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Amarnath Yatra: 1st batch flagged off from Jammu

The first convoy of pilgrims crossed the Qazigund-Banihal tunnel Wednesday, marking the start of the Amarnath Yatra (July 3-Aug 9), being held under unprecedented security. The pilgrims were flagged off from the Jammu base camp by LG Manoj Sinha. TNN

3 Indian nationals abducted in Mali

India on Wednesday expressed deep concern over abduction of three Indian nationals in Mali, west Africa. New Delhi has called upon the Mali govt to take all necessary measures to secure their "safe & expeditious" release. There has been no claim of responsibility for the kidnappings. PTI

Hasina gets 6 mths' jail in contempt case

Ex-PM Sheikh Hasina was sentenced to six months in prison in a contempt of court case by Bangladesh International Crimes Tribunal Wednesday as it tries her for "crimes against humanity" cases in absentia. PG OPP

SEVIS records of all 358 restored

In a court-aided settlement reached with the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration, all 358 international students, many of whom are Indian, had their SEVIS registration restored retroactively. PG OPP

Gandhis conspired to take over ₹2k cr co: ED

ED on Wednesday told a special court in Delhi that ex-Congress chiefs Sonia Gandhi & Rahul Gandhi wanted to take over a Rs 2,000 crore company — AJL — that once published party organ National Herald. P 11

Infy staffer held for filming woman

An Infosys engineer at Electronics City campus in Bengaluru was held after being allegedly caught perching himself on a commode & trying to film a woman colleague in the next toilet cubicle. P 11

8-year age bar for aggregators' fleet

Vehicle aggregators such as Uber, Ola and Rapido won't be allowed to onboard cars, buses, three-wheelers and motorcycles that are more than eight years old, the road transport ministry said in its revised guidelines. P 13

Diddy held guilty only on lesser charges

Rapper Sean 'Diddy' Combs was convicted of prostitution-related offences but acquitted Wednesday of sex trafficking and racketeering charges. Combs, 55, could go to prison for as long as a decade. PG OPP

NCB busts global med piracy network

A routine car interception at central Delhi's Bengali Market led narcotics bureau to a global drug cartel that used encrypted digital platforms and cryptocurrency to smuggle medicines across four continents. P 9

Bizman again held for plane threats

Mumbai businessman Birju Salla, the first person to be convicted under the amended Anti-Hijacking Act before being acquitted, was detained over bomb threats to a flight and the Ahmedabad airport. P 13

Bring to justice all those tied to Pahalgam attack, says Quad

Joint Statement Doesn't Name Perpetrator Grp

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New Delhi: The Quad foreign ministers strongly condemned the Pahalgam terrorist attack in a joint statement, calling for the perpetrators, organisers and financiers of the "reprehensible act" to be brought to justice without any delay. The four-nation grouping also urged all UN states to cooperate with "all relevant authorities" in this regard, without naming Pakistan or India.

In his opening remarks at the meeting in Washington, external affairs minister S Jaishankar had said India expected Quad — a strategic grouping of leading maritime nations committed to a free and open Indo-Pacific — to understand and appreciate India's right to defend its citizens from cross-border terrorism. This was the first Quad ministerial since the April 22 Pahalgam attack and the subsequent India-Pakistan conflict that ended with India's bombing of Pakistan air bases.

Apart from India, Quad comprises the US, Australia and Japan, all of which had separately condemned the J&K attack. India, however, was keen that Quad do so in a joint statement for a more impactful response to Pakistan's role in the attack and its support for cross-border terrorism. The Quad statement, however, did not mention the perpetrator group — The Resistance Front.

▶UNSC line, P 15

> We **condemn in the strongest terms** the terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, on April 22, 2025... We call for the perpetrators, organisers and financiers of this reprehensible act to be brought to justice without any delay and **urge all UN Member States...to cooperate actively with all relevant authorities**
> —Quad statement

Photo: Reuters

Foreign minister S Jaishankar speaks at the Quad meet as foreign ministers from Australia, Japan and US look on

➤ Quad also obliquely refers to China's actions in East China Sea & South China Sea, saying it was opposed to 'unilateral actions that seek to change status quo'

Eye on China, it launches critical minerals drive

The Quad grouping has announced an initiative to diversify and secure supply chains of critical minerals, in a bid to reduce reliance on China, which is a dominant supplier globally.

