



## MP, UP, Haryana are experiencing heat as intense as Egypt and Saudi Arabia

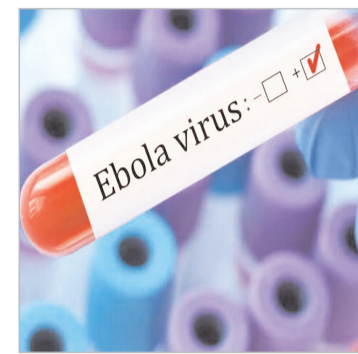
Temperatures reach 48°C four days before Nautapa; 8 schoolgirls faint in UP due to heat.

**Bhopal/Jaipur/Lucknow/Patna(GNS):** Nautapa begins on May 25th, but temperatures have already reached 48°C. This figure was recorded in Banda, Uttar Pradesh. On May 20th, Banda was the third hottest city in the world in terms of temperature. Only Aswan in Egypt, at 49.4°C, and Arafat in Saudi Arabia, recorded temperatures higher than Banda's, at 48.4°C. Khajuraho ranked fourth among the top five cities with the highest temperatures worldwide, at



47.4°C. Meanwhile, in Balrampur, eight female students fainted while studying at the Kasturba Gandhi Residential School due to the intense heat. All of them complained of vomiting, headaches, and fainting. They are undergoing treatment.

On Wednesday, temperatures also remained above 46°C in 16 cities across Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, Punjab, Odisha and Maharashtra.



## Indian government issued alert regarding Ebola virus

If any passenger has symptoms like fever, headache, etc., please report it.

**New Delhi (GNS):** The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has increased vigilance regarding the Ebola virus outbreak in Africa. The Indian government is closely monitoring the situation after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

According to media reports, the Directorate General of Police (DGHS) has issued an advisory to all international airports, specifically for passengers arriving from high-risk countries such as DR Congo, Uganda, and South Sudan. The advisory states that any

passenger experiencing symptoms such as fever, headache, weakness, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, or bleeding should report to the airport health officer before immigration.

A senior Health Ministry official clarified that no cases of Ebola have been reported in India at this time, and the current threat to the country is extremely low. However, as a precaution, surveillance and preparedness are being strengthened. The advisory also states that anyone who has come into contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected patient will be monitored. The government has clarified that if symptoms appear within 21 days of arriving in India, contact a doctor immediately and disclose your travel history.

## Tamil Nadu Congress MLA chants "Long Live Rahul" during oath-taking

**Chennai (GNS):** Controversy erupted again on Thursday during the cabinet expansion of the Vijayawada government in Tamil Nadu. Congress MLA Rajesh Kumar chanted "Long live Kamaraj," "Long live Rajiv Gandhi," and "Long live the people's leader Rahul Gandhi" during the oath-taking ceremony. Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar interrupted him, saying, "This is not part of your oath." Another controversy arose over the playing of a Tamil song, Tamil Nadu's state song, "Tamil Thai Vazhthu," was

Governor interrupts, says "This is not part of the oath"; Vijay's cabinet includes 23 ministers

played last during the ceremony. Under previous governments, it had always been played first.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay Rupani's cabinet was expanded, with 23 MLAs taking oath as ministers, including two Congress MLAs.

**Congress became part of the government after 59 years**

Congress has become a part of the government after 59 years. Previously, the Congress government ruled Tamil Nadu (then Madras State) from 1952 to 1967.



Rajagopalachari, K. Kamaraj, and M. Bhaktavatsalam served as Chief Ministers during this period. After the DMK came to power in 1967, Congress formed an alliance with both the DMK and the AIADMK, but did not join the government.

## Five people, including four members of a Lucknow family, died after their car fell into a ditch in Nainital district.

**Nainital, (GNS):** On Thursday afternoon, a Mahindra car went out of control and fell into a deep ditch on the Sanatorium-Ratighat bypass road in the Bhawali area. Five people died in the accident. These included four members of the same family and the driver. All of them were going to Kainchi Dham. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami expressed deep grief over the accident and directed the local administration to provide all possible help.

According to Nainital Police, Bhopendra Singh Chufal, a resident of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, was going to Kainchi Dham with his wife and children. About 500 meters before Dhaila village on the Sanatorium-Ratighat bypass road, his car went out of control and fell into the ditch. Upon receiving information about the accident, police forces, under the direction of Senior Superintendent of Police Dr. Manjunath TC, immediately arrived at the scene. During the rescue operation, the SDRF and



police teams retrieved all the bodies from the ditch and brought them to the road. The bodies of two men, two women, and a child were found in the crashed car.

According to the police, the deceased have been identified as Bhopendra Singh Chufal (48), his wife Seema Kaida Chufal (45), son Vasu Chufal (19), daughter Ravi Chufal (12), and the driver, Anuj Kumar Mishra (34). Anuj Kumar Mishra, son of Daya Sagar Mishra, was a resident of Afsar Nagar LPG Godown, Alam Nagar, Lucknow.

The road where the accident occurred is proposed as a bypass for Kainchi Dham and is currently under construction.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami expressed deep grief over the accident. Superintendent of Police (Crime), Dr. Jagdish Chandra, Circle Officer (Circle Officer) Ravikant Semwal, and Inspector-in-Charge Prakash Mehra, along with police forces, were present at the scene. Police are investigating the cause of the accident.

## Cockroach Janata Party's X account blocked:

13.4 million followers on Instagram in 6 days, this is 1.5 times the number of BJP followers, more than Congress

**New Delhi (GNS):** The Cockroach Janata Party (CJP), formed six days ago, had over 13.4 million followers on Instagram as of 2 p.m. Thursday. This is more than any other political party in the country. The Congress has 13.3 million followers, the BJP 8.7 million, the AAP 8.7 million, and the CPI(M) 2.35 million.

