



Jagannath Rath Yatra Begins Today

Hotels Booked Six Months in Advance

Room Rent Jumps from Rs 1,500 to Rs 50,000

Puri, (GNS): The famous Lord Jagannath Rath Yatra in Puri, Odisha, will begin on Thursday, July 16. The grand festival will continue till July 24, with more than 10 lakh devotees expected to participate. Hotels and lodges in Puri have been completely booked



due to the Rath Yatra. According to the district administration, bookings started as early as February



this year. Hotels and lodges located near the temple and

Rath Yatra route are in the highest demand. There is especially high demand for hotels whose balconies and windows open towards the Rath Yatra route. Compared to last year, hotel and lodge charges have increased up to ten times. Lodges that normally charge Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,000 are now charging up to Rs 50,000 for three days during the Rath Yatra period. There are around 1,200 hotels across the city.

Supreme Court Refuses to Stay Three-Language Policy

- Says Learning Any Language Is Never Useless
- CBSE Implemented Policy from This Session



New Delhi, (GNS): The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to stay the three-language policy of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). The court said that learning any language is never useless. The Supreme Court questioned whether English can be considered an indigenous (native) language of India. It also sought responses from the government and CBSE within 10 days regarding the challenges involved in implementing the policy. The next hearing in the matter will be held after 14 days on July 29. The three-language policy has been implemented from the current 2026-27 academic session. According to the new policy, students will have to study two Indian languages and one foreign language. As a result, they may have to discontinue languages that they have been studying continuously since Class 5.

Monsoon Stalls in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, Heavy Rainfall in UP and Bihar

Moist Winds Coming from Bay of Bengal Responsible; Red Alert Issued in Odisha

New Delhi/ Bhopal/ Jaipur, (GNS): The monsoon is not behaving uniformly across the country. While monsoon activity has slowed down in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, and Punjab, several areas of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and eastern Uttar Pradesh are receiving heavy rainfall. The Meteorological Department said that the



monsoon trough and moist winds coming from the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal have stalled over

eastern India. Due to this, sufficient moisture-laden winds are not reaching western and northern India, resulting in reduced rainfall activity. According to the Meteorological Department, good rainfall may begin in these states after a few days when a new low-pressure system develops or the monsoon trough moves towards the west. A red alert has been issued for heavy rainfall in Odisha.

Satellite Image Shows Monsoon Situation Across the Country: Satellite images show that the main focus of rainfall is currently over eastern and northeastern India. Dense clouds are visible over Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh,

Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura. Meanwhile, clouds have disappeared from Rajasthan, Gujarat, western Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, and western Maharashtra.

Red Alert in Odisha Before Jagannath Rath Yatra: The Meteorological Department has issued a warning of heavy rainfall in several parts of Odisha

Floods Affect 1.40 Lakh People in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh: In Arunachal Pradesh, four districts have suffered damage due to floods, landslides, and heavy rainfall during the last 24 hours. More than 1.02 lakh people have been affected in the state, with seven deaths and 29 injuries reported so far.

during the Rath Yatra, including Puri.

Urgent Hearing in Delhi High Court on Sonam Wangchuk's Hunger Strike

Court Seeks Response from Centre and Delhi Government

New Delhi, (GNS): A petition has been filed in the Delhi High Court regarding Sonam Wangchuk, who has been on a hunger strike at Jantar Mantar for the past 18 days. The petition seeks immediate medical assistance and treatment for Wangchuk. A bench of Justice D.K. Upadhyay and Justice Tejas Karia has sought responses from the Central and Delhi governments by Thursday morning.



The hearing will take place on Thursday as no government lawyer was present due to the Bar Association's boycott. Petitioner Rakesh

Kumar Saini told the court through video conferencing that Wangchuk's health condition was deteriorating due to the hunger strike and requested an urgent hearing.

Wangchuk has been on a fast since June 28 demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over alleged irregularities in NEET paper leaks and examination processes.

Karnataka: Woman Arrested for Allegedly Performing Black Magic on Judge's Chair

65-Year-Old Wanted Court Verdict in Her Favour

Chikkaballapur, (GNS): A 65-year-old woman, Manjula, has been arrested in Karnataka's Chikaballapur district for allegedly performing black magic on a judge's chair.

The woman allegedly wanted the verdict in her pending family civil case to go in her favour. According to police, the incident took place on July 9 and came to light on July 14.



Mustard Seeds Scattered on Judge's Chair: According to police, the incident occurred at around 9:40 am on July 9 in the court of the First Additional Senior Civil Judge

and Judicial Magistrate First Class. The woman allegedly entered the court room and scattered white mustard seeds that had been used for a ritual on the judge's table.

