

Punjab needs ‘double-engine’ govt to make state drug-free: Punjab BJP chief

CHANDIGARH: Punjab BJP president Kewal Singh Dhillon said on Sunday that a ‘double-engine’ government is needed to make the state drug-free. Referring to the drug abuse issue highlighted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his monthly radio address ‘Mann Ki Baat’, Dhillon called upon people from all sections of society to support the ‘Nasha-Mukt Bharat’ campaign and the ‘Nasha-Mukt Yuva for Viksit Bharat’ initiative. Dhillon said Punjab needs such a campaign as the state is “in the grip of the drug menace”. Targeting the AAP government, he alleged that despite its claim of making Punjab drug-free within three months after winning elections, the problem had multiplied under its rule. He appealed to people to join

the campaign and work towards protecting the younger generation from drugs. “Punjab needs a double-engine BJP government to make the state drug-free. Only the BJP can eradicate this social evil,” Dhillon said. The term “double engine” is used by BJP leaders to refer to the party being in power at the Centre as well as in a state. Assembly polls in Punjab are scheduled for early next year. On Sunday, Dhillon listened to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s 137th episode of his monthly radio programme ‘Mann Ki Baat’ along with party leaders and workers at an event organised at Jhajheri village in the Kharar Assembly constituency of Mohali district. Later, Dhillon addressed the gathering. BJP national vice-president Manpreet Singh

Badal, state vice-president Ranjit Singh Gill and district president Sanjeev Vishisht were among those present. Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed to citizens to unite against drug abuse and build a stronger future for the youth, noting that addiction engulfs not just an individual but impacts the entire society. In his monthly radio address, he noted that the ‘Drug-Free Youth for a Developed India’ campaign is rapidly gaining momentum across the country and stressed that its objective is clear: ‘Drug-free youth, drug-free India’. Punjab BJP chief Dhillon said the Prime Minister also highlighted issues related to women’s empowerment, farmers, agriculture and weaker sections during the programme, reflecting his vision of ‘Sabka Saath,

Sabka Vikas’. Dhillon said ‘Mann Ki Baat’ had evolved from being a radio programme into an effective platform for nation-building, public participation and social awareness. He urged party workers to take the Prime Minister’s messages to the last person in society. He said the Prime Minister had consistently used the programme to spread awareness about water conservation, cleanliness, environmental protection, women’s empowerment, self-reliance, promotion of local products, science and innovation, and social responsibility. “These messages are not only giving a new direction to society but also inspiring the youth to contribute towards the nation’s progress,” he said.

AIADMK to protest on Sept 3 over TVK MLA’s remarks against Jallikattu

CHENNAI: The AIADMK on Sunday announced a protest demonstration at Alanganallur Vadivasal in Madurai district on September 3, condemning the TVK government and its MLA M V Karuppiah, for his alleged remarks in the Assembly that the traditional bull-taming sport, Jallikattu, is “ruining the youth”. In a statement, AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami highlighted that Jallikattu represents the pride, culture, and valor of Tamils. The former chief minister detailed the party’s historical legal battles to protect the sport, noting how the late CM Minister J Jayalalithaa pressed the Central government and filed a review petition after the Supreme Court



banned the event in 2014. He further cited the AIADMK government’s enactment of an ordinance in January 2017 following widespread youth protests, followed by an amendment to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act that secured a favorable Constitution

Bench verdict in May 2023. The demonstration will be spearheaded by the AIADMK’s combined Madurai district units under the leadership of former ministers Sellur K Raju, R B Udhayakumar, and V V Rajan Chellappa, with former MLA K Manickam present.