This party, formed in protest of Chief Justice Surya Kant's cockroach statement, also had over 1.93 lakh followers on X.



However, the X account was blocked around 12 noon on Thursday.

CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke said, "As feared, it has happened. CJP's X account has been banned in India. X has taken action based on local regulations in India, a court order, or a legal complaint."

The CJP party was formed a day after Chief Justice Surya Kant compared some unemployed youth to cockroaches during a case hearing on May 15.

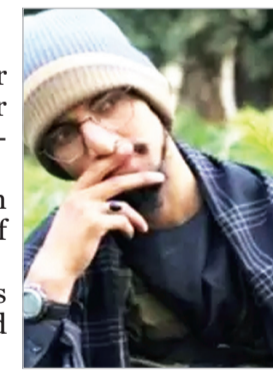
## Hamza Burhan, terrorist involved in the Pulwama attack, killed:

Claim: Unidentified assailants wearing burqas shot him; resident of Kashmir, went to Pakistan on visa

**Islamabad (GNS):** Hamza Burhan, a terrorist involved in the Pulwama terror attack, was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). It is being claimed that the attackers arrived on a motorcycle and were wearing burqas.

The car was stopped in a traffic jam outside AIMS College in Muzaffarabad when the attackers fired multiple shots at the man, killing him on the spot. CCTV footage of the entire incident has also emerged, although it has not been confirmed.

India designated Hamza Burhan as a terrorist under the UAPA in 2022. He was close to Abu Dujana, Abu Qasim, Burhan Wani, and Zakir Musa. He was considered one of the masterminds of the 2019 Pulwama terror attack, which killed 40 soldiers.



## Amarnath Yatra: Over 3.6 lakh registrations, preparations in full swing on difficult routes



**New Delhi (GNS):** Yatra, Baltal-Sonmarg and Nunwan-Pahalgam, are still covered with 10 to 12 feet of snow at many places. However, the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) is working rapidly to restore these difficult roads. BRO officials claim that both routes will be fully ready for the Yatra by June 15. Registrations started on April 15 and are now

ongoing for individuals or small groups through designated branches of Punjab National Bank, Jammu and Kashmir Bank, State Bank of India and Yes Bank, while registrations for groups of 5 to 30 people closed on Wednesday. This year, the comfort and safety of pilgrims have been prioritized. Pre-fabricated and fiber structures are being constructed at the base camp, replacing traditional tents. Each of these modern structures will have 48 rooms, with attached washrooms, hot and cold water, and a pantry. These facilities will effectively protect against sudden temperature drops or rain. Construction began three years ago and is now nearing completion. To ensure the safety of pilgrims, all vulnerable areas and disaster-prone locations have been declared no-entry zones for pilgrims. Given the risk of cloudbursts and flash floods, no camps will be set up in these vulnerable locations this time.

Mamata Banerjee suffers a double blow, first a crushing defeat and now a rift within her party, forcing her to take to the streets

Mamta's politics of simplicity

## 13-year-old girl marries 42-year-old man

Granddaughter sold for grandson's wedding; FIR filed against 13 people, including grandparents and groom

**Indore (GNS):** A case of child marriage has come to light in the Rangwasa area of Indore. Due to family ties and social pressure, a 13-year-old girl was forcibly married to a 42-year-old man. On Wednesday, the Rau police registered an FIR against 13 people, including the groom, his family

members, and the girl's grandparents, and have begun an investigation. Rajneesh Sinha, District Program Officer of the Women and Child Development Department, said that this entire incident happened due to a condition and family pressure. An elderly grandfather from Rangwasa wanted to find a daughter-in-law for his 19-year-old grandson. The grandson's wife (i.e. the girl's sister-in-law) had stipulated that she would only marry into this family if her sister-in-law (the girl) was married to her own uncle (a 42-year-old man).

# Where is this constitutional principle that the law is equal for all?

Sanat Jain

In recent years, serious questions have been raised about the impartiality, corruption, and accountability of the judiciary. According to information provided by the government in Parliament, thousands of complaints of corruption have been received by the government. Among these, the case of former Delhi High Court judge Yashwant Verma is the most concerning. Burnt currency notes worth crores of rupees were found in his residence. A Supreme Court committee investigated, and he was advised to resign, but he initially refused. He was later transferred to the Allahabad High Court, where he was not assigned any judicial duties. Now, he has sub-

mitted his resignation to the President, but until its acceptance, he remains on the list of senior judges of the Allahabad High Court. This entire incident has raised serious questions about the accountability and corruption of the Indian judiciary. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the government have maintained silence despite receiving thousands of complaints, and have taken no action, which is a matter of concern. The most pressing question is: if a judge is accused of serious corruption and resigns before the impeachment process is complete, is no further effective action possible against him? According to the Constitution, the only constitutional method for removing High Court and Supreme Court judges is

impeachment in Parliament. This process is so complex and based on political consensus that it is rarely completed in practice. In such a situation, if a judge resigns, impeachment automatically becomes irrelevant. When a complaint of corruption charges is made to the judiciary or the government, in such a situation, after conducting an internal investigation, the government can terminate the judge's service and prosecute him through the President. The government makes the appointment and also has the right to remove him in case of misconduct.

