

Punjab CM Mann asks Centre to release Rs 60,000 cr pending funds; visits flood-affected areas

CHANDIGARH: Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday renewed his demand for the release of the state's pending funds worth Rs 60,000 crore from the Centre, in the wake of the crisis in flood-struck Punjab.Mann said that he was asking for Punjab's "rights" and not "begging" as he claimed that Punjab had incurred losses of Rs 50,000 crore due to GST implementation.

He added that an additional Rs 8,000 crore under the rural development fund was also pending with the Centre.Mann visited flood-hit villages in Ferozepur district on Tuesday to analyse the situation on the ground. Punjab is battling with severe flooding as the death toll climbed to 30 after four more people lost their lives in Mansa, Fazilka and



Ludhiana districts on Monday.Punjab CM on Sunday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging the Centre to release all "stuck" funds amounting to nearly ₹60,000 crore and enhance

financial relief for flood-hit farmers.In his letter, Mann demanded compensation of at least ₹50,000 per acre for affected farmers. He wrote, "about 3 lakh acres of farmland, primarily paddy fields,

remain submerged under floodwater, leading to devastating crop losses just weeks before harvest".

Heavy rainfall in the catchment areas of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu &

Kashmir has left the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi rivers swollen.Pathankot has recorded the highest casualties with six deaths, while three persons remain missing. Floodwaters have caused large-scale damage in Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Ferozepur, Pathankot, Fazilka, Kapurthala and Hoshiarpur districts.

Twelve of Punjab's 23 districts have been impacted, affecting more than 2.56 lakh residents. So far, 15,688 people have been evacuated from submerged villages.Authorities have set up 129 relief camps, providing shelter to over 7,100 displaced persons.

Rescue and relief operations are underway with the support of multiple agencies, including 20 teams of the NDRF and 10 columns of the Army.

Landslide wipes out Sudanese village, more than 1,000 dead

NEW DELHI: An armed group that controls part of western Sudan pleaded on Tuesday for international help recovering bodies and rescuing residents from torrential rain, after at least 1,000 people were killed in a landslide that wiped out a mountain village.

Only one person survived the destruction of the village of Tarseen in the mountainous Jebel Marra area of the Darfur region, said the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army.

SLM/A, which has long controlled and governed an autonomous portion of Jebel Marra, appealed to the United Nations and international aid agencies to help collect the bodies of victims, including men, women and children.

"Tarseen, famed for its citrus production, has now been completely levelled

to the ground," the group said in a statement.

"Nearby villagers are overwhelmed with fear that a similar fate might befall them if the ... torrential rainfall persists, which underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive evacuation plan and provision of emergency shelter," the group's leader Abdelwahid Mohamed Nur said in a separate appeal.

The SLM/A has remained neutral in the battle between the main enemies in Sudan's civil war, the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. The two foes are fighting over control of al-Fashir, nearby capital of North Darfur state, which is under siege from the RSF and has suffered famine.

Residents of al-Fashir and nearby areas have

sought shelter in Jebel Marra, though food, shelter, and medical supplies are insufficient and hundreds of thousands have been exposed to the rains. Tawila, where most have arrived, is in the throes of a cholera outbreak, as are other parts of Darfur.

The two-year civil war has left more than half of Sudan's population facing crisis levels of hunger and driven millions from their homes, leaving them especially exposed to Sudan's damaging yearly floods.

Sudan's army-controlled government expressed its condolences and willingness to assist.

The Prime Minister of a newly-installed RSF-controlled rival government, Mohamed Hassan al-Taiishi, said he would be coordinating with the SLM/A on the delivery of aid supplies to the area.

Bhutan PM to visit Gaya

NEW DELHI: Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay and his wife Tashi Doma will be on a visit to India from September 3-6, during which they will visit Gaya and Ayodhya, before coming to Delhi. They will arrive in New Delhi on Friday evening, when External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will call on them. They depart for home on Saturday. In Bihar, the Bhutanese PM will visit Rajgir, Nalanda on September 3-4. The Bhutanese PM and the Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar are to inaugurate the Royal Bhutanese Monastery in Rajgir on September 4, commemorating the Golden Jubilee of bilateral relations. He is to visit Ayodhya on September 5, and visit the Ram Temple and offer prayers.