US May Impose 100% Tariff on India

Action Planned Against Countries Buying Russian Oil

Washington DC, (GNS): The United States has started preparations to tighten restrictions on countries purchasing oil from Russia. A bill has been introduced in the US Senate proposing a 100% tariff on five countries, including India and China. Hungary, Slovakia, and Azerbaijan are also included in the list. According to the bill, goods imported from these countries could face tariffs of up to 100%. It also includes provisions for imposing new sanctions on



Russia's energy, financial, and defence sectors. Earlier, the initial draft of the bill had proposed a 500% tariff, but it was later reduced to 100%. If the bill is passed, the US would, for the first time, impose tariffs on a country solely because it is buying oil from Russia and

increasing Moscow's revenue. The aim of the move is to put economic pressure on Russia's oil trade and weaken its ability to continue the war.

India Bought More Than Half of Its Oil from Russia Last Month India purchased a record 2.61 million barrels per day of crude oil from Russia in June 2026, accounting for 52.4% of the country's total oil imports. This means that more than one out of every two barrels of oil imported by India last month came from Russia.

Government Reiterates Again: Passport Is Not Proof of Citizenship

It Is a Travel Document Issued for Foreign Travel; Less Than 8% Indians Have One

New Delhi, (GNS): The Central Government has once again clarified that a passport is not proof of citizenship.

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on



Tuesday that under the Passport Act, 1967, the Government of India issues passports to Indian citizens for travelling outside the country.

The ministry said that a passport is a document

issued only after complete verification and scrutiny. It is governed by the Passport Act, 1967, and the Passport Rules, 1980.

Jaiswal said that less than 8% of India's citizens possess passports.

US Bombs Iran for Seven Hours

Military Bases Targeted; Iran Attacks US Bases in Bahrain, Kuwait, and Jordan

Tel Aviv/ Tehran/ Washington DC, (GNS): The United States carried out attacks on Iran for the fourth consecutive night on Tuesday. According to the US Central Command (CENTCOM), the seven-hour-long operation targeted Iran's missile and drone facilities, naval resources, and coastal defence systems around the Strait of Hormuz.



Meanwhile, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) claimed that it launched retaliatory operations and attacked US military bases in Bahrain, Kuwait, and Jordan. The IRGC

also claimed that it targeted the US Fifth Fleet base in Bahrain and Al-Azraq Air Base in Jordan. Amid the escalating tensions, US President Donald Trump warned Iran that if Tehran does not move towards an agreement, power plants and bridges could also become targets next week. On the other hand, Iran has made it regarding the Strait of Hormuz.

Transparency faces a litmus test at Ram's temple

(Kumar Krishnan)

The Shri Ram Temple in Ayodhya is not just a religious site. It symbolizes the faith of millions of Indians, a national resolve realized after more than five centuries of struggle, social movements, and a historic Supreme Court decision. People from every corner of the country contributed financially to the construction of this temple according to their devotion. Some donated a hundred rupees, some their life savings, and others offered gold, silver, and precious metals. Therefore, every question related to the Ram Temple is not just a matter of a trust or

institution, but a question of the faith of millions of devotees. This is why, when the matter of alleged irregularities in offerings and donations to the temple reached the Supreme Court, it attracted nationwide attention. The Supreme

Court, while hearing public interest litigations filed in this matter, has sought responses from the Central Government, the Uttar Pradesh Government, and the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust. It has also summoned a status report from the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of Uttar Pradesh. The Court has also set a date for the next

hearing in the case. This action by the court is not to convict anyone, but to ensure that the allegations are investigated impartially and transparently, and the truth emerges. This is the role of the judiciary in a democracy—to maintain trust and strengthen the rule of law. The petitions allege serious irregularities in the management of donations and offerings received at the temple. Allegations include alleged embezzlement of offerings by some employees, unauthorized possession of donation room keys, and negligence in financial procedures. The Vishwa Sindhi Seva Sangam has also expressed concern

about the lack of proper receipts and the security of approximately 200 kilograms of silver bricks donated to the temple in 2021. The Trust has also taken steps such as revoking the credentials of some employees and making changes to the darshan system. Amidst all this, the SIT investigation and the court process will ultimately determine the truth.

The most important point here is that there are allegations, not a verdict. The court has only sought answers, not declared anyone guilty. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the media, politics, and society—all three—to respect the judicial process.

It is unfair to prejudge someone, and equally wrong to dismiss every allegation as a conspiracy without investigation.

But this entire episode has raised a significant question. Is there adequate financial transparency within India's major religious institutions? Temples, gurudwaras, monasteries, dargahs, and other religious institutions receive donations worth thousands of crores of rupees every year. This money does not come in the form of taxes, but rather represents people's faith. Therefore, it should be managed with the same level of sanctity and transparency.

Some of the country's leading religious institutions have taken significant steps toward modern financial management. Systems such as digital accounting systems, online donations, CCTV monitoring, regular audits, and public income-expenditure statements are gradually increasing. However, in many places, traditional systems, with limited oversight and inadequate accountability, persist. As the size of institutions and the amount of donations increase, relying solely on tradition cannot continue. Embracing modern management and transparency is the need of the hour.