It is also being argued that the constitutional protections afforded to judges were intended to ensure the independence of the judiciary, not to shield them from corruption

allegations. Judge protection laws and constitutional provisions make it difficult to immediately impact retirement benefits, pensions, and the dignity of the office. If this protection renders the accountability system ineffective, public trust in the judiciary is bound to diminish or even disappear. In the Yashwant Verma case, no clear information has yet emerged about a criminal FIR or a detailed criminal investigation. If such a suspicious amount of cash were found with an ordinary government official, enforcement agencies would have immediately become active. The lack of an investigation process in the name of maintaining the dignity of the judiciary undermines the constitutional principle of "equal law for all." It is true that no judge can be

convicted solely on the basis of allegations. Judicial independence is a fundamental prerequisite of democracy. However, a balance between independence and accountability is also essential. The time has come for Parliament and the judiciary to jointly develop a system whereby judges are investigated independently, transparently, and timely in cases of serious corruption, whether they are in office, have resigned, or have retired. Trial court judges are prosecuted jointly by the High Court and the State Government. The Yashwant Verma case is not a case of one individual; corruption in the judiciary has increased in recent years. This is a time to test the credibility of the Indian judicial system.

## Editorial

### Paradoxes of the oil crisis

Farmers in Buldhana (Maharashtra) have staged a sit-in protest. They can't get enough diesel. Farming is impossible without diesel. In some places, people have even come to blows. In one place, long queues of people carrying trucks, tractors, trolleys, and their own containers and drums stretched. Farmers are forced to spend the night sleeping near petrol pumps, so they are making arrangements by erecting mosquito nets. Some petrol pumps have been closed, with signs posted: "Petrol is out of stock, diesel is not sold here." This is the average picture of India, the reality, yet Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri claims that there is no shortage of crude oil, natural gas, cooking gas, petrol, and diesel in the country. How long will the average Indian survive in such a contradiction? Some statistics are noteworthy. Indian Oil Company has earned profits of over 95,000 crore, Bharatiya Petroleum over 65,000 crore, Hindustan Petroleum over 48,000 crore, and ONGC over 1.5 lakh crore. How cheaply were petrol, diesel, and LPG provided to the average consumer? The government is completely silent on this issue. However, the Petroleum Minister has been lamenting that oil companies are still incurring a daily loss of 750 crore. The price hike in petrol and diesel will only cover 15% of the companies' losses. If petrol and diesel are made more expensive by 10 per liter, 50% of the losses could be covered. When petroleum products become more expensive by 17-18, oil companies may begin to make profits. After all, who are these profits for? Shouldn't a portion of them be shared with the average consumer? Why didn't companies reduce the retail price of petroleum products when crude oil was arriving in the country at \$70-\$72 per barrel? These are Indian public sector companies, run by taxpayer and shareholder funds. They are not just some Lala's business. However, India is facing an oil crisis, and a major oil company will invest nearly 2 lakh crore in the United States! What could be a more ugly and grotesque contradiction than an Indian company investing abroad, not domestically, during a crisis? Similarly, a major pharmaceutical company will invest nearly 2 lakh crore in the United States.

# Biodiversity Conservation: The Biggest Need for Human Survival

Sunil Kumar Mahala

International Day for Biological Diversity is celebrated every year on May 22nd to raise awareness about the conservation of the Earth's diverse fauna, countless flora, and ecosystems. The primary purpose of celebrating this day is to raise public awareness about the conservation of Earth's fauna, flora, microorganisms, and ecosystems. Biodiversity is not only the beauty of nature but also the foundation of human life, food, medicine, water, climate balance, and economic development. Simply put, the millions of flora, fauna, and microorganisms that comprise the fabric of life on Earth are what we call biodiversity. Biodiversity is essentially a combination of two words: "bio," meaning life, and "diversity," meaning variety. Simply put, biodiversity refers to the number and variety of organisms found in a given geographical area. It would not be wrong to say that it refers to the types of plants, animals, and microorganisms. The truth is that biodiversity is a living resource and is the result of millions of years of evolution. Simply put, biodiversity represents the variety and variability of life on Earth. It includes species diversity, ecosystem diversity, and genetic diversity within species. It encompasses the diversity of plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms, as well as the diversity of the ecosystems they inhabit. Types of biodiversity include ecosystem diversity, species diversity, genetic diversity, functional diversity, and cultural diversity. In other words, biodiversity is the diversity of different species and their ecosystems present in an area. We can also say that biodiversity is the biological variety of all life forms on Earth, i.e., plants and animals, which is found in their species, genetics, and ecology. The main objective behind celebrating this day is to raise global awareness about biodiversity conservation, save endangered species and destroyed natural habitats, establish a balance



between the environment and sustainable development, inspire people to live in harmony with nature, and involve governments, organizations, and ordinary citizens in conservation efforts. Let me inform readers that on December 20, 2000, the United Nations General Assembly declared May 22nd as International Biodiversity Day to raise awareness about biodiversity conservation worldwide and protect the world's biodiversity. Every year, a theme is set for this day, and last year, in 2025, the theme for this day was "Harmony with Nature and Sustainable Development." The theme for 2026 is "Local Action, Global Impact." In fact, this theme reminds us that biodiversity conservation is not only possible through large international agreements, but also through the efforts of local communities. Even small efforts by youth and ordinary citizens have a significant impact globally. When we conserve our surrounding environment, local water sources, and native species, it has a positive impact on the entire global ecosystem. Recently, if we consider the history of this day, on May 22, 1992, the draft of the Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted in Nairobi. On December 29, 1992, the Climate Conference held under the auspices of the United Nations focused global attention on biodi-

versity, and the decision was made to celebrate it globally. It is noteworthy that initially, it was celebrated on December 29, but later, in 2000, it was changed to May 22 to ensure participation from more countries. Furthermore, the idea of celebrating it on May 29 was initially mooted, but ultimately, May 22 was agreed upon, and since then, the tradition of celebrating it worldwide has begun. This day is also extremely significant in the context of India. On May 22, 2002, the Government of India took significant steps to advance the historic Biodiversity Act, 2002 in Parliament, which provided legal protection to India's traditional natural resources against international biopiracy. It would not be an exaggeration to say that biodiversity is directly related to human survival. Indeed, the food on our plates and most life-saving medicines are derived from natural flora and fauna. As a reminder, approximately 80 percent of human diets come from plants, and fish is the primary protein source for approximately 3 billion people. Plants absorb carbon dioxide and provide oxygen, while bees and other pollinators play a vital role in crop production, increasing agricultural production. Dense forests and oceans regulate the Earth's temperature and help mitigate the effects of global warming. Biodiversity plays a vital role in

