nearly all professions are banned, the opportunity for online work is a lifeline.

The most qualified join his team at Afghan Geeks, which also offers website development and chatbot creation services. He now has several clients from Afghanistan, the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe.

Although he’s been teaching his students for seven months, Jafari has never seen their faces. He asks how they are and what the situation in Afghanistan is, “But I’ve never asked them to open their cameras or to share their profile, to share the image. I’ve never done that. I don’t want to do it because I respect their culture, their choice.”



ONE OF THE most lethal attacks in history, August 6, 2025, marks 80 years of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. On August 6, 1945, the United States of America dropped an atomic bomb named “Little Boy” on Hiroshima, Japan, and on August 9, 1945, another bomb, “Fat Man”, was dropped on Nagasaki. As many as 140,000 people lost their lives while many were crippled due to nuclear radiation.

Three days after Hiroshima, as many as 40,000 innocent people lost their lives when the second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. The ones who survived faced acute radiation sickness and long-term health issues. Some of them were diagnosed with cancer years later. This led to the surrender of Japan, marking the end of World War II. Japan made the announcement of its surrender on August 15, 1945, and officially signed the surrender on September 2, 1945.

Nagasaki was a major port and industrial hub, especially for shipbuilding, and Hiroshima was a military and industrial centre that housed important Japanese army facilities.

The survivors of these fatal atomic bombings are called “hibakusha”, which in English is translated to “bomb-affected people”.

Survivors suffered from leukaemia, cancer and other chronic diseases.

Not only this, the later years for the survivors were turbulent. They were discriminated against at every step, facing social stigma, health issues, PTSD, survivor’s guilt and psychological trauma. “Hibakusha” also described skin peeling off due to burns or drinking contaminated water out of desperation. The radiation not only destroyed human lives, but also had a long-term impact on the climate, soil and water. This further affected the agricultural ability of the land.

Japan marks annual ceremonies to commemorate the victims and advocate for nuclear disarmament. Both cities became symbols of peace, with memorials like Hiroshima’s Peace Memorial Park and Nagasaki’s Peace Park.

Nagasaki was not the original target, as authorities had initially drawn up a shortlist of four cities, which were Hiroshima, Kokura, Niigata and Kyoto. The list was later revised by the Secretary of War Henry Stimson, who reportedly argued that Kyoto was too significant a cultural centre to be destroyed. Some accounts suggest he also had personal reasons, as he is believed to have spent his honeymoon there. It is to be noted that Kokura was spared due to cloud cover on August 9, which led to Nagasaki’s bombing instead. Nagasaki’s hilly terrain helped reduce some damage, but the key industrial areas were wiped clean by the bomb.

The world was in shock. Many influential leaders, including Albert Einstein, a Manhattan Project supporter, later advocated for nuclear disarmament. The bombings showed the destructive potential of nuclear weapons, which then influenced the arms race at the global level. Following this, during the Cold War (roughly 1947–1991), countries and international organisations worked



# 80 YEARS ON, SCARS REMAIN

## FACT FILE

**US B-29 bomber Enola Gay** dropped the atomic bomb “Little Boy” on Hiroshima at 8:15 am (local time) and the “Fat Man” atomic bomb on Nagasaki was dropped by the same US bomber at 11:02 am (local time) on August 9.

**“Little Boy”** — a uranium bomb, generated heat of 4,000 °C (7,200 °F).

**“Fat Man”** — a plutonium bomb, had a blast power of 21 kilotons of TNT. The blast flattened a two-mile radius, with fires burning for days.

**70 per cent** of Hiroshima’s buildings faced complete destruction. These include homes and business places.

**40 per cent** of Nagasaki was destroyed.

hard to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and other instruments of mass destruction (WMDs) between nations.

As of 2025, there are 12,500 nuclear warheads globally. There are several international organisations such as ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) that bat for nuclear disarmament.

To date, the debate on the bombings remains controversial. Remembering the innocent lives lost, the world must reflect upon what could be the humanitarian consequences of nuclear warfare. Should an act like this be justified under any circumstances?