Editorial

On Wimbledon 2026

When Jannik Sinner arrived at Wimbledon, there were questions aplenty. They hinged on the defeat he suffered at the French Open, where he wilted in the second round under the extreme Paris heat despite being two sets and 5-1 up. When he needed five sets to get past the first round at the All England Club, the intrigue about his physical health and state of tennis deepened. None of his achievements in the 52 weeks preceding Wimbledon — 76 wins against just six losses, and 10 titles — seemed to matter. But with two superlative performances, against Novak Djokovic in the semifinal and Alexander Zverev in the final, the World No. 1 silenced the doubters in the best possible fashion. Djokovic and Zverev were his two biggest threats, with the former a seven-time winner at SW19 and the latter the reigning Roland-Garros champion. But the Italian's top-notch serving and baseline consistency fetched him his second straight Wimbledon and fifth Major title. The success was also Sinner's tenth consecutive victory over Zverev. But even in defeat, the German can hold his head high. Since the start of 2024, men's tennis has largely been a cat-and-mouse game between Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz. Zverev's potential entry as the distinguished third will make the sport healthier.

The women's game has had a more even spread of champions, and Wimbledon has been at the forefront of producing them. It was no different this year as Linda Noskova became the tenth different women's singles winner at SW19 in as many years. The fact that Noskova, Iga Swiatek and Elena Rybakina are the only ones in this list to also feature in the current WTA top-10 is indicative of the depth in quality. The player from Czechia was spoken of but was never considered the favourite to win, for she had reached the quarterfinal stage at a Slam only once before. Yet, the 21-year-old put together a remarkable streak that culminated in the pulsating three-set triumph over compatriot Karolina Muchova (2023 French Open finalist).

The most impressive bit was Noskova's resilience in roaring back after missing out on five championship points in the second set. At the start of the tournament, there was concern that such elite performances would be dulled by the organisers.

A grand celebration of faith, tradition and spiritual consciousness

(Lalit Garg)

The Rath Yatra of Lord Shri Jagannath, which begins on the second day of the bright fortnight of Ashadha month and continues for ten days, is not just a religious event but a grand celebration of India's cultural consciousness, folk faith, social harmony, and spiritual philosophy. This grand procession in Puri is a living symbol of a tradition spanning thousands of years, in which the Lord himself comes among his devotees. This is why it is called the "Maha Yatra." This pilgrimage to Shri Jagannath Dham, the most revered among the four holy places in India, attracts millions of devotees not only from the country but from all over the world. The 2026 Rath Yatra is also being celebrated with immense devotion and enthusiasm, but this time a new controversy has also arisen. Some religious and traditional organizations have objected to ISKCON organizing Rath Yatras on different dates in accordance with local circumstances in various places in India and abroad. They believe that the date of the Jagannath Rath Yatra should be the same as that determined by the Puri Srimandir. On the other hand, ISKCON argues that in foreign countries, changes in the date are sometimes necessary due to local authorities' permission, public holidays, weather, and other practical reasons. This dispute is not merely about the date, but rather about finding a balance between tradition and global expansion.

It is essential to understand that while the Puri Rath Yatra and other Rath Yatras may differ in form, their primary purpose is devotion to Lord Jagannath, public welfare, and religious propagation. If tradition is respected and faith remains intact, differences can be resolved through dialogue. The fundamental nature of religion is to unite, not divide. The Srimandir in Puri is the primary abode of Lord Jagannath. In this nearly 800-year-old temple, Lord

Krishna resides in the form of Jagannath along with his elder brother Balabhadra and sister Subhadra. Only once each year, the three idols emerge from their sanctum sanctorum to give darshan to devotees. This is the greatest speciality of this pilgrimage. While darshan of the Lord is limited on normal days, during the Rath Yatra, everyone can have a direct darshan of the Lord without any discrimination.

Preparations for the Yatra begin on Akshaya Tritiya. On that day, the construction of the three massive chariots of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra begins. New chariots are built every year. Although their shape and size remain the same for centuries, each year new wood, new decorations, and new construction are employed. Lord Jagannath's chariot is called Garudadhvaj (Kapiladhvaj), Balabhadra's is called Taladhvaj, and Subhadra's is called Darpadalan or Padmadhvaj. The process of building these chariots is considered not just a work of art but a spiritual practice. Artisans build them following specific religious rules. This tradition teaches us that every year, humanity should reinvent itself by abandoning jealousy, hatred, ego, and greed.

There are many mythological stories behind the Rath Yatra. It is said that Subhadra once expressed her desire to see the city of Dwarka. Lord Krishna and Balarama then took her on a separate chariot and took her on a tour of the city. In memory of this, a joint Rath Yatra of the three siblings is held. According to another legend, the incomplete idols of the Lord were created by Vishwakarma himself, a unique feature of the Jagannath culture even today. A very touching aspect of this Maha Yatra is that after Snan Purnima, the Lord is considered unwell and does not give public darshan for approximately fifteen days. After this, he rides on chariots to his aunt's

home, the Gundicha Temple, rests there for nine days, and then returns to the Srimandir via the Bahuda Yatra. The tradition of the Lord accepting the Poda Pitha on his return, and Goddess Lakshmi breaking the chariot's wheel on the fifth day in anger, and the Lord later appeasing her, are all imbued with devotion and human compassion.