Delhi Police reunites 48 kidnapped children under ‘Operation Milap’

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Police has traced and reunited 130 missing persons, including 48 children, with their families in August as part of its special drive, 'Operation Milap', an official said on Tuesday.

Police said the initiative, aimed at locating missing and kidnapped children and adults, involved extensive fieldwork, CCTV analysis, and intelligence gathering. Inquiries were carried out at bus stands, railway stations, auto and e-rickshaw stands, while local informers, transport staff, and vendors were also roped in to provide leads, they added.

Between August 1 and 31, police successfully recovered 48 missing or kid-

napped children and 82 adults. All were safely reunited with their families after verification, an officer said.

Since January this year, the police have traced and reunited 931 missing people, including 306 children and 625 adults, according to data shared by officials.

The highest recoveries in August were reported by Kapashera Police Station, which traced 14 missing children — four boys and 10 girls — and 13 adults.

The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit also played a key role, tracing 14 children, most of them girls, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southwest) Amit Goel said.

Among other police stations, Sagarpur locat-

ed three children and 15 adults, while Palam Village traced two missing girls and 13 adults. Vasant Kunj South found two boys and nine adults, and Delhi Cantt located two boys and three adults.

Kishangarh Police traced a 14-year-old girl and six missing women, while Vasant Kunj North located four children and six adults.

Police at R.K. Puram recovered three minors and one woman, while S.J. Enclave traced four minor girls and five adults.

In addition, Vasant Vihar Police reunited three missing adults with their families, Sarojini Nagar traced seven adults, and South Campus located two women, police said.

Delhi HC rejects bail pleas of Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam & 7 others in 2020 Delhi riots case

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court Tuesday dismissed appeals filed by former JNU student leaders Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam, along with seven others, challenging trial court orders denying them bail in the 2020 Northeast Delhi riots conspiracy case. All nine accused have remained in custody since 2020, and the trial is yet to begin.

A division bench of Justices Navin Chawla and Shalinder Kaur had reserved its verdict on 9 July after hearing the batch of petitions, which have been pending in the high court since 2022 and were earlier heard by multiple benches. The FIR in the case was registered by the



Delhi Police's Special Cell in 2020 under the Indian Penal Code, 1860, and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. The accused who had approached the high court include Sharjeel Imam, Umar Khalid, Mohd Saleem Khan, Shifa-ur-Rehman, Athar Khan, Meeran Haider,

Shadab Ahmed, Abdul Khalid Saifi, and Gulfisha Fatima.

The charges arise out of the communal violence that broke out in Northeast Delhi on 23 February 2020, following protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which left at least 53 peo-

ple dead and hundreds injured. According to the Delhi Police's Special Cell and Crime Branch, the violence was the result of a "deep conspiracy", allegedly masterminded by Khalid, with its foundation laid during the anti-CAA and NRC protests of 2019.

Sharjeel Imam was arrested in August 2020, while Khalid and others were later named in the chargesheet. Khalid's bail plea also remained pending before the Supreme Court between May 2023 and January 2024, before he withdrew it citing a "change in circumstances". He returned to the trial court and subsequently approached the high court again in February this year.

BJP govt ‘confused’ on foreign policy, prioritising propaganda over national interest: SP MP

BALLIA: Samajwadi Party (SP) Dharmendra Yadav from Azamgarh has accused the BJP-led Centre of being "confused" about the country's foreign policy, claiming that the government is prioritising propaganda over national interest.

Speaking at a function in Naseerpur Math village in Ballia district's Bharauli area on Monday evening, after unveiling a statue of folk singer Parashuram Yadav, the SP leader claimed that India's leadership had "bowed before the US" following its assertion that it had brokered a ceasefire with Pakistan.

"Operation Sindoor was a major success; our soldiers destroyed terrorist camps. But while our armed forces triumphed,

we saw our leadership bend in negotiations," Yadav said.