100 acres freed of legacy waste across Delhi’s landfills: CM Rekha

NEW DELHI: Around 2.16 crore tonnes of solid waste has been removed from the three landfill sites across the capital, with 100 acres of land reclaimed from legacy waste, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said on Sunday. Of this, around 70 lakh tonnes of waste was processed at Okhla, freeing 35 acres. At Bhalswa, around 102 lakh tonnes was processed, with 45 acres reclaimed. Another 44 lakh tonnes of waste was processed at Ghazipur, freeing 20 acres of land. The inert material generated during the waste processing is being used in construction of roads and filling up low lying areas, the chief minister said. Gupta further said Delhi government’s waste remediation measures are not limited to addressing legacy waste but also involve advance planning in view of future requirements. In this direction, preparations have been completed for setting up four new waste-to-energy plants across the city. “The government has not only focused on clearing existing garbage mountains but has



also planned ahead to ensure such a situation does not arise again,” she said. Once these plants are operational, Delhi will have the capacity to process its daily waste on the same day, ensuring that garbage does not continue to accumulate, Gupta said. She said the three landfills with mounds of legacy waste had remained a major problem for people of Delhi for years. “Our government had promised to flatten them, and we are working towards fulfilling that commitment through a scientific roadmap, dedication and a time-bound approach.” The chief minister said reclaiming such a large stretch of land from legacy waste is a significant achievement, reiterating the government’s objective to make these areas cleaner and more liveable.

UP state agency to leverage AI to seek patients’ feedback, fix shortcomings

LUCKNOW: ‘SACHIS’, an Uttar Pradesh health agency, is developing an AI chatbot to contact Ayushman cardholder patients and their attendants on the phone about their treatment and experiences at the hospital. SACHIS, the State Agency for Comprehensive Health and Integrated Services, serves as the primary nodal agency in UP, managing several landmark health programmes for over 9 crore people of the state. Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Maurya said that the objective of the AI-based voice bot is not only

to obtain feedback from patients, but also to analyse their responses with the help of technology. “This will help in monitoring hospitals, resolving complaints, conducting audits and improving the quality of healthcare services,” he said in a statement. According to the statement, patients may be asked whether they received treatment under the Ayushman scheme at the hospital, whether they faced any difficulties during treatment, what the services were at the hospital, and how the hospital staff



behaved. It will also be ascertained whether any unauthorised amount was charged from the patient or their family for treatment under the scheme. The information will help

the health department identify shortcomings based on their experience. SACHIS CEO Archana Verma said that through an AI analysis, a large number of feedback responses can be organised.

Shiv Sena MLC Kadu seeks resignation of MPSC chairman, secretary amid exam paper leak row

MUMABI: Shiv Sena MLC Bacchu Kadu on Sunday demanded the resignation of the Maharashtra Public Service Commission chairman and secretary on “moral grounds” over the alleged leak of the FDA inspector exam paper and a series of controversies surrounding competitive examinations. His demands come in the wake of the police on Wednesday arresting six individuals, including three MPSC officials, in connection with the alleged leak of the question paper of the Drug Inspector (Group-B) screening examination held earlier this year. The officials had said the accused allegedly accessed the

examination questions ahead of the test, compiled them into a separate set, and distributed it to unauthorised persons. “The commission’s top office-bearers should accept moral responsibility and quit. If they do not, I will demand their resignation from the chief minister and deputy chief minister (Eknath Shinde),” Kadu stated on a social media post. He demanded that the MPSC chairman and members have no political affiliations or connections, while the secretary should be a senior IAS officer rather than an official from the state secretariat cadre. Kadu further sought a detailed inquiry into the appointment of the commission’s present

joint secretary and controller of examinations, alleging that officials from the Mantralaya cadre were deputed without the commission’s approval. The controller of examinations should also face a criminal case as the post carries primary responsibility for the examination process, particularly issues relating to the security and confidentiality of question papers, Kadu said, threatening to take to the streets for the cause of students. In 2018, alleged irregularities during the Maharashtra Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) came to light during an investigation, including allegations of manipulation of marks. The 2020 Maharashtra TET

was also embroiled in allegations of manipulation of OMR sheets and software to increase marks, with several arrests reported in the case. In 2021, the Health Department Group-C examination faced allegations that its question paper had been leaked before the examination. The Group-D examination of the department that year was cancelled following an alleged paper leak and subsequently conducted afresh. The same year, the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) recruitment examination was cancelled following allegations of a paper leak, with the recruitment process restarted.