maintaining the balance of ecosystems, soil conservation, pest control, and climate balance. Biodiversity contributes to the availability of food, medicine, timber, fuel, and many other valuable goods and services. Biodiversity is also crucial for human culture and well-being, as it connects us to recreation, spirituality, and aesthetics. It is also a vital source of information for scientific research, helping to deepen understanding of the natural world and improve conservation efforts. If we consider the history of this day, the draft of the Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted in Nairobi on May 22, 1992. On December 29, 1992, the Climate Conference held under the auspices of the United Nations focused global attention on biodiversity, and the decision was made to celebrate it globally. It is noteworthy that initially, it was celebrated on December 29, but later, in 2000, it was changed to May 22 to ensure participation from more countries. Furthermore, it was initially considered to celebrate it on May 29, but ultimately, May 22 was agreed upon, and since then, the tradition of celebrating it worldwide has begun. This day is also very important in the context of India. On May 22, 2002, the Government of India took significant steps in Parliament to advance the landmark Biodiversity Act, 2002, which provided legal protection to India's traditional natural resources against international biopiracy. It would not be an exaggeration to say that biodiversity is directly essential for human survival. Indeed, the food on our plates and most life-saving medicines are derived from natural flora and fauna. As a reminder, approximately 80 percent of human diets come from plants, and fish is the primary protein source for approximately 3 billion people. Plants absorb carbon dioxide and provide oxygen, while bees and other pollinators play a vital role in crop production, increasing agricultural production.

# New rays of hope from the rise of Tamil politics in Tamil Nadu

Vinod Kumar Singh

The changing mandate of the Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections 26 has given a new message to Indian democracy from Tamil Dravidian politics to "New Tamil Politics".

India and Indian democracy are always discussed on the global political stage. In India, the Constitution is supreme. It clearly mentions the fundamental rights and duties of its citizens. It has given voting rights to its citizens. The biggest strength of Indian democracy has been that the people here have been changing the power, equations and political ideologies and concepts from time to time. The

power of any political party is not permanent in Indian politics. Sometimes the influence of national political parties is at its peak, and sometimes regional identity emerges as a new political stream. In recent times, the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu has been a prime example of this political transformation. It is well known that in 1967, when Dravidian politics, led by C.N. Annadurai, ended the long-standing political dominance of the Congress party and seized power, no one could have imagined that in the coming decades, Tamil Nadu would become the most influential political laboratory in Indian politics. At that time,

the Dravidian movement was not merely a means to win elections, but had become a major movement for social justice, linguistic identity, regional pride, and political self-respect. For the first time, Tamil society realized that it could have its own political identity, separate from the politics of Delhi. This was the period when politics and cinema combined to give birth to a new social consciousness in South India. The dialogues of Tamil films were no longer merely entertainment, but also became political messages. Heroes on the silver screen, defenders of the poor and fighters against injustice, gradually became heroes of

the real politics of the people. From this political and cultural milieu emerged charismatic leaders like M.G. Ramachandran, who exerted such influence on the public that the popularity of films directly translated into political support. His successor, J. Jayalalitha, carried forward this tradition and established a distinct identity for women's leadership in Tamil politics. This unique confluence of film and politics in South India gradually reached Andhra Pradesh, where N.T. Rama Rao transformed Telugu identity into political power. This was a new era when the power of regional parties was rapidly growing in comparison to

national political parties. For nearly six decades, Tamil Nadu politics revolved around the Dravidian parties. Sometimes the DMK came to power, sometimes the AIADMK, but the political center remained the same. The options before the people kept changing, but the core of politics remained the Dravidian ideology. However, times do not remain the same. In politics, generations change, priorities change, and public expectations also shift. The 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections will be the most significant example of this change.

This election not only overturned all political pundits'

predictions but also proved that when the public is determined to change, even decades-old political structures can be shaken. For the first time, a new political trend emerged under the leadership of popular Tamil film actor Vijay, attempting to break Tamil Nadu politics from the traditional Dravidian-versus-Dravidian conflict. Vijay presented himself not only as an actor but also as the leader of "new Tamil politics." The throngs of young people at his rallies, his extraordinary popularity on social media, and his anger against traditional politics completely transformed the electoral atmosphere.

# CM Rekha launches Rs 10-cr talent hunt scheme for youth

**New Delhi, (GNS):** Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday launched the 'Talent Hunt Scheme - Hauslon Ki Udaan 2026-27', a Rs 10-crore initiative aimed at identifying, nurturing and promoting hidden talent among young people across the national capital.

Announcing the scheme at CM Jan Seva Sadan, Gupta described the initiative as "much more than just a competition" and said it would provide a major platform for Delhi's youth to showcase their creativity, confidence and artistic abilities at the state and national levels. The official logo of the scheme was also unveiled during the event. The programme, which will be implemented by the



Department of Art, Culture and Languages, is open to youth aged between 16 and 35 years. Registrations have started free of cost through a dedicated portal [www.delhitalenthunt.com] from today, where participants can upload

videos and apply in different categories. According to the government, more than 25,000 participants are expected to take part in the competition. Speaking at the launch, Gupta said the government

believes every young person possesses talent and only needs the right opportunity and platform to succeed. She said the initiative not only aims to discover talent but also encourage self-confidence, self-employment and self-reliance among youth from different social and economic backgrounds. The Chief Minister said the scheme would cover all 70 Assembly constituencies in Delhi and would be conducted in a transparent and phased manner to ensure equal opportunity for participants. "Hauslon Ki Udaan' is not merely a talent hunt programme but a platform that will help Delhi's youth establish their identity before the country and the world," she said.

