

## IMD says wait for monsoon may be over in 5-6 days even as Delhi, UP reel under heat

**NEW DELHI:** Conditions are favourable for further advance of the southwest monsoon into several northern states over the next five to six days, the IMD said on Sunday, even as the national capital recorded its warmest morning in two years amid the delayed seasonal rainfall. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in a release that conditions are favourable for further advance of the southwest monsoon into some more parts of the North Arabian Sea and some areas of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, among other states, during the next two to three days. It is likely to continue its movement over some more



parts of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, some areas of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and southeast Rajasthan during the subsequent two to three days.

However, it also warned of heatwave conditions -- possibly severe -- in Uttar Pradesh on July 28 and 29. According to weather forecasting agency Skymet, Delhi is likely to see the arrival

of monsoon on July 4 if conditions remain favourable. Meanwhile, recording its warmest morning in two years, Delhi's minimum temperature settled at 31.1 degrees Celsius, 3.2 notches above the seasonal average, while the maximum climbed to 41.8 degrees Celsius. The last time the city's minimum temperature was higher was on June 14, 2024, when it was recorded at 33.3 degrees Celsius. According to the weather office, a heatwave has been realised over Delhi, and the "feels-like" temperature at 5:30 pm, as calculated by the IMD, was around 50.7 degrees Celsius. For Monday, however, it forecast

thunderstorms with rain. Skymet said the delay in the onset of the monsoon and the interaction of dry and moist winds have kept both temperatures and humidity unusually high. "Normally, the monsoon reaches Delhi around June 27-28, after which temperatures begin to ease and humidity increases. This year, however, the monsoon is likely to be delayed by about a week. Dry westerly winds from Pakistan are keeping temperatures high, while southwesterly winds from the Arabian Sea are also reaching Delhi and increasing humidity," Mahesh Palawat, Vice President (Meteorology and Climate Change), Skymet, said.

## Pinarayi Vijayan urges UDF govt to review proposed tax relief for low-alcohol liquor

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:**

Leader of the Opposition Pinarayi Vijayan on Sunday urged the UDF government to review its proposed tax relief for low-alcohol beverages, alleging that the move was intended to benefit the private liquor lobby. In a Facebook post, Vijayan referred to the recent discussion in the Assembly on the budget proposal relating to liquor tax relief and said Chief Minister V D Sathesnan had stated that the proposal would be implemented only after discussions within the UDF. The Left leader alleged that the Finance Bill tabled in the Assembly had already incorporated amendments proposing to reduce the tax on liquor with up to 10 per cent alcohol content to 120 per cent and on liquor with 10-20 per cent alcohol content to 175 per cent by including the category along with horti wine. Claiming that this was the first time tax relief was being proposed for low-alcohol spirit-based Indian-made foreign liquor in the state, Vijayan said the provision in the Finance Bill itself contradicted the government's denial that it had attempted to extend such a benefit. He said the Finance Bill, which gives statutory backing to the tax proposals announced in the budget, would become law once passed by the Assembly.



After that, the UDF government would have no legal means to prevent its implementation, and the proposal could not be kept in abeyance through an executive order, he alleged. Questioning the rationale for holding UDF discussions after incorporating the proposal into the Finance Bill, Vijayan alleged that the move was merely a smokescreen to accommodate the demands of liquor companies. Further, he alleged that while the CM had consistently defended the budget proposals as reflecting the government's policy and political stance, he had maintained that the liquor tax relief proposal was yet to be discussed within the UDF. Vijayan said the proposal had drawn strong criticism from the Opposition, the media and religious organisations. He claimed that concerns expressed by a section of Congress and its allies showed that the tax relief

proposal was not a collective decision. The Opposition leader further alleged that the excise minister (M Liju) had indicated he was unaware of the proposed change in the excise policy, reflecting dissatisfaction within the ruling front over the CM's alleged unilateral intervention in liquor policy while also handling the finance portfolio. The former CM alleged that, instead of following the established practice of framing budget proposals after consulting the concerned departments, Sathesnan had imposed his own preferences on other departments. Vijayan claimed there had been several instances over the past month in which the CM had taken key decisions without the knowledge of either the ruling front or the Cabinet. The government should review and withdraw the proposed tax relief for liquor, he added in the Facebook post.