Another remarkable sight of Puri's Rath Yatra is the Chera Pahara. Gajapati Maharaja himself sweeps the path of the chariots with a golden broom. This tradition conveys the message that kings and commoners are all equal before God. Even the highest position of power cannot be greater than service. The Mahaprasad at the Jagannath Temple is a special attraction during the Rath Yatra. One of the largest temple kitchens in the world, this prasad is prepared in earthen pots. Lentils, rice, vegetables, malpuja, gajamoong, lai, coconut, and a variety of other delicacies are made available to devotees at very low prices. This prasad is not just food, but a symbol of equality and sharing.

Religious texts extol the immense significance of the Rath Yatra. The Skanda Purana, Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, and Uttarakhand contain detailed descriptions of the glory of Lord Jagannath. It is believed that witnessing the Rath Yatra and touching the chariots cleanses the sins of many lifetimes, and the chariot puller is considered worthy of salvation. However, the spiritual meaning of these beliefs is that only those who steer their life's chariot on the path of righteousness, service, and virtue attain true liberation. The most significant feature of the Jagannath Rath Yatra is its social harmony. On this occasion, there are no distinctions based on caste, class, language, region, or sect. Millions of devotees pull the chariot ropes together. This is the moment when religion ceases to be merely a form of worship and becomes a

celebration of social unity.

Today, this journey is no longer limited to Puri. Jagannath Rath Yatra is held in almost all major cities in India, as well as in the United States, Britain, Russia, Australia, Canada, South Africa, and many European countries. ISKCON, in particular, has played a significant role in bringing this tradition to global recognition. Millions of foreign devotees have learned about Lord Krishna and the Jagannath culture through this medium. Therefore, if practical changes are made to the dates, they may be due not to religious contempt, but to the constraints of local systems. Nevertheless, it is natural to expect that, as far as possible, the Srimandir tradition and the established date be respected, so that the message of unity is further strengthened throughout the world.

Philosophically, the chariot symbolizes the human body, God represents the soul, and the ropes pulling the chariot symbolize society and public power. The soul is meaningful only when society cooperates, and society becomes superior only when it is centered on God, morality, and self-purification. This is why the Jagannath Rath Yatra is not merely a religious ritual, but a unique festival of self-purification, public welfare, harmony, service, and spiritual awakening. In today's times, when society is experiencing numerous ideological, social, and religious divisions, this grand journey of Lord Jagannath reminds us that the true purpose of religion is not conflict, but dialogue. Not dominance, but coordination, and not external ostentation, but purity of conscience. This is the eternal message of this grand journey: the chariot of life moves in the right direction only when the wheels of faith, service, harmony, self-control, and public welfare keep moving at a steady pace. This is the eternal glory of the Jagannath Rath Yatra and its global relevance.

(Brainstorming) Is the BJP government heartless, the opposition insensitive, and opportunistic

(Sanat Jain)

Samajwadi Party National President Akhilesh Yadav has appealed to renowned social activist and environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk, who is on a hunger strike with the Cockroach Janata Party, to break his fast. Seventeen days have passed since the fast began, and he has lost more than 8 kilograms. The doctors who are examining him have expressed concern for his life. In response to this concern, the opposition has also begun issuing statements. SP leader Akhilesh Yadav appealed to Sonam Wangchuk, saying, "No one's life is of any importance to the BJP government. We humbly request him to break his fast. His life is dedicated to humanity and the environment. The BJP-led government he is fasting to awaken is a principled, corrupt, insensitive,

and heartless government. For them, no one's sacrifice is of any value." For the past week, opposition leaders have been appealing to Sonam Wangchuk to break his fast, but instead of supporting him in this fight, the opposition and the public he is fighting for are silently watching the spectacle. If the public and the opposition were responsible and sensitive, they would have joined him in the movement and fought this battle. This has not happened. The entire opposition is cursing the government, but neither is the opposition uniting to fight the government, nor is the public coming forward to fight its own battle.

The BJP government clearly believes that if the public is suffering, they will take to the streets themselves, but if the public is not on the streets, it means they are not

suffering. If the opposition is not united, the government assumes that it and its government's policies have the public's support. In such a situation, like many adept preachers, everyone has completely deviated from their duties to serve their own interests, shifting responsibility onto each other, portraying themselves as superior and the best. Those in power are enjoying the pleasures of power. Opposition leaders are playing different politics to reach power. No one is fighting for the people. No one is paying attention to the country's problems. All opposition political parties are fighting for their own political and family interests. If they were concerned about the country's constitution, democracy, and the poor, the entire opposition would unite and fight against the government. When envi-

ronmentalists like Wangchuk take drastic steps like hunger strikes to fight for the environment, freedom, and the rights of students, there is no greater misfortune than the opposition failing to unite.