# Ebola scare: Delhi airport issues advisory for passengers arriving from Congo, Uganda, South Sudan

**New Delhi, (GNS):** Indira Gandhi International Airport has issued a health advisory on Thursday for passengers travelling from or transiting through Ebola-affected countries, directing those showing symptoms to immediately report to airport health authorities for screening.

According to the advisory issued by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) under the Union Health Ministry, travellers arriving from countries reporting Ebola cases - including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and South Sudan - have been asked to remain alert for symptoms associated with the disease. The advisory states that passengers experiencing symptoms such as fever, vomiting, diarrhoea, headache, muscle pain, weakness, sore throat or unexplained bleeding must immediately report to the Airport Health Officer or health desk before immigration clearance. Authorities have also



advised travellers who may have come into direct contact with the blood or bodily fluids of a suspected or confirmed Ebola patient to undergo immediate screening. The notice further stated that any passenger developing symptoms within 21 days of arrival should seek medical care without delay and inform healthcare officials about their travel history.

The advisory has been issued as part of preventive public health measures and enhanced airport surveillance protocols.

## Talent hunt scheme for young offers prizes up to Rs 2.5 lakh

**New Delhi, (GNS):** Delhi govt on Wednesday launched a talent hunt scheme to promote young people across the city in diverse creative fields such as singing and dancing to theatre and digital arts. With a proposed budget of Rs 10 crore, the scheme will offer cash prizes of up to Rs 2.5 lakh and provide a competitive platform for people aged 16 to 35 through a four-stage selection process under seven categories. "The objective of the scheme is also to create an inclusive and accessible platform that encourages diversity, self-employment and self-reliance among talented youth," chief minister Rekha Gupta said while launching Talent Hunt Scheme - Hauslon Ki Udaan 2026-27 from her residence in Civil Lines as Delhi govt ministers and officials worked from home on Wednesday to save fuel. "The initiative will help promote Delhi's rich cultural heritage alongside modern creative expression." Over 25,000 participants are expected to take part at different stages. They can register for free through www.delhitalenthunt.com from Wednesday, govt said. The portal will also carry registration details, programme information and regular updates. Under singing, participants can compete in classical, folk and non-classical music, while the dance category will include classical, folk and contemporary/non-classical forms, said an official. The categories will also include fine art and digital art, sculpture and pottery, music composition, instrumental music, and acting and theatre. The first stage will involve online registration, screening and shortlisting, and 24,500 candidates will move to the next round. In the second stage, 35 cluster-level competitions will be organised, with each cluster covering two assembly constituencies, to pick 2,450 participants.

The third stage will consist of four zonal-level competitions where the best performers from each category will be selected, and the final stage will end with a state-level grand finale in Aug featuring 28 finalists. "Altogether 25% weightage in the evaluation process will come from online public voting, while the remaining 75 per cent will be based on assessment by an expert jury comprising experienced and reputed professionals from relevant fields," CM said, adding that Bollywood personalities are expected to attend the final.

# Fresh push to improve heritage tourism experience in Delhi

**New Delhi, (GNS):** EaseMyTrip Foundation, the CSR arm of travel-tech platform EaseMyTrip, has partnered with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to launch Savae Cafeteria at the Qutub Minar complex in Delhi. The initiative aims to improve visitor experience at one of India's most visited heritage monuments by offering clean, hygienic and affordable food facilities.

The launch event was attended by Tourism Secretary Shri Bhuvnesh Kumar, Culture Secretary Shri Vivek Aggarwal, senior ASI officials and representatives from the foundation. The collaboration reflects growing



efforts to strengthen India's heritage tourism infrastructure through public-private partnerships.

The initiative comes at a time when heritage and experiential tourism are witnessing rapid growth in the country,

with India recently recording over 250 crore domestic tourist visits. Qutub Minar alone attracts nearly three million visitors annually and remains one of the country's highest-footfall monuments.

Ajay Verna, Chief Experience Officer of the foundation, noted that modern travellers increasingly prefer immersive and experience-driven journeys, making visitor comfort and infrastructure important parts of tourism today.

The foundation is also exploring heritage walks and integrated cultural experiences to improve engagement and promote sustainable tourism. It currently supports

four heritage monuments under the 'Adopt a Heritage' initiative, including Agra Fort, Khajuraho, Sun Temple and Qutub Minar.

Commenting on the launch, Rikant Pittie, CEO & Co-Founder, EaseMyTrip, said, "Today's launch of Savae Cafeteria at Qutub Minar premises marks an important milestone in partnership with the Archaeological Survey of India to enhance visitor experiences at one of India's most iconic heritage landmarks."

He added that such collaborations are important for strengthening India's tourism ecosystem while preserving cultural heritage for future generations.

# Delhi-NCR taxi and auto unions begin 3-day strike: All you need to know

**New Delhi, (GNS):** Commercial vehicle drivers' unions in Delhi-NCR began a three-day strike on Thursday, demanding a hike in taxi and auto fares amid rising fuel prices, though several auto and taxi unions distanced themselves from the protest, saying services would continue as usual.

The strike, called from May 21 to 23, was announced by the All India Motor Transport Congress and supported by the Chaalak Shakti Union.

The unions have said the increase in CNG, petrol and diesel prices has made it difficult for drivers to support their families. "Due to the continuously increasing prices of CNG, petrol and diesel, middle-class drivers are struggling to support their families. Therefore, in coordination



with other organisations of Delhi, the 'Chaalak Shakti Union' has called for a Chakka Jam (strike) and appealed not to operate vehicles on May 21, 22 and 23," said Anuj Kumar Rathore, vice-president of the Chaalak Shakti Union.