"Reliance on any one country for processing and refining critical minerals and derivative goods production exposes our industries to economic coercion, price manipulation, and supply chain disruptions, which further harms our economic and national security," said the joint statement, without naming China. The ministers also expressed concern about the situation in East China Sea and South China Sea, reiterating their strong opposition to unilateral action that seeks to change status quo by force or coercion. P 11

Trust will pick successor, says Dalai Lama; China says its approval must

No One Has The Authority To Meddle, He Says

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Kullu: Ahead of his 90th birthday, the Dalai Lama on Wednesday said the institution of the Dalai Lama would continue, and that Gaden Phodrang Trust, founded by him, has the sole authority to recognise the future reincarnation.

In a message to China, which has been insisting that it would choose the successor, the 14th Dalai Lama said "no one else has any such authority to interfere in this matter".

"When the time comes, His Holiness will reincarnate, and any adult or a person from any gender can be recognised as his reincarnation," said Samdhong Rinpoche, a member of the Trust, at a press conference in McLeodganj. "It's not necessary that the next Dalai Lama will be from Tibet," Rinpoche said.

A PTI report from Beijing quoted the Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman rejecting this succession plan. At a media briefing, Mao Ning insisted any future heir to the Dalai Lama "must follow the principles of domestic (Chinese) recognition — the 'Golden Urn' process — and approval by the central govt (Beijing) in line with Chinese religious traditions and laws".

▶How Will The Next Dalai Lama Be Chosen? P 15
▶EDIT: India's Tibet Test
▶Buddhists wrote, P 15

Reuters

The 14th Dalai Lama, who turns 90 on July 6, addresses the Tibetan Religious Conference

India unlikely to rush into taking a stand

The contentious issue of finding a successor to the 14th Dalai Lama can potentially lead to another flashpoint in India's relationship with China that has shown several signs of improvement in the past nine months, **reports Sachin Parashar**. Beijing is likely to choose a successor of its own and will closely follow how India, home to the Tibetan government-in-exile, reacts to the likely dual succession.

New Delhi has not spoken officially on the issue yet and it's unlikely it will be in any hurry to do so now.

Maintaining "the practice of Living Buddha reincarnation has continued for over 700 years", Chinese ambassador to India Xu Feihong said the process must comply with "rigorous rituals and historical conventions as well as Chinese regulations". P 15

Global South to be focus of PM's 5-nation tour

New Delhi: PM Modi arrived in Accra for a state visit to Ghana and, in a special gesture, he was received at the airport by Ghana President John Dramani Mahama. The govt said in a statement that the first such visit in the past three decades to Ghana would further deepen the partnership between India and Ghana, and underscore India's commitment to strengthening its engagement with Africa and Global South partners.

Modi is in Ghana for the first leg of his five-nation tour. TNN

▶Trip to Brasilia, P 14

In meet with Jaishankar, US def secy seeks completion of pending defence sales

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: As foreign minister S Jaishankar held a bilateral meeting with US defence secretary Pete Hegseth, the latter expressed hope that the US can complete several major pending defence sales to India and expand shared defence industrial cooperation.

Noting mutual concern about the danger of aggression in the Asia-Pacific region, according to a US readout, the two reviewed pending defence sales, the signing of the next '10 Year Defence Framework' and progress on advanced tech policy reviews.

The two countries had announced plans to pursue new procurements and co-production arrangements for Javelin anti-tank guided missiles and Stryker armoured vehicles. Talks are also on for procurement of six additional P-8I maritime patrol aircraft from US.

▶Rubio on boosting ties, P 13

US, Vietnam reach deal with 20% tariff

US and Vietnam struck a trade deal that sets 20% tariffs on many of the latter's exports following last-minute negotiations, US President Trump and Vietnamese state media said Wednesday. Vietnam would also provide more market access, with US exports facing no tariffs. PG OPP

Mumbai delivery man drowns in 22nd-floor pool

Mumbai: A man working for an app-based food delivery company drowned in a swimming pool on the 22nd floor of a south Mumbai building after he lost his balance and fell into it while on a phone call at 11.50 pm Tuesday.

Imran Akbar Khozada (44) had gone to the highrise to deliver an order. He called up the customer and was directed to the 22nd floor. When he didn't turn up, the customer went to look for him and found he had fallen into the pool. The customer alerted police. Khozada was taken to hospital where he was declared dead. CCTV footage shows Khozada stepping out of the lift while talking on his phone and falling into the pool, police said. His family doesn't suspect foul play. TNN

Bihar rolls revision could snatch votes of 'tens of lakhs', INDIA bloc tells EC

Ambika Pandit & Bharti Jain

New Delhi: Netas of the INDIA bloc met the Election Commission on Wednesday to question the timing of the special intensive revision (SIR) of the Bihar electoral roll, saying it comes too close to the ensuing assembly poll. They also complained that EC's guidelines, including only those who are 'ordinarily resident' in a constituency, may affect migrants who form a significant part of the Bihar electorate.