Even before this, environmentalist Professor G.D. Agarwal died during a hunger strike. He sat on a fast unto death for 111 days. The entire opposition remained isolated. This situation is most favorable for the government. The government believes that since the public and the opposition agree with its policies and power, no one is protesting. Unless the entire opposition unites to honestly fight for the Constitution, democracy, and the common people, unless it convinces the public that the opposition is fighting for the people, how will the public stand with them? This is easi-

ly understandable. The Cockroach Janata Party is a platform that was formed on social media after the NEET exam paper leak in response to the Chief Justice calling young people cockroaches. This party did not exist, but Sonam Wangchuk began a hunger strike on its platform, which has left him isolated from such a major environmental and education issue. The government is also taking advantage of this. The opposition is also avoiding the platform of the Cockroach Janata Party. But this is a case where everyone must unite to raise the demands of the environment and students. Political parties, as well as the general public, must join forces in this fight. If this doesn't happen, then, just as many people have already lost their lives during hunger also become one.

Delhi government likely to launch monthly aid scheme for women on Rakshabandhan

New Delhi, (GNS) : The BJP government's scheme to provide a monthly aid to women in Delhi with a household income under Rs 2.5 lakh is expected to be launched this year on Rakshabandhan, officials said on Tuesday. The monthly aid was of the key poll promises of BJP in the run-up to the 2025 Assembly polls.

The name of the scheme, which has so far been called 'Mahila Samridhhi Yojana', is likely to be changed.

Officials said that the Department of Women and Child Development is considering renaming the scheme to 'Laxmi Yojana'. "It has not been



finalised yet but has been discussed in meetings and is being considered. Final decision and approval will come from the government," said an official.

Meanwhile, officials said the portal for the registration of the monthly financial assistance is ready. "The discussions on the final eligibility criteria and modalities are under discussion...Once it is done,

it will be forwarded further for final approval from the higher authority," the official added.

The government last year constituted a high-level committee - headed by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and ministers Parvesh Sahib Singh, Kapil Mishra, and Ashish Sood as members - to finalise the eligibility criteria, norms, and implementation of this scheme.

There are around 17 lakh ration card holders in the Capital, said officials, adding that the scheme is likely to benefit 20-22 lakh women in Delhi. "Once the eligibility criteria is finalised, it will be shared with the IT department to be incor-

porated in the portal, which is not a time taking process and will be done in a day," another official said.

The monthly financial assistance is likely to be given to women aged between 21 and 60 years. "The beneficiary should be a ration card holder, and from the economically weaker section. Another important criterion is the annual family income, which is still under discussion. Recently, the government raised the annual family income limit for ration card holders, so it might be revised and may be between Rs 2.5 to Rs 3 Lakh... a final decision is yet to be taken," said officials.

Delhi Govt clears final hurdle for Sarojini Nagar redevelopment

New Delhi, (GNS) : The redevelopment of Delhi's Sarojini Nagar General Pool Residential Accommodation (GPRA) Colony has crossed a key regulatory milestone after the Delhi Government's Department of Forests and Wildlife approved the felling or transplantation of 1,091 trees, clearing the way for construction to proceed in the remaining undeveloped parts of the project.

The approval follows months of site inspections and a multi-stage review aimed at minimising the environmental impact of one of the Capital's biggest government housing redevelopment projects.

Officials said the final number of affected trees was significantly reduced before permission was granted.

According to officials, the process began with an assessment identifying 1,218 trees. A detailed site inspection by the tree officer revised the list,



reducing the number to 1,170 and saving 48 trees.

The proposal was then examined by the Union Central Empowered Committee (CEC), which, through its order dated May 11, 2026, directed that another 79 trees be retained. This brought the final figure to 1,091 trees that will either be felled or transplanted. Sources said the final approval was issued on June 19.

Officials associated with the clearance process said the exercise involved extensive field verification before any decision was taken.

Delhi Jal Board slashes infra charges for commercial, institutional buildings

New Delhi, (GNS) : The Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has substantially reduced infrastructure charges (IFC) for several categories of commercial and institutional buildings, slashing the fees by up to 90 per cent in some cases. The move is aimed at promoting "ease of living" and simplifying the existing charging mechanism.

The revised charges apply across property categories A to H and cover a wide range of developments, including banquet halls, mercantile buildings, hotels, guest houses, factories, petrol pumps and institutional projects.

Among the biggest beneficiaries are warehouses and storage houses. For a 1,000 sq m institutional warehouse with a floor area ratio (FAR) of 200 in category A/B, the infrastructure charge has been reduced from Rs 54.93 lakh to Rs 3.94 lakh - a reduction of nearly 93 per cent. Similar reductions have been notified across other property categories.



Industrial projects have also received significant relief. Infrastructure charges for a factory or industrial building on a 1,000 sq m plot with a FAR of 150 have been reduced from Rs 57.68 lakh to Rs 8.91 lakh in category A/B, with proportionately lesser charges for lower-category plots.