Also read: Fuel price hike: Delhi-NCR to see three-day strike by cab, auto drivers

The unions have demanded that the Delhi government immediately revise taxi and auto fares, warning of a larger

protest if no action is taken. "If the government does not immediately increase taxi fares and issue a notification within one or two weeks, this movement will be intensified into a large-scale protest, for which the Delhi government solely would be responsible," the union said.

In a letter to Delhi lieutenant governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu and chief minister Rekha Gupta, the All India Motor Transport Congress said commercial drivers were facing "economic exploitation" and demanded stronger policies to protect them.

The unions also alleged that app-based cab companies were "acting arbitrarily", while drivers in Delhi were "becoming victims of economic exploitation and slavery-like conditions."

# 89 cyber offenders brought to justice during April crackdown in west Delhi



**New Delhi, (GNS):** The Delhi Police busted multiple interstate cyber fraud syndicates and brought 89 criminals to justice during its April crackdown in west Delhi, officials said on Wednesday.

According to the police, 35 accused were arrested, while warnings were issued to 54 others and investigation into 34 major cyber fraud cases was completed during operations conducted across several states, including Jharkhand, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Delhi. The syndicates were involved in digital arrest scams, investment frauds, APK file scams, fake dating membership frauds and mule account operations, they said. Financial recovery operations by the district police also proved to be effective as of the total cheated amount of Rs 3.36 crores reported during the month, the teams succeeded in securing Rs 1.11 crores through immediate lien marking and banking coordination.

# Murder convict turns bizman, nabbed from UP after 24 years

**New Delhi, (GNS):** The double life of Nandlal Verma, a seemingly humble spare auto parts businessman living with his family in Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh, came crashing down after police discovered that he was actually Rakesh Patel, a murder convict absconding for 24 years.

Patel, originally from northwest Delhi's Jahangirpuri, had stabbed a neighbour to death along with two of his associates, Chander Prakash and Anil Kumar, over a trivial matter in 1990. He was arrested, and sentenced to life imprisonment five years later. He had gained the trust of authorities when he was first granted parole for his wedding in 1999. Three years later, when he was granted parole in 2002 for the birth of his



second child, he didn't surrender, and fled. After Patel was identified as one of the parole jumpers, a police team carried out an extensive analysis of his jail records, parole history, criminal antecedents, mobile phone details, known addresses and information related to his relatives, associates and suspected hideouts. "Technical as well as manual surveillance was

mounted to ascertain his current whereabouts," said DCP (crime) Pankaj Kumar. "Raids were conducted repeatedly at the known addresses and suspected hideouts in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh," he added. A team was sent to Prayagraj after a tip-off was received that Patel had been living there along with his family and had changed his name to Nandlal Verma. He tried to

conceal his identity before the team and claimed that he had no connection with the murder case, said police.

Although he was allegedly unable to produce any valid documents establishing his identity, his son had shown certain documents that made investigators more suspicious and prompted them to conduct a more intense verification. Confronted with ample evidence, Patel finally confessed, claimed police.

He told the cops that after jumping parole, he had moved between different locations to evade arrest and eventually settled in Prayagraj, where he started an auto spare parts business to sustain himself and his family while remaining under the radar for years. He shifted to the current place in Prayagraj in 2022.

# Dowry death case registered after 25-year-old woman's fall in west Delhi

**New Delhi, (GNS):** A case of dowry death has been registered two days after a 25-year-old woman died after allegedly falling from a building in west Delhi's Dasghara village.

The woman was married to Raju Singh, who works in customer verification for a private real estate company. The couple, married in 2022, and had a six-month-old child. The woman was a homemaker, said police.

According to investigators, a PCR call was received regarding a woman falling from a building, near Holi Chowk, in Dasghara village. A team from Inderpuri police station reached the spot and shifted the woman to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared her brought dead. "The woman had been married for less than seven years. Mandatory legal proceedings were ini-



tiated and the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) of the Karol Bagh area was informed," said DCP (west) Darade Sharad Bhaskar. Statements of the deceased woman's family members were subsequently recorded as part of the inquest proceedings. The crime and the forensic science laboratory (FSL) teams from Rohini collected evidence from the spot. The woman's post-mortem was also conducted on Wednesday.

"When statements were recorded of family mem-

bers, it emerged that the woman was being harassed for dowry, which may have led her to jump," said a senior police officer. The facts of the case are being ascertained and verified, the officer added.

Based on the inquiry, statements of relatives and the post-mortem report, police have registered an FIR under Sections 80 (dowry death) and 3(5) (common intention) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita against the woman's husband and his two brothers on Wednesday.

## Women lead Cong 'Halla Bol' against price rise, BJP dismisses 'political melodrama'

**New Delhi, (GNS):** Around 300 people, mostly women, marched through the Kotla Mubarakpur market on Wednesday evening as Congress organised 'Halla Bol' over rising inflation, alleging that the prices of essential commodities have increased sharply under BJP-run central govt and pushed middle-class and lower-income families into financial distress.

Gathering near Pitanji Chowk in Kasturba Nagar, the protesters highlighted the increasing costs of milk, LPG cylinders, petrol, diesel, vegetables and other household essentials. Many women participants said stagnant salaries and soaring prices were making it difficult to manage daily household expenses. "We are earning the same salaries, but prices of everything have increased. How will we run our households?" asked Anamika.