"America repeatedly said it arranged a ceasefire, and our government could not even respond once. This shows the leadership has bowed before the US," he alleged.

He further claimed the government was failing to take clear decisions in the country's interest because it was "busy in propaganda, publicity and misusing agencies like the Income Tax department and CBI against opponents." Yadav also criticised the BJP over the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill introduced in the Lok Sabha, alleging it was aimed at suppressing opposition parties rather than curbing corruption.

"The purpose of this

law is to jail opposition leaders and topple their governments. India already has many laws to deal with corruption," Yadav said.

On political developments in Bihar, Yadav said SP national president Akhilesh Yadav's visit to the state had "boosted" the opposition INDIA bloc. "Bihar is our border state, our culture and ties are closely linked. The state has a history of leading change, from the freedom struggle to the Emergency. This time o, Bihar is ready for change," he said.

Asked how many seats the SP would contest in Bihar, Yadav replied, "The question is not about SP's seats; the question is how many seats the INDIA bloc will win.

BJP accuses Cong media chief of ‘electoral fraud’

NEW DELHI: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) today took a dig at leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi for his 'Vote fraud' rant, as it accused his party's media chief Pawan Khara of serious electoral irregularities involving possession of multiple voter identity cards.

At a press briefing here, BJP national spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari alleged that Khara holds two distinct EPIC (Electoral Photo Identity Card) numbers, which, according to him, constitutes a blatant violation of election regulations.

"We want to ask five questions to Rahul Gandhi," Bhandari asserted. "Was he aware of the multiple EPIC IDs of Pawan Khara? Will he call Pawan Khara a vote chor? Will he admit that the Gandhi-Vadra family is against SIR to protect their vote fraud?"

HC quashes sports quota in medical admissions introduced mid-process by govt

PANAJI: The Bombay High Court has struck down the Goa government's move to introduce a sports quota for admissions to the medical and dental colleges after the process had already begun, holding that it was contrary to the binding rules in the admission prospectus.

A division bench of Justices Bharati H Dangre and Nivedita P Mehta passed the order on a petition filed by an NEET candidate challenging a notice issued on August 1 by the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) inviting sportspersons to apply for unfilled seats under the Children of Freedom Fighters (CFF) category.

A copy of the order dated August 25 was made available on Tuesday. The bench observed that the common admission prospectus for 2025-26 "has the force of law and is binding

on both the authorities and the candidates," emphasising that timelines are the essence of the admission procedure.

"Without amending the prospectus or notifying modifications therein, inviting applications under a new category after commencement of counselling amounts to changing the rules of the game after it has begun," the court held.

The prospectus covered 180 seats for MBBS at Goa Medical College, Bambolim and 50 seats for a five-year BDS course at the Goa Dental College.

Senior advocate S S Kantak, appearing for the petitioner, had argued that the DTE had published a schedule for counselling for admission to MBBS courses on July 28 and, according to it, the first round of counselling was to be held on August 1, but it was resched-

uled to August 5.

The petitioner participated in the first round of counselling for MBBS/BDS held on August 5, and at the end of the first round, the candidate with rank 78 secured the last seat in MBBS in the general category, and the candidate with rank 108 secured the first seat in BDS in the general category, it was stated.

There were only two candidates ranked higher than the petitioner, who did not secure admission, and this gave him hope that he had a chance to occupy either a seat in MBBS or BDS in the general category.

However, the creation of a new sports quota crushed his hopes.

"The government permitted eligible meritorious persons to prefer an application for the first time under the sports quota by fixing the cut-off date that is Au-

gust 14," the petition stated.

Kantak argued that the state government's move, after publication of the ranking in the merit list and the scheduled date of the first session of counselling, amounted to changing the rules of the game after it had begun.

The government, represented by Advocate General Devidas Pangam, defended the policy, citing its executive powers and the Goa Sports Policy 2009.

Sports bodies, including the Goa Football Association and Fencing Association, intervened in support of the quota, arguing that many states had already adopted similar measures.

The bench, in its order, mentioned that cut-off dates were prescribed for filling applications, and the merit list by applying the criteria prescribed in the Rules was published on July 30.