## Akalis opposing anti-sacrilege act as they know they will have to pay for misdeeds: Mann

**FARIDKOT:** Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said on Sunday that Akalis are opposing the anti-sacrilege Act because they know they will have to answer for their past "misdeeds". Addressing a gathering during a public interaction programme here, Mann said, "The Akalis are opposing the anti-sacrilege Act tooth and nail because they are aware that they will have to pay for the misdeeds committed in the past. "The Akalis were hand in glove with the fissiparous forces that hatched the conspiracies of 'beadbi' in the past. Now these leaders must pay for their sinister actions, which is why they and their stooges are opposing this law: Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar (Amendment) Act,

2026." Mann said he is grateful to the Almighty for blessing him with the opportunity to enact the anti-sacrilege Act. He said whenever incidents of 'beadbi' of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji took place, the sentiments of millions of devotees were deeply hurt. "The Almighty blessed me with the wisdom and strength to bring this legislation after detailed consultations with legal experts," he said. "The state government drafted this legislation carefully to prevent future amendments or loopholes from weakening it. This law will strongly deter anti-social elements from attempting such sacrilegious acts in the future, and no one will ever be able to commit this heinous crime," he said. The Punjab Assembly un-

animously passed the Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar (Amendment) Bill, 2026, on April 13. The bill has a provision for stricter punishment, including life imprisonment for any act of sacrilege against the Guru Granth Sahib. Incidents related to the theft of a 'bir' (copy) of Guru Granth Sahib from Burj Jawahar Singh Wala gurdwara, the posting of handwritten sacrilegious posters in Bargari and Burj Jawahar Singh Wala, and torn pages of the holy book found scattered at Bargari occurred in Faridkot's Bargari in 2015, when the Akalis were in power. These incidents had led to anti-sacrilege protests in Faridkot and in police firing at anti-sacrilege protesters in October 2015, two persons were

killed in Behal Kalan, while some others were injured at Kotkapura in Faridkot. On his government's works, the chief minister said, "We have provided free electricity to households, more than 68,000 government jobs to the youth without corruption, improved roads, closed toll plazas saving Rs 70 lakh every day, imparted quality education, strengthened healthcare, built modern infrastructure and undertaken several other key initiatives." He said when the state government assumed office, only 22 per cent of canal water was being utilised for irrigation in Punjab. "Today, this has increased to more than 80 per cent. The state government is also working tirelessly for the development of villages by providing grants," he said.

## Tiger reintroduction succeeds at most sites; falls short in Satkosia, Rajaji: Report

**ALWAR:** Unlike tiger reserves such as Sariska in Alwar and Panna in Madhya Pradesh, where India's tiger reintroduction and population recovery programmes have seen immense success, Satkosia in Odisha and Rajaji in Uttarakhand are yet to see similar results, according to a new report. The reintroduction initiative, which began in 2008 at Sariska, helped increase the population from zero to 56 as of now. At Panna, the programme, which kicked off in 2009, led to the rise in tiger population from zero to 88. However, at Satkosia, where two tigers were reintroduced in 2018, the current population is zero. Note that there was already a tiger present at the site before the beginning of the initiative. At Rajaji (western part), where five tigers were introduced in 2020, the population currently remains the same. No tigers inhabited the location before the reintroduction. These are findings of the 'Reintroduction and Recovery of Tigers in India', which is one of the three reports released by Environment Minister Bhopender Yadav on Sunday here. The report documents India's experience in restoring tiger populations through planned reintroduction and supplementation programmes at 12 different sites. Speaking at the launch of the re-



port, Sanjay Kumar, the Additional Director General of Forests (ADGF) for Project Tiger said, "At Satkosia, the country's first interstate reintroduction programme took place, under which tigers were brought from Madhya Pradesh to Odisha. However, we did not get the expected results. One reason for this could be that we could not win the local communities' confidence regarding the initiative." According to the report, the lesson from the Satkosia initiative's failure was that the recipient site must possess adequate prey populations, secure and inviolate habitats, ef-

fective protection mechanisms, ecological connectivity, and social acceptance among local communities before initiating translocation. In his speech, Kumar pointed out that at Rajaji, where there is a lack of connectivity between the western and eastern parts, the tiger population has not increased since the 2020 reintroduction. "Rajaji highlights the importance of supplementation in restoring isolated populations, while emphasising the need for prey recovery, habitat connectivity, protection, and long-term monitoring for successful tiger recovery," the report said.