By AMARPREET KAUR

## JAPANESE PM SHIGERU ISHIBA SAYS NEVER AGAIN



JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER Shigeru Ishiba on Wednesday paid tributes to those who died in the most fatal US atomic bombing, marking the 80th anniversary of the incident.

Speaking at a press conference after attending a memorial ceremony in Hiroshima, western Japan, he reiterated his government’s commitment to peace and nuclear disarmament while also denying whispers and suggestions of Japan entering a NATO-like nuclear-sharing arrangement with the US, which became Tokyo’s closest ally in the post-war era.

The Japanese PM posted on X, “Today, I attended the Peace Memorial Ceremony held at the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima City. Eighty years have passed since the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, turning this city into a scorched wasteland in an instant, and I respectfully offered my sincere condolences to the spirits of those who lost their lives.”

“After the ceremony, I visited the Peace Memorial Museum again. As the only country capable of conveying the horrors of the atomic bomb to the world, we will pass down the memory of this tragic experience and lead international efforts to prevent such a calamity from happening again. At a meeting in Hiroshima to hear requests from representatives of atomic bomb survivors, I discussed with the delegation steady efforts toward realising a world without nuclear weapons, initiatives under the Hiroshima Action Plan, support measures for survivors and the expansion of the Peace Memorial Museum,” he added.

The PM also met representatives of atomic bomb survivors and discussed support measures, the Hiroshima Action Plan, as well as the expansion of the Peace Memorial Museum.

“The government firmly maintains the three non-nuclear principles and we have no plans to review them,” Ishiba said. He then stressed the need to consider ways to make the extended deterrence provided by the US more effective, which includes its nuclear capabilities.

“This does not contradict our stance to ultimately realise a world free of nuclear weapons,” said Ishiba, who formerly served as defence minister.





# RBI keeps lending rate unchanged

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

THE RESERVE Bank of India’s (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), led by Governor Sanjay Malhotra, has opted to keep key lending rates unchanged at 5.5 per cent. The decision was announced on Wednesday following a three-day meeting from August 4-6.

According to Governor Malhotra, the MPC unanimously voted to maintain the policy repo rate under the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) at 5.5 per cent. Consequently, the Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) rate will remain at 5.25 per cent, and the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate will both stay at 5.75 per cent. The committee also decided to continue with a "neutral" monetary policy stance.

The MPC's assessment of the economic situation found that while headline inflation is lower than previously projected, this is primarily due to fluctuations in food prices, particularly vegetables. In contrast, core inflation has remained stable around the anticipated 4 per cent level. The committee projects that infla-



tion will begin to increase from the last quarter of the current financial year.

The committee noted that growth remains robust, although it is below previous expectations. The impact of evolving uncertainties surrounding tariffs was also acknowledged. The transmission of previous monetary policy decisions is ongoing.

Governor Malhotra explained that the full effect of the 100 basis points rate cut implemented since February 2025 is still unfolding in the broader economy. "On balance, therefore, the current macroeco-

nomie conditions, outlook and the uncertainties call for continuation of the policy repo rate of 5.5 per cent and wait for further transmission of the front-loaded rate cut to the credit markets and to the broader economy," he stated.

In line with this, the MPC unanimously voted to keep the repo rate unchanged and resolved to maintain a close watch on incoming data and the evolving dynamics of domestic growth and inflation to determine the future direction of monetary policy.

# GDP projected to grow at 6.5 pc in current fiscal

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
MUMBAI, AUGUST 6

THE RESERVE Bank of India’s (RBI) much-awaited monetary policy meeting just wrapped up, having assumed greater significance in the backdrop of US President Donald Trump’s stream of threats to “substantially” hike tariff rates on Indian goods in these 24 hours.

The third bi-monthly monetary policy for 2025-26 was unveiled by the central bank’s Governor, Sanjay Malhotra, in Mumbai, and various immediate issues came under the scanner – the decision on repo rate cut, GDP growth projection, monsoon and inflation.

A statement released by the bank noted that the GDP growth projection for the current fiscal year was retained at 6.5 per cent, even while the forecast for inflation was pegged at 3.1 per cent, lower than the previous 3.7 per cent.