India’s emerging as global leader of sustainability: Piyush Goyal

NEW DELHI: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal today said India has emerged as one of the best-performing G20 nations in meeting sustainability commitments, with renewable energy capacity surging and global partnerships expanding.

Speaking at CII's 20th Global Sustainability Summit in the Capital, Goyal credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership with putting sustainability at the heart of India's growth journey. "Without Prime Minister Modi's decisive role, COP21 may not have been a success. He brought the Global South together to make sustainability a shared responsibility," he remarked.

Highlighting India's achievements, Goyal said the country had already installed 50 percent renewable energy capacity, well

ahead of schedule, and was on course to achieve 500 GW by 2030.

"India now offers round-the-clock renewable power at globally unmatched rates, around Rs4.60–Rs5.00 per kWh," he said, adding that transparent bidding had cut solar tariffs drastically over the last decade.

The Minister said India's economic strength and resilience were rooted in sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity. He pointed to the success of the UJALA scheme and urged startups to innovate in areas such as energy efficiency, water harvesting, and waste management. "The Prime Minister's mantra of Zero Defect, Zero Effect is our commitment to quality and sustainability," he said.

Calling India the fastest-growing large economy, Goyal said the coun-

try's 7.8 percent GDP growth in Q1 FY26 reflected the collective resolve of 1.4 billion people. "With India contributing 18 percent to global growth and soon to be the world's third-largest economy, we engage with the world from a position of strength," he added. On trade, the Minister noted that India was expanding its footprint through Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with partners including the UAE, UK, EFTA bloc and Mauritius, while talks were ongoing with the EU, Chile, Peru, New Zealand, and Oman. "We are also in dialogue with the United States for a bilateral trade agreement," he said.

Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is a pact between two or more countries to reduce or eliminate tariffs, quotas and other trade barriers, making it easier and cheaper to trade goods and services between them.

Maratha quota stir: Apology in court, govt acceptance & a win for Manoj Jarange

NEW DELHI: Scenes of celebration were seen at Azad Maidan in Mumbai on Tuesday after Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange announced victory for the agitation. This came after the Maharashtra government's cabinet sub-committee on Maratha quota, headed by minister Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil, accepted most of his demands. Jarange made the announcement on the fifth day of his hunger strike, saying that the government had agreed to give Kunbi caste certificates to eligible Marathas. His supporters cheered the development, which also brought relief to Mumbai residents.

The Kunbi status will allow members of the Maratha community to seek benefits under the OBC quota, which has been Jarange's main demand."We will leave Mumbai by 9 pm (Tuesday) if the Maharashtra government issues GRs (government resolutions) on the Maratha quota demands," Jarange said. The sub-committee accepted his demand to implement the Hyderabad Gazetteer and assured that



Marathas with Kunbi records will be given caste certificates after proper inquiry.Jarange told his supporters that the committee has agreed to issue a GR immediately and that the Satara Gazetteer will be implemented within a month.He added that the government has promised to withdraw cases against Maratha protesters by the end of September.

The committee also said financial aid and jobs according to edu-

cational qualifications will be given within a week to families of those who died during the protests.According to Jarange, the committee informed him that Rs 15 crore has already been given to the families of deceased protesters, and the remaining compensation will be provided within a week.

Later in the day, Jarange ended his fast after accepting the GR issued by the cabinet sub-committee.

Vikhe Patil thanked him for agreeing to the proposal and breaking his fast.

The Maharashtra government issued a resolution on the Hyderabad Gazetteer and announced the setting up of committees to enable Marathas to obtain Kunbi caste certificates if they can provide documentary proof showing they were recorded as Kunbis in the past.The GR said, "In accordance with the historical references contained in the Hyderabad gazetteer, a dedicated scrutiny process shall be conducted to verify documents and establish eligibility of persons from the Maratha community for Kunbi caste certificates. The committee shall ensure that every claim is assessed in a time-bound and transparent manner."

Activist Manoj Jarange has been demanding that Marathas be recognised as Kunbis, an agrarian caste listed in the OBC category in Maharashtra. Such classification would make Marathas eligible for reservation in government jobs and education.