Govt employees demand withdrawal of notices over Aug 27 strike, plan mass leave on Sept 8

LUDHIANA: The protesting state government employees, under the banner of Punjab Sanjha Mulazam Manch Committee, on Sunday decided to intensify their agitation in the coming weeks and go on mass leave on September 8 if notices issued to them over the recent statewide strike are not withdrawn. The move follows a meeting of the bodies representing the protesting employees in Ludhiana, held here to decide the next course of action. After a three-hour discussion, it was decided that if their demands are not met, the agitating employees will go on two-day mass casual leave again on October 21-22. The meeting also came up with several measures to press for their demands -- including gheraoing native residences of AAP ministers and MLAs and forming a human chain of employees across the state to mobilise public opinion. The committee has given the AAP-led Punjab government time till September 7 to withdraw the show-cause notices seeking explanation for the government employees’ “unauthorised” absence on the day of the statewide strike. Earlier, in a letter to all administrative secretaries

and heads of departments, the state personnel department said notices be issued to those employees who remained “unauthorised absent” and ensure disciplinary action against them as per rules. Over 3 lakh government employees went on a statewide strike by taking mass casual leave on August 27 to press the Punjab government to accept their demands, including the release of pending dearness allowance (DA), affecting public services. Over 150 employees’ bodies, under the banner of Punjab Sanjha Mulazam Manch, had joined hands for the ‘maha hartal’ to press the state government to accept their long-pending demands. Over 3.50 lakh pensioners also participated in the strike. The meeting on Sunday was attended by senior leaders of the employees’ bodies, including Satish Rana, Sukhchain Singh Khaira, Germanjit Singh and Gurnam Singh Virk. The unions also unveiled a campaign titled ‘Return of the Chief Minister from Chandigarh Secretariat to Satoj Village (Bhagwant Mann’s native village)’, symbolising the demand to push the chief minister out of the secretariat until their demands were met.

DGCA flagged safety issues with Tecnam aircraft before Kanpur crash

LUCKNOW: Aviation regulator DGCA had flagged safety issues concerning Tecnam aircraft over a month before a Tecnam P2006T training aircraft crashed in Kanpur on August 27, killing a trainee pilot and an instructor. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had also issued safety recommendations to flying training organisations (FTOs) concerning the Tecnam aircraft and asked them to implement them with immediate effect.

According to official communications accessed and reviewed by PTI, the DGCA had at least twice since 2025 flagged concerns over Tecnam planes, primarily used in India for flying training, with FTOs. The latest communication, dated July 10, 2026, circulated safety recommendations issued by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) following the May 12, 2022 crash of a twin-engine Tecnam P2006T, operated by FSTC Flying School Pvt

Ltd, at Bhiwani in Haryana. In the email, the regulator advised FTOs to “avoid parking Tecnam aircraft on apron/tarmac for prolonged periods during the summer season prior to commencing training flights”. It also said, “Greater emphasis should be placed on training for handling emergency situations, particularly during critical phases of flight on Tecnam aircraft.” The DGCA further directed that “checklists should be revised to explicitly

incorporate all Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM)-recommended actions for handling emergency situations”. The communication was based on the final investigation report of the 2022 Bhiwani accident, which was available on the AAIB website, the email said. An earlier DGCA communication had sought feedback from FTOs on the operational performance of Tecnam aircraft, a civil aviation source told PTI. A reminder was sent on

August 4, 2025, with the subject: “Reminder regarding Feedback checklist for ‘Operational Assessment of General Aviation (GA) Aircraft’s Performance -Tecnam Aircraft.” The reminder referred to an earlier email seeking responses through the feedback checklist, according to the source. A flying instructor, who spoke to PTI on condition of anonymity, said several instructors had faced difficulties. “Diamond and Cessna aircraft, which have tra-

ditionally been flown for a long time, have good reliability, maintenance and airworthiness. Tecnam aircraft are becoming more popular because of their affordability, but there is a flying risk associated with them,” the instructor said. The senior pilot trainer said the concerns extended to both single-engine and multi-engine Tecnam aircraft and claimed that incidents involving the aircraft were not always reflected clearly in available records.