Taking into account the headwinds emanating from prolonged geopolitical tensions, global uncertainties, and volatility in the world’s financial markets pose risks to the growth outlook. Yet, the impact of the 100 bps rate cut since

February, 2025, is still unfolding, said Malhotra.

"Growth is robust and as per projections, though it is below our aspirations, the uncertainties of tariffs are still evolving. Monetary policy transmission is continuing. The impact of the 100 bps rate cut since February 2025 on the economy is still unfolding," the Governor said.

Malhotra said he was upbeat about the domestic growth holding up and broadly evolving along the lines of assessment even though some high-frequency indicators showed mixed signals in May-June.

Additionally, an above-normal southwest monsoon, a buoyant services sector, and sustained growth in construction and trade in the coming months should act as buffers for the economy.

"Taking all these factors into account, real GDP growth for 2025-26 is projected at 6.5 per cent, with Q1 at 6.5 per cent, Q2 at 6.7 per cent, Q3 at 6.6 per cent, and Q4 at 6.3 per cent," he said.

For Q1 of 2026-27, real GDP is projected at 6.6 per cent, with the risks evenly balanced out.

# Philippines to prioritise increased imports of essential items from India

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

A HIGH-LEVEL delegation from the Philippines held a meeting with industry officials from India, including those from the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and the Indian Rice Exporters Federation (IREF) to discuss ways to boost imports of key Indian food products.

An industry official said on Wednesday that an agreement was reached between the Indian and Philippines’ representatives that includes a commitment from the Philippines to prioritise increased imports of essential items from India that include rice, buffalo meat, vegetables, fruits, and peanuts.

The Philippines’ delegation was led by

Secretary of Agriculture Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr.

The meeting, informed officials of the IREF, was centered on reducing reliance on Chinese products and promoting stronger bilateral ties between India and the Philippines so as to contribute to improved food security, economic expansion, and diversified trade amid evolving global economic conditions.

Another key development of the meeting was an agreement by the Philippine government to eliminate restrictions on Basmati rice imports.

Dev Garg, Vice President of IREF and Director of Shri Lal Mahal Group, who had participated in the discussions, said mutual agreements were reached to reinforce agricultural connections and diversify supply chains.

# RBI to make claims settlement simpler for nominees of deceased

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
MUMBAI, AUGUST 6

IN ITS third bi-monthly monetary policy meeting, the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) panel members have decided to standardise the procedure for settlement of claims in respect of bank accounts and articles kept in safe custody or safe deposit lockers of deceased bank customers.

The move is aimed at simplifying the process for settlement of claims in favour of nominees of deceased, and also for accounts without nomination.

"We will be standardising the procedure for settlement of claims in respect of bank accounts, and articles kept in safe custody or safe deposit lockers of deceased bank customers. This is expected to make settlement more convenient and simpler," said Sanjay Malhotra, Governor, RBI, while addressing the monetary policy meeting.



While the nomination facility in respect of deposit accounts, articles kept in safe custody or safe deposit lockers is available under the provisions of Banking Regulation Act, 1949; the procedures to facilitate settlement of claims made by survivors/nominees/legal heirs vary across banks.

A statement released by the RBI on the Developmental and Regulatory Policies stated that the central bank’s extant instructions are intended to facilitate expeditious settlement of claims or return of articles or release of contents of safe deposit locker upon death of a customer and to minimise

hardship caused to family members.

"With a view to enhance customer service standards, it has been decided to streamline the procedures and standardise the documentation to be submitted to the banks. A draft circular in this regard shall be issued shortly for public consultation," it said.

Malhotra also informed that the central bank plans to expand the functionality in RBI Retail-Direct platform to enable retail investors to put in money in treasury bills through systematic investment plans.

An auto-bidding facility for T-bills that covers both investment and re-investment options has been enabled in 'Retail Direct' to mandate automatic placement of bids in primary auctions of T-bills, the bank’s statement said.

The Retail Direct portal was launched in November 2021 to facilitate retail investors to open their Gilt accounts with the Reserve Bank under the Retail Direct Scheme.