Commercial developments, including banquet halls, mercantile establishments, hotels and petrol pumps, will also benefit from the revised rates. Infrastructure charges for banquet halls and petrol pumps in Category A/B have been reduced from Rs 57.68 lakh to Rs 19.80 lakh, while hotels will now pay Rs 24.06 lakh instead of Rs 57.68 lakh.

CM directs for complete preparations before Kanwar Yatra begins

New Delhi, (GNS) : With a focus on basic civic amenities for devotees and coordination among organisers, chief minister Rekha Gupta has directed all district magistrates to complete preparations for the Kanwar Yatra before it begins. Directions include making adequate arrangements for drinking water, sanitation, medical facilities, electricity and smooth traffic movement. She also reviewed the capital's monsoon preparedness.

In addition, while chairing a meeting of the DDC Apex Committee at the Secretariat, Gupta directed officials to organise special camps under the PM UDAY scheme across unauthorised colonies so that residents can complete their registration before the Oct 31 deadline. The review meeting also covered the establishment of mini secretariats in every district, progress of rainwater harvesting projects,



weekly public grievance hearings at district magistrate offices, cleanliness drives around public places and govt office complexes, and the development of cooling zones.

Gupta said the govt was committed to ensuring effective implementation of its initiatives through continuous field monitoring and coordination among departments, adding that officials would be held accountable for monsoon management and Kanwar Yatra arrangements.

Coinciding with the Hindu month of Sawan, Kanwar Yatra 2026 will begin on Jul 30.

Delhi Govt Brings Widow, Disability Pension Beneficiaries Under PMJAY

New Delhi, (GNS) : Delhi government has said that widow pension beneficiaries and persons with disabilities receiving government pensions will now be brought under the ambit of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has said that more than 3 lakh 90 thousand widow pension beneficiaries and around one lakh 31 thousand beneficiaries under the disability pension scheme will be directly benefited.

She also said that following this decision, around five lakh 50 thousand additional families will come under a robust health security cover.

Chief Minister Gupta said that this is not merely an administrative decision but a commitment linked to the health and dignity of every needy family in Delhi.

What will happen to former CM Kejriwal's Sheesh Mahal' Delhi govt reveals its big move

New Delhi, (GNS) : The government has announced plans to redevelop the government bungalow at 6 Flagstaff Road in Civil Lines. The property, long associated with former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, will be turned into a state guest house and a modern cultural centre, The Indian Express reported, citing officials. The project timeline and estimated costs have not yet been disclosed. The government said detailed plans will be released after final approvals and stakeholder consultations.

The proposal to develop the Civil Lines bungalow is in



the final stages. It was discussed in a high-level meeting where Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and senior officials were present. The Public Works Department (PWD) has been asked to submit details of the present condition of the property," a source in the Delhi government said.

A senior official said that the bungalow was on the agenda of the Delhi Cabinet's

last meeting but couldn't be discussed because the government's focus was on rolling out the EV policy. "The proposal will be taken up for final approval soon."

What's the plan going ahead? The official added that the complex will host government meetings, cultural programmes and national and international delegations and accommodate distinguished guests. Delhi currently lacks its own state guest house or dedicated cultural centre, forcing authorities to make ad hoc arrangements for visiting dignitaries and state-level delegations.

Govt schools lose 86 lakh students in two years

New Delhi, (GNS) : Private schools are gaining students at the cost of govt schools, reshaping who studies where in India's classrooms.

While overall school enrolment has held broadly steady over two years, govt schools lost nearly 86 lakh students between 2023-24 and 2025-26, even as private unaided recognised schools added over 88 lakh of them.

A Media analysis of UDISE+ NEP-structure reports for 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26 (released Tuesday) shows total enrol-

ment from foundational to secondary level at 24.7 crore in 2025-26, compared with 24.8 crore in 2023-24 - a decline of about 8.3 lakh. But within this nearly flat headline number, enrolment in govt schools fell from 12.8 crore to 11.9 crore, while that in private unaided recognised schools rose from 9 crore to 9.9 crore.

The shift comes at a time when school system has shown improvement on several access and infrastructure indicators. The number of schools declined marginally from 14.7 lakh to 14.7



lakh, but the teacher base rose from 98 lakh to 1 crore, improving the overall pupil-teacher ratio from 25 to 24. Number of zero-enrolment schools fell from 12,954 to 5,663, while single-teacher

schools declined from 1.1 lakh to 1 lakh.

The clearest academic access gain is at secondary level. Secondary GER rose from 66.5 in 2023-24 to 71.7 in 2025-26, while secondary

dropout fell from 10.9% to 7%. The transition rate from middle to secondary improved from 83.3% to 88.3%, and secondary level retention rose from 45.6% to 51.9%. Girls continued to do better than boys at secondary stage: in 2025-26, girls had higher GER (74 vs 69.6), lower dropout (5.7% vs 8.3%) and better retention (55% vs 49.2%).