## Uddhav seeks disqualification of rebel MPs, says defections part of

**PARBHANI:** Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday demanded the immediate disqualification of six party MPs who recently defected to the Eknath Shinde-led camp, alleging that their switch was part of a larger political conspiracy. Addressing a rally in Parbhani, the former Maharashtra chief minister said the Lok Sabha Speaker must uphold the rule of law regarding the defections and alleged that the BJP's central leadership was systematically "clipping the wings" of its own state leaders. He attacked the BJP over the Ram Mandir donation embezzlement issue, accusing the saffron party of exploiting the temple for political gain, labelling it the "Babur Janata Party". "Babur demolished the Ram Mandir. A 'Babur Janata Party' has now come to loot the newly constructed temple. What is the difference between them?" he questioned. The Sena (UBT) chief is touring the Marathwada region, targeting the six rebel MPs by visiting their con-

stituencies. He addressed rallies in Parbhani and Dharrashiv, represented by Sanjay Jadhav and Omprakash Rajee Nimbalkar, respectively. Jadhav, Nimbalkar, and four other Lok Sabha members of the Shiv Sena (UBT) joined the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena on June 22, bringing down the Uddhav-led party's strength in the lower House to three MPs. Mocking the BJP over its earlier slogan of "Mandir Wahi Banayege", Thackeray said in Dharrashiv that the temple is being looted, and accused the BJP of exploiting the Hindutva sentiment for acquiring power. "They are splitting Shiv Sena because they want to finish Maharashtra dharm and Marathi asmita (pride), and erase the self-respect taught by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. They want to take everything to Gujarat," Thackeray alleged. The Ram Mandir is a source of inspiration for Hindus. My question is why they have turned the temple into a shop. This temple is the outcome of a long struggle.

Earlier, the BJP gave the slogan 'Mandir Wahi Banayege' (Temple will be built at the same spot in Ayodhya). Now, we know why they wanted to build this temple. They have betrayed the ideology of Hindutva, he said. Even the contracts for Kumbh Mela (work) in Nashik are being awarded to Gujaratis, he claimed. "They will get a free hand if the Thackerays are finished, but the Thackerays cannot be finished," he said. He said that MPs loyal to the Shiv Sena (UBT) had submitted a formal representation to Speaker Om Birla seeking an opportunity to present their side, noting that MP Arvind Sawant had cut short an official visit to Kargil after the Speaker advanced the date of the hearing. "If there is a rule of law in this country, these six MPs should be disqualified. I still believe in the Lok Sabha Speaker because if he does not follow the law, he cannot ask others to follow it. We respect his authority, not his wishes," said Thackeray.

The dissident MPs had won against the BJP and Shiv Sena candidates in the 2024 general elections. The Thackeray-led party won nine Lok Sabha seats from Maharashtra in the polls. "If you have the majority, then why do you need my MPs?" Thackeray asked in Dharrashiv, adding that traitors need to be crushed. Targeting Nimbalkar on his home turf, the Sena (UBT) leader said treachery has taken place in the district of Tuljabhavani, one of the patron deities of Maharashtra. He alleged that the MPs switched their allegiance not for development funds as they have been claiming, but to pursue their selfish motives. The Sena (UBT) chief alleged that the defections were part of a bigger political game under "Operation Devendra", aimed at sidelining Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, just as the party had done to other leaders in the past. "The people voted against the Modi wave here (Parbhani). Now, the MP who won against that wave has crossed over.