# WhatsApp introduces new safety tool, ban on scammers’ accounts

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
CALIFORNIA, AUGUST 6

META’S MESSAGING platform, WhatsApp, has a new safety feature that offer users key information about those reaching out to them who are not in their contact list.

The ‘Safety Overview’ tool was launched by the messaging group as part of its efforts to crack down on scammers and frauds, said a statement.

The feature alerts a user when someone not in their contacts adds them to a new WhatsApp group that they may not recognise, offering more information about the said group without having to look at the chat.

"From there, you may choose to exit the group without ever having to look at the chat, and if you think you might recognise the group after seeing the safety overview, you can also choose to



showing more context about the person they are messaging.

WhatsApp also informed that its security teams had detected and banned over 6.8 million scam centres-linked accounts in the first six months of 2025.

More recently, WhatsApp, Meta and OpenAI had disrupted scammers' efforts that had links to a criminal scam centre in Cambodia.

"Based on our investigative insights into the latest enforcement efforts, we proactively detected and took down accounts before scam centres were able to operationalise them. These centres are operated by organised crime gangs primarily in South East Asia and employed forced labour," it said.

These attempts ranged from offering payments for fake likes to enlisting others into a rent-a-scooter pyramid scheme, or luring people to invest in cryptocurrency.

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# Mahindra to reward 23,000 employees with ₹400-500-cr ESOPs

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
MUMBAI, AUGUST 6

IN WHAT may be a first for a large Indian conglomerate, Mahindra & Mahindra is launching a one-time Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) to almost 23,000 shop floor workers, the group’s CEO and MD, Anish Shah said.

He said that since the diversified group’s market cap had grown 12 times since April 2020, the group felt it was important to acknowledge it by rewarding its employees for their contribution to the company’s growth.

"So this is something that I am very happy about and very proud about our company’s culture because these ESOPs are for every single person in the company. This is effectively a token of grat-

itude, because their efforts have helped us do extremely well," he said.

The initiative covers three of Mahindra’s key subsidiaries – Mahindra & Mahindra (auto and farm sectors), Mahindra Electric Automobile (MEAL), and Mahindra Last Mile Mobility, and the total disbursement would be between ₹400-500 crore, ‘depending on factors’, Shah said.

"It (₹400 crore to ₹500 crore) is a very significant amount, but as I look at it, overall, the value creation they (workers) have led is a lot more," he said.

The shares will be granted in the form of restricted stock units (RSUs) and employees on the permanent payroll with a minimum of 12 months’ service within the group will be eligible to receive the ESOPs.





## SIRAJ ARRIVES TO HERO'S WELCOME IN HYDERABAD

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
HYDERABAD, AUGUST 6

INDIA PACER Mohammed Siraj landed in his hometown Hyderabad on Wednesday after a stellar performance in the drawn Test series against England, and enthusiastic fans turned up in large numbers to welcome him.

Siraj was the leading wicket-taker in the five-match series. He played all the five games and bowled a staggering 185.3. The 31-year-old, along with team's fielding coach T Dilip, first landed at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport terminal from London before heading to his hometown. He was dressed in dapper black casuals and a small group of fans gave him a joyous welcome.

There were requests for selfies and autographs, but Siraj quickly left for the domestic terminal to catch the connecting flight to Hyderabad, where he was once again greeted by a group of adoring fans.

"We have not spoken to him yet. But we will certainly plan something for him, as he could be in the city for a while now. It's a matter of pride for all of us that he did so well for the country in the series against England," a Hyderabad Cricket Association official said.

Siraj's best effort came on the fifth day of the final Test at the Oval when he helped India bowl out England for 367. Siraj took five wickets in the innings to complete a match-haul of nine wickets. The six-run win, the slimmest in India's Test history, earned the visitors a highly admirable 2-2 draw in the series.

**There were requests for selfies and autographs, but Siraj quickly left for the domestic terminal to catch the connecting flight to Hyderabad**

# Chappell blasts England's 'Bazball' philosophy

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

**C**RITICISING ENGLAND'S "Bazball" philosophy during the drawn Test series against India, Australian cricketer great Greg Chappell has said that "positive cricket doesn't mean reckless cricket".