The level-wise enrolment pattern has also changed. Secondary enrolment rose by about 31.5 lakh between 2023-24 and 2025-26, while preparatory enrolment fell by over 42 lakh.

Foundational enrolment rose only marginally. The reports note that UDISE+ foundational data does not include Anganwadi enrolment, which limits how far school-based pre-primary numbers can be read as the full Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) picture. Infrastructure has shown a sharper improvement in digital access than in basic amenities, many of which are already near saturation. Schools with computer facility rose from 57.2% to 69.9%, while internet facilities rose from 53.9% to 67.4%.

Delhi draws inspiration from India's civilisational heritage: L-G Sandhu

New Delhi, (GNS): Delhi Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Tuesday said the national capital continues to draw inspiration from India's enduring civilisational values. He was welcoming Shankaracharya Shri Shankara Vijayendra Saraswati Swamigal of the Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham at an India Foundation programme held at the Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre.

Addressing an audience that included policymakers, diplomats and scholars, Sandhu described it as a privilege for the Capital to host one of India's oldest living spiritual traditions. He also congratulated the India Foundation



for bringing together participants from different fields for the programme.

Calling the Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham a living civilisational institution established by Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya at Kanchipuram, Sandhu said it has preserved an unbroken lineage of 71 Acharyas for more than 2,500 years. He said the

institution had carried forward its legacy through three pillars: Veda, by preserving Vedic scholarship; Vidya, through integrated Pathashalas and institutions such as the Sri Chandrashekharendra Saraswati Vishwa Mahavidyalaya; and Vaidya, through a network of charitable healthcare institutions serving com-

munities across the country.

He also highlighted the Peetham's work beyond religious traditions, referring to its efforts to strengthen national integration through spiritual outreach in the North East and Jammu and Kashmir. He further noted its initiatives to preserve India's heritage through manuscript digitisation and the revival of traditional temple architecture.

Concluding his address, L-G Sandhu said Delhi, as the country's capital and a meeting point of diverse traditions and communities, continued to draw deep inspiration from such civilisational institutions in its journey towards a Viksit Bharat.

Can't proactively remove court proceeding videos: Meta, Google to Delhi HC

New Delhi, (GNS): Meta and Google said they cannot proactively identify and remove unauthorised recordings of court proceedings from their platforms, arguing they neither had the obligation nor the technical ability to screen such content before it was uploaded.

The responses were submitted to the Delhi High Court on Tuesday in response to a plea against Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal and other political leaders. The plea alleged leaders had unlawfully recorded and circulated videos of court proceedings on April 13, when Kejriwal sought the recusal of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma from the CBI's Delhi liquor policy case.

The petitioner alleged the circulation violated court rules and sought their removal from social media platforms. Meta said intermediaries were under no legal obligation to



proactively monitor user-generated content, including unauthorised recordings of court hearings. Google took a similar stand, stating that it was impossible to monitor every video uploaded to YouTube.

The company said it neither owned nor controlled the user-uploaded content and could not determine whether a video was unlawful unless notified. It described itself as a 'mere intermediary' and said responsibility, if any, lay with the uploader of the content.

Delhi: BSES sets up war rooms QRTs for monsoon-related exigencies

New Delhi, (GNS): BSES on Tuesday said it has activated its monsoon preparedness plan and issued a safety advisory for consumers, outlining measures to ensure reliable power supply and minimise rain-related disruptions across its distribution areas in the national capital.

BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL) and BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL) said their monsoon action plan follows an integrated and proactive approach aimed at ensuring consumer safety and reducing downtime arising from heavy rainfall and waterlogging.

A BSES official said the discoms were fully geared to ensure reliable power supply to over 54 lakh consumers and more than 2.25 crore residents while taking all necessary safety measures during the monsoon.

"Consumers, too, have an important role to play in ensur-



ing an incident-free season by following simple safety guidelines. We urge all residents to stay alert, exercise caution around electrical installations and report any safety hazards promptly," the official said.

The power distribution companies said preventive measures had been undertaken to minimise moisture-related breakdowns, including raising the foundation height of transformers in low-lying areas, preventing waterlogging and moisture ingress in switchgear, and ensuring proper fencing around transformers.

Shah launches 'mission 70L tree plantation drive' in Delhi

New Delhi, (GNS): Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday launched Delhi's ambitious "Mission 70 lakh Tree Plantation Campaign" under the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" initiative, unveiling an extensive ecological restoration plan aimed at transforming the Capital's Ridge into its "green lungs". The initiative also includes measures to clean the Yamuna, expand electric mobility and strengthen public infrastructure.

Launching the campaign after planting saplings at the Central Ridge and Nanakpura Ridge, Shah said the Centre and the Delhi Government would work together to restore nearly 6,300 hectares of Ridge forest over the next four



years by planting more than one crore native trees, along with lakhs of shrubs, bamboo and climbers.

Shah said invasive and ecologically unsuitable species such as acacia, which have spread across parts of the Ridge over the years, would gradually be replaced with indigenous species,

including peepal, banyan, neem, arjun and jamun.