Govt committed to welfare of employees, pensioners: Sukhu

SHIMLA: Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said on Sunday that the Congress government is committed to the welfare of employees and pensioners. Addressing the people in Dehra in Kangra district, the chief minister said full arrears, leave encashment and gratuity had been paid to pensioners aged above 67 years. He announced that Class-IV employees who retired between January 1, 2016 and January 31, 2022, would receive an additional Rs 20,000 over and above their salary arrears. Sukhu said directions would be issued to remove the condition related to basic pay for

Class-I, Class-II and Class-III pensioners. “Following the removal of this condition, all eligible pensioners would be paid 35 per cent of their pending arrears. With this payment, a total of 57 per cent of the employees’ arrears would be cleared,” he said. The chief minister said the state government will also provide Dearness Allowance (DA) to employees in due course. He distributed cheques of financial assistance of Rs 3,500 each to 800 fishermen under the ‘Mukhyamantri Machhuara Samman Nidhi’ Yojana. The assistance has been transferred directly into their bank accounts

through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). Sukhu said the state government is fighting for Himachal Pradesh’s rights and taking effective measures to combat corruption. “Despite the discontinuation of the Revenue Deficit Grant (RDG), the government ensured financial benefits to employees and pensioners through financial prudence and discipline,” he said. The chief minister said drinking water projects worth Rs 100 crore are under implementation in Dehra. “The ozone-based drinking water project will also be completed within the next year,” he said.

Thane court acquits six in 2011 extortion case

THANE: A court in Maharashtra’s Thane district has acquitted six men, including a social worker, in a 14-year-old case of extortion and wrongful restraint, citing absence of evidence. Chief Judicial Magistrate Vikram M Karhadkar cleared all six accused of charges under sections 384 (extortion) and 341 (wrongful restraint) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) after the sole prosecution witness failed to support the case, which stemmed from a 2011 incident. A copy of the order passed on August 27 was made available on Sunday. The court acquitted Santosh Shivram Sonawane, Kailash Narsing Bakule,

Sushant Sayaji Jadhav, Sachin Vijay Chavan, Pradeep Shantaram Gole, and Sunil Deepak Khambe. Another accused in the case passed away during the pendency of the trial. According to the prosecution, the incident occurred on February 5, 2011, at the Anand Nagar Octroi Naka in Kopri, Thane. A deputy octroi inspector alleged that individuals in parked vehicles were intercepting truck drivers, illegally collecting Rs 200 from them, and issuing membership receipts for the ‘Adhunik Bharat Driver and Cleaner Sangh’. The prosecution examined only the com-

plainant, who failed to support the state’s case. Consequently, the court dispensed with recording the statement of the accused under Section 313 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) as no incriminating material emerged against them. The court held that despite granting ample opportunity to the prosecution, no other witness was examined, and there was no other documentary or circumstantial evidence available in the case. “Overall, since there is no oral, documentary, or circumstantial evidence available against the accused in the present case, nothing is established against the accused,” it stated.

Mercury settles at 35.5 deg C in Delhi; IMD forecasts cloudy sky

NEW DELHI: Delhi on Sunday recorded a maximum temperature of 35.5 degrees Celsius, one notch above the seasonal average, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The minimum temperature settled at 28 degrees Celsius, 1.5 notches above the season’s average, at the city’s representative Safdarjung weather station, the IMD said. Among other weather stations, Palam recorded a minimum temperature of 25.4 degrees Celsius, Lodi Road 27.2 degrees, Ridge 24 degrees and Ayanagar 27 degrees. The maximum temperature at Safdarjung was recorded at 35.5 degrees Celsius. Lodi Road recorded a maximum of 35.2 degrees Celsius, Ridge 35 degrees, Ayanagar 34.7 degrees and Palam 34 degrees. The IMD has forecast a cloudy sky in the national capital on Monday, with the maximum and minimum temperature expected to remain around 36 and 26 degrees Celsius, respectively. Relative humidity was recorded at 66 per cent at 5.30 pm. The air quality was recorded in the ‘moderate’ category at 5 pm, with an Air Quality Index (AQI) reading of 130, according to the Sameer app. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), an AQI between zero and 50 is considered ‘good’, 51 and 100 ‘satisfactory’, 101 and 200 ‘moderate’, 201 and 300 ‘poor’, 301 and 400 ‘very poor’, and 401 and 500 ‘severe’.