Rajendra Singh, who runs a business to support his four-member family, said, "Common people are suffering the most because every essential item has become expensive." Congress national secretary Abhishek Dutt said, "People voted with hopes of better days, but today everything from bread to petrol and CNG has become four to five times more expensive." Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said that while the prices of commodities did rise over time, Congress' protest was nothing more than "political melodrama". "It should explain why, between 2004 and 2014, during Congress govt, the country witnessed an average inflation rate of 8.2%, which rose to 10.9% in 2009," he said. "In comparison, between 2014 and 2025, India witnessed a much lower average inflation rate of 4.7%."

## Delhi taxi union opts out of three-day transport strike



**New Delhi, (GNS):** As transport unions across parts of the country prepare for a proposed three-day strike beginning May 21, the Delhi Taxi and Tourist Transport Association on Wednesday distanced itself from the agitation, saying it would neither participate in nor support the shutdown planned for May 21, 22 and 23. The announcement was made by association president Sanjay Samrat after consultations with office-bearers and members of the body representing taxi and tourist transport operators in the national capital.

In a statement, Samrat said the country was going through a difficult phase amid rising international oil and gas prices and asserted that disrupting public transport services at such a time would only inconvenience ordinary citizens. He said the association believed it was important to stand with the nation instead of adding to public hardship through strikes. The development assumes significance as transport disruptions were expected to affect movement in parts of the country during the proposed agitation. By opting out, the Delhi-based taxi and tourist vehicle body has signalled a visible split within sections of the transport sector over how protests against policy decisions should be carried out. Explaining the association's stand, Samrat said the organisation had consistently raised concerns over issues affecting taxi and tourist vehicle operators and had democratically opposed policies it considered detrimental to the sector.

# Gadkari reviews 793 Km of National Highways in Tripura at high-level Delhi meeting

**New Delhi, (GNS):** Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari held a high-level meeting in the national capital and reviewed the quality and maintenance progress of 793 km of National Highway stretches covering 41 projects in Tripura.

The review was undertaken following inputs received through media reports and social media feedback, officials from the ministry said.

During the meeting, Gadkari stressed the need to expedite project execution while ensuring strict adherence to quality standards. He also emphasised the adoption of advanced construction technologies to build durable and high-perform-



ance highway infrastructure.

The minister further directed officials to strengthen monitoring mechanisms and ensure comprehensive monsoon preparedness measures, including efficient drainage systems, slope stabilisation, and rapid

response arrangements to maintain road safety and uninterrupted connectivity across the state.

Yesterday, Gadkari also reviewed the quality and maintenance progress of 4,178 km of National Highway projects in Assam.

## Why this forest is the hottest area in Delhi

**New Delhi, (GNS):** The Kamla Nehru Ridge is a lush green expanse with minimal concrete. It is away from dense urban construction and vehicular movement. Peacocks roam freely, monkeys swing from branches and mongooses, boars and reptiles thrive in the dense vegetation.

Why then, does it emerge as the hottest part of Delhi regularly?

By late afternoon and evening, the heat becomes palpable at the meteorological observa-



tory inside the premises of the regional seismological centre, popularly known as "Bhuchaal Bhawan". The Ridge

observatory recorded the city's highest maximum temperatures, among the manned stations, on all three days this week -

44.6 degrees Celsius on Monday, 46.5 degrees Celsius on Tuesday and 45.8 degrees Celsius on Wednesday. On each of these days, Safdarjung, Delhi's base weather station and the benchmark for the city's official weather readings, recorded temperatures at least a degree lower.

AK Singh, the scientific officer stationed at the observatory, explained that the Ridge consistently behaves differently from the rest of Delhi. "Generally, the Ridge

observatory often records the highest maximum temperature, lowest minimum temperature, as well as the maximum precipitation," Singh said.

"It's because of its unique geography. It's a forest, but with rocky terrain. The rocks absorb heat, thereby increasing the temperature; they also radiate the heat. Later they cool down quite quickly, thus impacting the minimum temperatures. Due to greenery, the rain in the

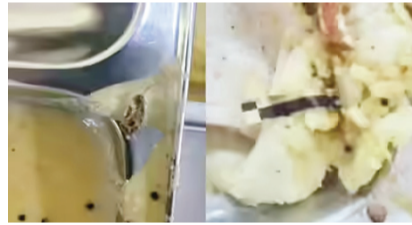
area is also often high," he added as he accesses the Stevenson screen (an enclosure to protect meteorological instruments) to take a temperature reading. The Ridge is one of the five manned weather observatories maintained by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) in the capital. Readings are recorded every three hours. The other manned observatories are in Safdarjung, Palam, Ayanagar and Lodhi Road.

## Cockroach found in South Campus DU hostel mess food, students hold protest

**New Delhi, (GNS):** A student has reported finding a cockroach in a serving of chutney in the boys' hostel mess of Delhi University's South Campus, days after a gutka wrapper was found in a dosa.

The insect was swimming in a serving of chutney that came with the uttapam breakfast on Tuesday. The hostel caretaker, a student said, acted casually when this was pointed out. He told the student to take a different plate. A protest started on the campus soon after. The students of Sabarmati and Aravali hostels started the agitation, raising concerns over food safety and hygiene.

About 15 days earlier, a gutka wrapper was allegedly found in a dosa filling during breakfast. Videos and photos circulating on social media purportedly show the contaminated food. Sambhav, the first-year MA history student from Bihar, who found the insect in



his food, told Media: "I was taking food from the counter when I noticed a cockroach in the chutney. I immediately flagged it to the caretaker serving us. He took it casually and told me to take a different plate. It was treated as if it is normal. This is not the first time. Every now and then, insects are found in the food, and even after repeated complaints, nothing has improved." Paban, a first-year MA student of political science from Assam, alleged that he fell ill after breakfast on Tuesday. "I had an exam that day, so I quickly ate breakfast and left. I felt nauseous during the exam and had to step out to

vomit, which wasted my time and may affect my performance. I was taken to the hostel health facility, where I was told I may have eaten something bad. Later, I found out through a hostel WhatsApp group that a cockroach was found in the food," he told Media. He added that he wrote to hostel authorities seeking a rebate in the mess fees and permission to avoid mess food while recovering, and alleged that he was threatened with eviction after raising the complaint.