He said the Delhi Government had revived a process pending for nearly three decades by notifying around 5,000 hectares of Ridge land as forest, providing it legal protection. He said the government would ensure conservation of the Ridge's biodiversity, soil

and water through legal safeguards while restoring the fragile ecosystem.

The afforestation programme goes beyond tree planting. The government plans to create theme-based forests such as Nakshatra Van, Rishi Van and Tirthankar Van, develop more than 70 water bodies, restore archaeological structures and improve biodiversity as part of a long-term ecological management plan.

Appealing to residents to join the campaign, Shah urged Delhiites to plant a tree in the name of their mothers and use the newly launched green drive portal to register for plantation activities. He said more than 12 lakh saplings would be distributed free of cost across the city.

Delhi University announces 2,153 sports quota seats for UG admissions; volleyball, basketball top the list

New Delhi, (GNS): The University of Delhi (DU) has released the sports supernumerary quota seat matrix for undergraduate admissions for the 2026-27 academic session, offering a total of 2,153 seats across 28 sports disciplines.

The announcement comes as Phase II of the Common Seat Allocation System (CSAS-UG) 2026 is under way, with candidates currently filling their programme and college preferences.

According to the seat matrix, 1,119 seats have been earmarked for male candidates and 1,034 for female candidates. Among all disci-



plines, volleyball has the highest number of seats at 222, followed by basketball (206), football (195), cricket (192) and athletics (151).

The university has also

released a college wise seat matrix, allowing aspirants to check the availability of sports quota seats in their preferred colleges and disciplines.

One roof, one Nation Karnal's Unity Mall taking shape to boost MSMEs

New Delhi, (GNS): In a major step towards promoting local industries and empowering small business, a grand Unity Mall (Ekta Mall) is being constructed in Karnal under the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative of the Union government.

The ambitious project aims to provide a dedicated platform for showcasing and marketing products made by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) from across the country.

The mall is being developed over 3.87 acres in Sector 37 along NH-44 in Karnal. The authorities claimed that once completed, it is expected to emerge



as a major commercial and cultural hub, bringing together India's rich handicrafts, traditional products, and region-specific specialties under one roof.

They further claimed that the project is being implemented to create new market opportunities for local products and traditional artisans. This mall is among the 100 Unity Malls announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Union Budget

2023-24 to promote and sell ODOP products and handicrafts from across India.

The project is being constructed by the Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSIIDC) at an estimated cost of Rs 162.88 crore under a Central Government initiative. Construction work began in July 2025, with a completion timeline of 24 months, said an official of the HSIIDC.

Around 15 percent of the work has already been completed, and the executing agency is confident of completing the project before the stipulated deadline in July 2027, he added.

2 brothers held after evading life imprisonment for a decade in Delhi

New Delhi, (GNS): Two brothers, both convicted to life imprisonment in a 1996 Delhi murder case and absconding for nearly a decade, have been arrested by the Delhi Police, officials said on Tuesday. One of them is also wanted in a Mumbai contract killing case in which the police alleged he murdered a man for Rs 2 lakh, dismembered the body and dumped the torso to conceal the victim's identity.

The accused, Firasat Ali (56) and Shah Nawaz Ali (51), were arrested in coordinated raids conducted at Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh and Godda in Jharkhand,

respectively.

According to investigators, the brothers were convicted in a 1996 murder case in Delhi. However, after the Delhi High Court upheld their life sentence and dismissed their appeal in 2016, they failed to surrender and remained on the run. The police said Firasat Ali was also a proclaimed offender in a 2006 Mumbai contract killing case.

According to investigators, an unidentified human torso wrapped in a plastic bag was recovered near Bhindi Bazar in Mumbai in May 2006. The head and limbs were missing. During



investigation, the Mumbai Police identified the deceased as Kisan Kharva and alleged that his wife had hired Firasat Ali and another accused to kill him for Rs 2 lakh.

The investigators alleged that Firasat Ali murdered

Kharva, severed the head and limbs and disposed of the body parts at different locations to conceal the victim's identity. He was arrested by the Mumbai Police in 2018 and was granted bail by the Bombay High Court in 2021. However, he later

absconded during the trial and was declared a proclaimed offender. The brothers were originally convicted in connection with a 1996 murder in Delhi's Rajouri Garden. According to police, the case stemmed from an altercation over the purchase of an old saree at a clothes market in Raghbir Nagar.

Later that day, Shah Nawaz, along with Firasat Ali, Arshad Ali and an associate, allegedly entered the complainant's house armed with knives and attacked the occupants. Ishfaq Ahmed, alias Pappu, succumbed to multiple stab injuries, while two others

were injured.

The accused were convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment by a Delhi sessions court in 2000. They were granted bail during the pendency of their appeal. However, they failed to surrender after the Delhi High Court upheld their conviction in 2016.

During interrogation, the brothers admitted to frequently changing hideouts across Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Jharkhand while working as clothes merchants to evade arrest, the Crime Branch said.