The opposition told EC that SIR could be "disastrous" as it could lead to the deletion of "tens of lakhs" of genuine voters, especially those on the margins. Eleven opposition parties that met EC comprised Congress, RJD, TMC, DMK, SP, JMM, NCP-SP, Shiv Sena (UBT), CPI(M), CPI and CPI(ML) Liberation.

▶Risk of exclusion, P 14

EC ALLAYS FEARS

➤ **11 oppn parties meet EC for almost 3 hrs** against **special intensive revision** (SIR) & **'ordinarily resident'** norm

➤ **Oppn says SIR may lead to deletion of genuine voters,** especially those on margins who may find it difficult to arrange docus at short notice

➤ **EC** allays fears, **says it is bound by RPA,** which allows only citizens ordinarily resident in a constituency to be enrolled

Maha rules out foul play in Disha Salian's death

Maharashtra govt has told Bombay high court that there is no room for suspicion in the death of PR manager Disha Salian, 28, the former manager of late actor Sushant Singh Rajput, **reports Rosy Sequeira**.

Salian allegedly jumped from the 12th floor of a building on June 9, 2020. The state opposed a petition filed by Disha's father seeking justice for his daughter who he said "was brutally raped, murdered and subjected to a politically orchestrated cover-up", saying the contentions are "baseless".

Due to mental stress over a family dispute and business deals, as claimed by friends, "Disha out of her own volition jumped off the window", it said. P 11

Infy staffer held for filming woman

An Infosys engineer at Electronics City campus in Bengaluru was held after being allegedly caught perching himself on a commode & trying to film a woman colleague in the next toilet cubicle. P 11

SBI flags Anil Ambani's RCom loan a/c as fraud

In a step that also implicates the company's former director Anil Ambani, SBI has moved to classify the loan account of Reliance Communications as fraud. In a disclosure on July 1, RCom stated that SBI plans to report Ambani's name to the RBI. The move sets off another round of legal contest amid the telco's ongoing insolvency proceedings.

The classification traces back to a 2020 forensic audit by BDO, which prompted SBI's fraud panel to flag the account. Canara Bank had earlier declared the loan as fraud in Nov 2024, but that order was later set aside by Delhi HC. Ambani's lawyers said SBI's order was passed ex parte and in breach of natural justice. P 18

China targets India's mfg sector, delays machinery delivery, pulls iPhone engrs

Pankaj Doval & Sidhartha | TNN

New Delhi: In what has the potential to disturb India's strong march in manufacturing, tensions with China have seen the neighbouring country delay delivery of critical machinery while ordering the pullout of some of its citizens from Indian factories, including those engaged in engineering and manufacturing jobs at Foxconn, Apple's contract manufacturer.

This comes just as China has also put curbs on export of magnets to India that are used in making of automobile and electronic products.

Sources said there has been a "massive pressure" at the operations of Foxconn in India, with the Taiwanese giant employing a "few hundred key Chinese personnel" at its factories in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

▶Schedule may be hit, P 18

TIT-FOR-TAT?

➤ **Chinese nationals** make up less than 1% of Foxconn staffers in India, but **play a key part in mfg operations**

➤ **Situation also worrisome at** units of top Chinese phone cos, **Oppo & Vivo**, in India

➤ There's speculation China may be doing a 'tit-for-tat' as its corporate personnel have allegedly faced issues in getting Indian biz visas

Covid jabs not linked to sudden deaths: Centre

New Delhi: There is no direct link between Covid-19 vaccination and sudden deaths in the country, Union health ministry said Wednesday, a day after Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah claimed over 20 people had died of heart attack in a month in Hassan district. The CM said "hasty approval and distribution" of the vaccine could be a reason.

The Centre said studies by ICMR and AIIMS have established there was no link between the jabs and the deaths, adding, "Sudden cardiac deaths can result from many factors, including genetics, lifestyle, pre-existing conditions and post-Covid complications." TNN

▶To file report, P 14

Insurance co not bound to pay for death of person driving rashly, rules SC

New Delhi: Supreme Court on Wednesday said insurance companies are not bound to pay compensation to the kin of drivers who die due to their own mistake during daredevil stunts or on account of rash and negligent driving, in an extreme message to speed addicts and those who seek to hog eyeballs by performing stunts, **reports Dhananjay Mahapatra**.

Justices P S Narasimha and R Mahadevan refused to give relief to the wife, son and parents of a man who died while driving a car at high speed in a rash and negligent act which ended with the vehicle toppling over.