In his column for ESPNcricinfo, Chappell praised the young Indian team for being fearless, but lambasted the English squad, particularly Harry Brook, for failing to read situations which required perseverance instead of flashy stroke play.

"England's own journey in this series presents a cautionary subplot, one embodied by the brilliant but mercurial Harry Brook, whose virtues I have extolled publicly before. He has time, range, confidence and that rare gift of making batting look effortless. But cricket, particularly Test cricket, is not just about shot-making. It's about judgement. About recognising when the moment demands attack and when it demands restraint,"



said the former India head coach.

England were 301/3 in pursuit of 374 when 26-year-old Brook's dismissal triggered a collapse on the fourth day of the fifth Test in London which England lost by six runs. "Brook's dismissal at The Oval, with the game finely poised, was symptomatic of the conundrum that is facing the England setup. The "Bazball" philosophy of fearless, attacking cricket has revitalised their Test side. But it cannot become an excuse to avoid doing the hard yards. All England needed was one

**In his column for ESPNcricinfo, Chappell praised the young Indian team for being fearless, but lambasted the English squad, particularly Harry Brook, for failing to read situations which required perseverance instead of flashy stroke play.**

batter to hold his nerve. To absorb pressure. Brook went for the glory shot and perished. "There's nothing wrong with positivity. But positive cricket doesn't mean reckless cricket. It means confident, calculated risk-taking," he pointed out.

Chappell said a more restrained approach in challenging match situations would help Brook establish himself as a worthy successor to Joe Root, England's

most prolific run-scorer. "Brook is emerging, and he will learn. But to become the match-winner England need, he must embrace the grind along with the glamour. Root didn't become England's most prolific batter by always playing pretty strokes. He earned it with grit. Brook will need to do the same if he is to fulfil his vast potential," he said.

Giving his overall assessment of the series, Chappell said the showdown would be long remembered for not just the result, but also the "theatre" it created.

The two teams engaged in on-field heated verbal exchanges during the hard-fought contests, all of which lasted five days. There were also gritty displays by Rishabh Pant and Chris Woakes, who took the field despite serious injuries to help their teams. "The subplots. The redefinition of roles. Both sides were tested, physically, tactically, emotionally. But it was India who emerged as moral victors. They won clarity. Identity. Purpose," he said.

## Four boxers enter U-22 Asian Boxing Championships finals

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
BANGKOK, AUGUST 6

NEERAJ, ISHAN Kataria, Yatri Patel and Priya packed a punch on way to reaching the finals of the U22 Asian Boxing Championships here on Wednesday.

Neeraj relied on his speed and counter-attacking skills to defeat Kyeongho Bang of South Korea 5-0 in the men's 75kg category to book a place in the title showdown, while Ishan Kataria, in men's 90+kg, dominated Chen Chen of China with his big punches as the referee had to stop the contest in the third round.

Yatri Patel in women's 57kg then reached the final by using a combination of left-right punches to dominate Vietnam's Thi Nhung Quand and win by a unanimous 5:0 verdict. Priya (women's 60kg) also came up with a dominating performance to overpower Uzbekistan's Odinakhon Ismoilova to reach the final.

The U19 and U22 Asian Boxing Championships, which are being held simultaneously, gives India's rising stars a platform to showcase their skills against



some of Asia's toughest opponents. India has fielded 40 boxers — 20 in each age group — in the competition.

Among the other semi-finalists, Rocky Chaudhary's bout against Iran's Sam Estaki was stopped in the second round as he suffered cuts over both his eyebrows. Harsh (60kg) and Mayur (90kg) took the fight to their respective opponents but could not finish on the right side of the split verdict.

Harsh went down 1:4 against Uzbekistan's

Shohruh Abdulmalikov, while Mayur lost to Shakhzod Polvonov from the same country. Ankush went down 0:5 to Sanzhar-Ali Begaliyev of Kazakhstan. All the four boxers will bring home a bronze medal each.

Bhawna Sharma went down 1:4 against Robiyakhon Bakhtiyorova of Uzbekistan in the women's 48kg category, while Parthavi Grewal (women's 60kg), Parnjal Yadav (women's 65kg) and Shruti (women's 75kg) also lost their semifinal bouts to settle for bronze medals.