Students residing in the hostels claimed the incidents were not isolated, alleging that residents have fallen ill in the past because of poor food quality. They also flagged unhygienic conditions in the kitchen and shared images that showed a cockroach infestation in pantry areas, use of partially rotten vegetables, and dough being kneaded using the wastewater of a water purifier.

## Delhi Govt approves Rs 473-cr project to replace 96K streetlights in Capital

**New Delhi, (GNS):** In a major infrastructure push linked to road and women's security, the Delhi Government has approved a Rs 473-crore project to replace nearly 96,000 street lights across the Capital with smart LED systems capable of real-time monitoring and remote operation. The decision was taken during an Expenditure Finance Committee meeting chaired by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday, with the government setting a target to complete the transformation before Diwali.

Officials said the project would cover roads maintained by the PWD and include replacement of existing high-pressure sodium vapour (HPSV) lights and older LED fixtures with advanced smart LEDs. Around 5,000 additional poles will also be installed to



illuminate stretches currently lacking adequate street lighting. The move comes amid growing concerns over poorly lit roads, dark spots and delayed repairs caused by the absence of real-time monitoring systems. "Dark spots often remain unattended for long periods, affecting visibility and public safety, especially women's safety," said CM Gupta, adding that the new system would provide more uniform lighting while reducing electricity consumption and operational delays.

## Delhi swelters under heatwave as Ridge hits 46.5°C; orange alert across NCR extended till May 26

**New Delhi, (GNS):** The city continued to sizzle on Wednesday, with isolated heatwave conditions recorded in parts. The mercury touched 46.5°C in North Delhi's Ridge, 46.3°C in northwest Delhi's Mungeshpur and 44.5°C - 4.1 notches above normal - at Safdarjung, the city's base station. No respite is in store. A heatwave warning was extended till May 26 and an orange alert is in place till then. Isolated to citywide heatwave conditions are likely to persist, with the maximum temperature expected to hover between 43°C and 47°C, Met officials said. On Tuesday, Safdarjung logged a season-high maximum of 45.1°C. For heatwave conditions to be declared in the plains, the maximum temperature should either be above 45°C, or above 40°C with a departure of more than 4.5 notches above normal. A severe heatwave is declared when the departure is at least 6.5°C above normal.

On Wednesday, Delhi's four weather stations - Mungeshpur, Lodhi



Road, Ayanagar and Ridge - met these heatwave criteria. Heatwave is declared in the entire city when these conditions are met in Safdarjung as well.

"With clear skies and dry westerly winds persisting, Delhi-NCR continued to record high temperatures, similar to large parts of northwest and central India. No significant change in weather conditions is likely, till at least the weekend, meaning heatwave conditions should persist in parts of the city," an IMD official said. In 2025, Delhi didn't have any heatwave in May because of strong western disturbances and a cumulative rainfall of 185.92 mm.

## Amid uncertainty and missing basics, evicted families arrive at Savda Ghevra

**New Delhi, (GNS):** Manisha, 38, has spent the past four years cooped up inside her allotted flat in the DUSIB-run Savda Ghevra resettlement colony with her four children, while her husband continues to stay in east Delhi to save on commuting costs. Her youngest child, aged just four, sleeps through the sweltering heat as the AC has stopped working "due to fluctuations of voltage" - a routine problem in the colony that is now preparing to receive a fresh deluge of evicted families from 11 Delhi colonies.

A total of 717 flats in the resettlement hub, already cut off from markets and basic amenities, have been earmarked for relocation despite many lacking electricity meters and water supply. Workers were seen installing meters at the site, yet, several soon-to-be residents remain sceptical that the arrangements will be completed



before May 26 - the deadline set by Delhi High Court for allottees to move in. The court had on May 12 cleared the relocation process and finalised the evictions.

Asked about the preparations for the incoming residents, a DUSIB official maintained that arrangements were already in place. According to the official, families are required to pay Rs 30,000 towards maintenance charges covering the next five years. On electricity connections, the official said, "About 200 families had applied for meters, and so far, most of them have been set up." Regarding water supply, the official stated

pipelines had already been laid. "If there's any shortage, each compound has been equipped with a motor to draw water," he added.

However, during Media's visit, 60-year-old Amar Singh (name changed for anonymity), relocated from Masjid Camp near the PM's residence at Lok Kalyan Marg, was seen hauling buckets of water up to his allotted fifth-floor flat so the toilet could be made usable. Singh said it was his father who had first settled there in 1958 while helping lay railway tracks in the city. Over the years, Singh built a small business, eventually amassing enough amount to plan his son's marriage. "I had just built a home for us in 2023, and now I had to move out as we were served notices," he said, as his wife swept the yet-to-be-smoothed cement floor. For longtime residents like Manisha, however, such hardships are hardly new. From the lack of last-mile con-

nectivity to the nearest metro station at Ghevra, located about 3km away, to the absence of schools and medical clinics within nearly a 4km radius, daily life inside the colony has long revolved around compromise. The nearest medical facility, Ghevra's Arogya Mandir, is also located about 3km away. Residents said even delivery applications serviced the colony only until about a year ago before gradually discontinuing operations beyond the periphery of Ghevra. For many families, that meant losing one of the few accessible options for day-to-day necessities.

Outside one of the blocks, Anush, a young boy whose family had moved from the Janakpuri slum cluster to the third floor in 2023, pointed to another issue:

"Security remains a larger concern as many of these flats remain vacated, giving a wide avenue for the thieves to come inside."