▶'Broke rules', P 14

IN THE COURTS

➤ Slamming MCD and other civic bodies for their 'complete apathy and insensitivity' in maintaining lavatories in the capital, HC says **we want to hold the Olympics but we don't have clean public toilets** | P 9

➤ Court in UP's Etah hands life sentences to **2 brothers for killing their cousin** in 2008 over an **unpaid ₹1 lakh loan.** The duo had filed FIR as witnesses in the case | P 13

➤ Delhi HC asks drug authority to **consult experts** and stakeholder regarding alleged **'weight loss' drugs being sold** in markets | P 4

Bail for 2 who breached Parl security in 2023

New Delhi: The Delhi high court Wednesday granted bail to two accused in the Dec 2023 Parliament breach case, forbidding them from talking in public about the smoke attack in Lok Sabha.

A bench of Justices Subramonium Prasad and Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar granted the relief to Neelam Azad and Mahesh Kumawat on a bond of Rs 50,000 each and two sureties. "They shall not give interviews or make any statement regarding the case before the press or social media. They shall not leave Delhi and must appear before the investigating agency every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday," it said, allowing their plea against a trial court's order rejecting their bail plea. TNN

Principals of five colleges under Patna univ picked by drawing lots

Patna: Five colleges of Patna University (PU) on Wednesday got new principals, not on their merit or suitability but through a lucky draw, **reports B K Mishra**.

Nagendra Prasad Verma, a history teacher at Chapra's Jai Prakash University, was selected as principal of Magadh Mahila College in Patna through a lottery. The draw of lots extended to Patna College and Patna Science College, two of Bihar's oldest and most prestigious institutes, which will be now headed, respectively, by Anil Kumar, a chemistry teacher from a UP college, and Alaka Yadav of Hajipur's Mahila College.

Suheli Mehta, a home science teacher at Magadh Mahila College, was 'picked' to head Vanijya Mahavidyalay while Yogendra Kr Varma of Patna Law College became the institution's principal.

All the five incumbents were earlier selected as principals on the recommendations of Bihar State University Service Commission (BSUSC), based on their interviews and academic qualifications. It's after a gap of 15 years that the PU colleges will get principals recommended by the university service commission.

▶Raise questions, P 15

ACADEMIC LOTTERY

➤ Draw of lots **ordered by Bihar guv & PU chancellor Arif Mohd Khan** after allegations of foul play in appointment of principals in some state univs

➤ Lucky draw held among 5 candidates **selected for principal's post** by state's univ service commission

➤ Academics question choice of a **home science teacher to head commerce college, chemistry don** for institute **specialising in humanities**

Take new link road, reach Jaipur in 3 hrs

New Delhi: The travel to Jaipur from Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida and Faridabad has become shorter and faster with the highways authority on Wednesday opening a link road — Bandikui-Jaipur — from the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, **reports Dipak Dash**.

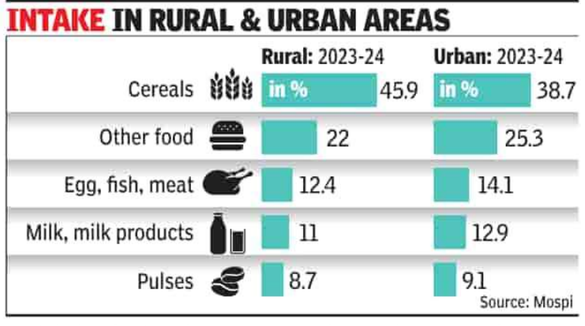
This will reduce travel time from Delhi to 2.5-3 hours compared to the current 3.5-4 hours. The link takes off at Bandikui, 170km from Sohna, from where the expressway starts.

▶Reduced by 20km, P 9

Indians are having more protein, and fat, than a decade ago, says govt data

New Delhi: Consumption of protein rich food in India has inched up in over a decade but fat intake has risen at a faster pace. Latest data released Wednesday showed cereals continue to be the most important source of protein among the five major food groups.

The data released by the statistics office showed an increasing trend in daily intake of protein by individuals in urban as well as rural India since 2009-10 and trend was evident in most major states. Rajasthan, Haryana, Maharashtra and UP, however, showed a marginal decline in average protein intake. In urban areas, daily per capita intake of protein rose from 58.8 gms 2009-10 to 63.4 gms per day in 2023-24, an increase of 8%, while in rural areas, it rose at a slower pace, from 59.3 gms a day in 2009-10 to 61.8 gms in 2023-24. TNN

▶Egg, meat & fish, P 14

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