## Man of the moment rises to career-best 15th in ICC rankings

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
DUBAI, AUGUST 6

INDIA PACER Mohammed Siraj has attained a career-best 15th position in the latest ICC Test rankings following his match-winning performance in the fifth and final Test against England at The Oval.

Siraj climbed 12 spots following his nine wickets in the match, including a five-for, as India defeated England by six runs in a thriller to level the series 2-2.

With England requiring 35 runs on the last day with four wickets in hand, a charged up Siraj, who was adjudged "Player of the Match", accounted for three batters, including the last dismissal of Gus Atkinson, to earn India a remarkable win.

Siraj's best ICC ranking so far had been a 16th position which he reached in January last year.

India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who played three Tests to manage his workload, continues to lead the charts with 889 points.

Prasidh Krishna also attained a career-best 59th position after he, along with Siraj, became only the second India pair to take four or more wickets each in both innings of a Test, a feat earlier accomplished by spinners Bishan Bedi and Erapalli Prasanna against Australia in Delhi in 1969.

India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal returned to the top-5 in the Test batting rankings following his second century in the series at The Oval. Jaiswal rose three spots and is on 792 points, while the only other India batter in the top-10 is Rishabh Pant, who has slipped one spot to eighth as he could not play the fifth Test due to a foot injury.

Charismatic England batter Joe Root has firmed up his position at the top with his third century in as many matches, while Harry Brook's 98-ball 111 helped him attain the second position.

In the bowling department, England fast bowlers Atkinson and Josh Tongue have also achieved career-best positions after finishing with eight wickets each in the match. Atkinson is in the top-10 for the first time, while Tongue is up 14 places to 46th.

## Gill nominated for ICC Player of Month

NEWS ARENA NETWORK  
DUBAI, AUGUST 6

INDIA CAPTAIN Shubman Gill was named among the three nominees for ICC's Player of the Month award for July, along with South Africa's Wiaan Mulder and England skipper Ben Stokes, on Wednesday.

Gill led India superbly in the recently concluded Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy against England as the young Indian side earned a hard-fought 2-2 draw in a series in which the 25-year-old rewrote batting records. Gill scored 754 runs in the series against England with four centuries, including a double ton at an average of 75.40 to break Sunil Gavaskar's record (732) for the highest run tally for an Indian captain in a five-Test series.

Gill's score is now also the second-best



behind Sir Donald Bradman (810 runs) in the all-time list for captains. "Shubman Gill had a sensational month, amassing 567 runs at an impeccable average of 94.50 in three Tests during India's gripping series in England," the ICC wrote on its website.

"He played a starring role in India's record-breaking win at Edgbaston, where he scored a monumental 269 in the first

innings followed by 161 in the second. His combined 430 runs across the two innings is the second highest tally, next only to Graham Gooch's 456," it said.

The ICC said Gill carried the baton from "all-time great" Virat Kohli at No.4. "His consistency at No. 4, carrying on the baton from all-time great Virat Kohli, provided stability and flair in equal measure, combined with his extraordinary captaincy in his debut series," it said.

In his maiden outing as South Africa captain, Mulder struck a mammoth 367 not out against Zimbabwe, but declared his team's innings when he could have broken legendary Brian Lara's record for the highest individual total of 400 not out against England in 2004.

The ICC said, "He scored 531 runs across the two matches at an astonishing average of 265.50, including a composed

147 in the second innings of the first Test. However, his standout act came in the second Test at Bulawayo, where he smashed an unbeaten 367 in his first outing as South Africa's Test skipper, the highest individual score in South African Test history. Mulder also chipped in with the ball, claiming seven wickets at just 15.28 apiece, including a four-wicket haul in the first Test," it said.

The ICC lauded Stokes for his all-round show against India, saying, "He scored 251 runs at an average of 50.20 and took 12 wickets at 26.33, delivering in high-pressure situations with both bat and ball. His leadership proved crucial in maintaining England's intensity and belief in a closely contested series. With ball in hand, he bowled long spells, often breaking key partnerships and turning the tide in England's favour," said the ICC.