## BJP's twin law-and-order bills target organised crime, political violence spark civil liberty debate

**KOLKATA:** Promising a decisive crackdown on syndicates, extortion rackets and political violence, the BJP government in West Bengal is set to place before the Assembly two law-and-order bills that would significantly expand the state's powers to tackle organised crime and public disorder, while triggering opposition concerns over civil liberties and executive overreach. The West Bengal Public Safety and Control of Anti-social Activities Bill, 2026 and the West Bengal Maintenance of Public Order (Amendment) Bill, 2026 will be tabled in the assembly on Monday. But beyond their legal provisions, the two bills also represent a clear statement of the ideological shift underway in West Bengal after the BJP's emphatic electoral victory -- from what it describes as a politics of accommodation to a politics of enforcement. The first bill significantly widens the definition of "anti-social activity" and

empowers authorities to order preventive detention of individuals for up to 12 months without trial if they are considered a threat to public safety. It also criminalises harbouring or assisting persons against whom detention or external orders have been issued. The proposed legislation broadly defines "goondas" to include habitual offenders, members of organised criminal groups and those involved in activities ranging from extortion and land grabbing to illegal mining, smuggling of natural resources and offences under various arms, narcotics and explosives laws. It further grants police extensive powers of search, seizure and arrest, with offences under the law proposed to be cognisable and non-bailable. The second bill seeks to amend the West Bengal Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1972 by introducing a mechanism for recovering compensation for damage

caused during riots, arson, violent protests and public disorder. Under the proposal, a Claims Commission would assess losses suffered by both government agencies and private individuals. Compensation could be recovered not only from those directly involved in violence but also from alleged organisers, financiers, instigators and those accused of providing logistical support. Failure to pay could invite recovery proceedings akin to the collection of land revenue, while offenders' properties may be attached and auctioned to realise dues. Government sources argue that ordinary criminal laws have often proved inadequate in dealing with entrenched criminal syndicates and politically protected networks that flourished over the years. "The objective is simple -- restore public order, break organised criminal ecosystems and ensure that those who destroy public property pay for it.

## Police conclude anti-drug awareness fortnight, highlights enforcement against narcotics

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi Police has concluded its "Nasha Mukti Bharat Pakhwada-2026" campaign with a public awareness programme featuring cultural performances and a live concert aimed at spreading awareness about the dangers of drug abuse. The event was attended by union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Delhi Police Commissioner Satish Golcha, Special Commissioner of Police (Crime) HGS Dhaliwal and other senior officials. According to Delhi Police, the campaign was organised as part of activities marking the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, observed globally on June 26. The programme included performances by the Delhi Police Band, a pantomime show and a musical performance by singer Mika Singh. Delhi Police said it has continued enforcement against narcotics through



Operation Kavach, an anti-drug initiative launched in May 2023 to target drug trafficking networks across the national capital. The police said that during 2025, it registered 2,154 cases under the NDPS Act and arrested 2,853 alleged drug traffickers. Between January 1 and June 15, 2026, it registered 1,418 NDPS cases and arrested

1,812 persons in connection with drug-related offences. According to the police, properties worth Rs 14.99 crore have been attached under the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PITNDPS) Act. It said that 39 detention orders have been issued under the Act, while 48 propos-

als are under process. Delhi Police said the latest phase of Operation Kavach, conducted between June 22 and 24, involved 1,474 police teams carrying out simultaneous raids at 4,035 locations across all 15 police districts. The operation resulted in the registration of 212 NDPS cases and the arrest of 255 alleged drug traffickers. Police also registered 315

Arms Act cases, arrested 329 people and recovered illegal firearms. Additionally, 398 Excise Act cases were registered, leading to the arrest of 405 persons and the seizure of illicit liquor. As part of the fortnight-long campaign, Delhi Police organised awareness drives across schools, colleges, residential areas and public spaces through street plays, painting exhibitions, awareness vans and community outreach programmes. Addressing the concluding event, union Home Secretary Govind Mohan commended Delhi Police's anti-drug campaign and reiterated the government's goal of achieving a drug-free Delhi by 2027. He urged citizens, particularly parents and young people, to actively participate in efforts to combat drug abuse and encouraged the use of the MANAS portal to report drug-related activities.