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PM Modi wishes Naveen Patnaik speedy recovery

Bhubaneswar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today spoke to former Odisha Chief Minister and BJD President Naveen Patnaik, who has been undergoing treatment at a private hospital here since Sunday evening, and wished him a speedy recovery. Modi enquired about Patnaik's health, advised him to take rest, and invited him to visit Delhi soon. Patnaik was admitted to SUM Ultimate Medicare on Sunday around 5:15 PM after suffering from dehydration. According to the hospital's medical bulletin, his condition is stable, and he was shifted from the observation room to a cabin on Monday afternoon. Doctors said his health is improving steadily.

UP's Jalalabad to be renamed Parshurampuri, gets Centre's nod

Lucknow: Union Home Minister Amit Shah today approved the re-naming of the Jalalabad town to Parashurampuri in Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur district. In a letter to the state chief secretary, the Ministry of Home Affairs has given no objection to the proposal by the state government sent on June 27, 2025. The center's letter also asked the state government to fulfill all the required norms, and to rename Jalalabad as Parshurampuri. Two days back, former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Uma Bharti had suggested to his UP counterpart, Yogi Adityanath, to change the name of Shahjahanpur.

Two foreign peddlers held in Bengaluru

Bengaluru: Bengaluru Police today arrested two foreign nationals, including a Congo citizen who had acted as a drug peddler in the Kannada film Bheema, for allegedly running a narcotics racket in the city. Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh said the Electronic City police, acting on a tip-off, nabbed Joel Kabong of Congo and Joy Sunday of Nigeria while they attempted to sell drugs near Mahalaksmi Layout. About 2.15 kg of MDMA valued at Rs 5 crore was seized from them. Two others are absconding. Joel had come to India in 2013 and Joy in 2022 on student visas, but neither enrolled in college. They later settled in Bengaluru and took to drug trafficking for easy money. Police said Joy procured narcotics from Delhi and sold them online in the city, with Joel handling deliveries. Their clientele included students of reputed colleges.

Three injured in gas cylinder explosion in Meghalaya

Shillong: Three people, including a Border Security Force (BSF) personnel, were injured after a gas cylinder allegedly exploded here in Meghalaya late Tuesday night, police said on Wednesday. According to police, the explosion occurred around 2200 hours on Tuesday night in the portion of the building rented by Shubam Ch. Momin (27) at Umpling, Lumdingmet locality. Initial investigation revealed that the explosion occurred when Momin lit the gas stove. A police official said a thorough investigation is being carried out to ascertain the exact cause of the blast, which has caused significant damage to the house and surrounding structures.

UP govt cracks down on black marketing of fertiliser

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh government has reaffirmed that there is no shortage of fertilisers anywhere in the state. Urging people not to indulge in unnecessary hoarding, the government has reiterated that adequate stocks are available to meet farmers' needs. The Agriculture Department has shared detailed data on the availability and sale of fertilisers across all 18 divisions. According to the available statistics, during the Kharif season 2024, 36.76 lakh metric tonnes of fertiliser had been sold by August 18. In comparison, this year sales have already reached 42.64 lakh metric tonnes, showing a significant increase.

Miner killed in ECL coal mine accident at Andal, four rescued

Durgapur: A miner was killed after being washed away by a surge of water in an underground coal mine at Eastern Coalfields Ltd in Andal, in West Bengal's West Bardhaman district, officials said.

Bhopal, Thursday, August 21, 2025

PM Modi to kick off projects worth Rs 13,000 crore in poll bound Bihar

Patna (UNI)
Prime Minister Narendra Modi is slated to initiate projects worth over Rs 13000 crores for the poll bound Bihar during his proposed day-long visit to the state on August 22.
The PM will be arriving at Gaya, an international tourist spot where he is scheduled to lay the foundation stone and inaugurate multiple development projects worth around Rs 13,000 crore.
Before addressing a rally, the Prime Minister will also flag off two trains. Thereafter, he will visit and inaugurate Aunta – Simaria bridge project on River Ganga.
In line with his commitment to improving connectivity, the Prime Minister will inaugurate the 8.15 km long Aunta – Simaria bridge project on NH-31, including the 1.86 km long 6 lane Bridge on river Ganga, constructed at a cost of over Rs 1,870 crore. It will provide direct connectivity between Mokama in Patna and Begusarai.
The bridge has been constructed



parallel to an old 2-lane dilapidated rail-cum-road bridge "Rajendra Setu" which is in poor condition forcing heavy vehicles to re-route. The new bridge will reduce this extra travel distance of more than 100 km for the heavy vehicles travelling between North Bihar (Begusarai, Supaul, Madhubani, Purnea, Araria etc) and South Bihar areas (Sheikhpura, Nawada, Lakhisarai etc). It will also help reduce issues of

traffic jams in other parts of the region due to the detour which these vehicles were forced to take.
The bridge will boost economic growth in the adjoining areas, especially in North Bihar, which are dependent on South Bihar and Jharkhand for getting necessary raw material.
It will also provide better connectivity to the famous pilgrimage place of Simaria Dham, which is also the birthplace of famous poet Late Shri Ramdhari Singh Dinkar.
The Prime Minister is scheduled to inaugurate the four-lane Bakhtiyarpur to Mokama section of NH-31, worth around Rs 1,900 crore, which will ease congestion, reduce travel time, and enhance passenger and freight movement.
Further, improvement to the two-lane with paved shoulders of Bikramganj–Dawath–Nawanagar–Dumraon section of NH-120 in Bihar will improve connectivity in rural areas, providing new economic opportunities for the local population.

Kerala seizes 17,000 litres of fake coconut oil, raids intensified ahead of Onam

Thiruvananthapuram (UNI)
In a state-wide crackdown ahead of the Onam festival, the Kerala Food Safety Department seized nearly 17,000 litres of adulterated coconut oil during 1,014 inspections conducted over the past month.
Officials said 469 samples were collected for testing, and notices were issued to 25 establishments. Legal proceedings have also been initiated against manufacturers marketing spurious coconut oil under the brand names Kerasurya, Kera Haritham and Kuttanadan Kera.
Since April this year, the department has carried out 21,030 inspections across Kerala, registering cases against 331 establishments and imposing fines amounting to Rs 63 lakh on 1,613 businesses.
With the festive season approaching, Food Safety squads will be deployed in every district from next week to strictly monitor the quality of food

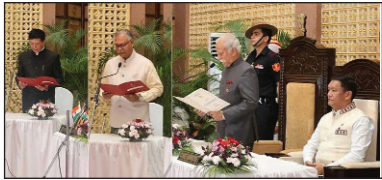
being produced, imported, distributed, and sold.
Night inspections are also planned, with special focus on street vendors, hotels, roadside eateries, bakeries, catering units and markets. Priority items include edible oils, ghee, jaggery, dairy products, payasam mixes, grains, vegetables, fruits and chips.
Health Minister Veena George has directed that no establishment should be allowed to operate without a valid food safety licence.
She warned that adulteration of food is a criminal offence and emphasized that substandard or misbranded items will not be tolerated.
Food business employees must hold valid health cards, and packaged products must carry clear manufacturing and expiry dates, as mandated by law.
Consumers have been advised to remain vigilant and to report violations or complaints to the toll-free number 1800 425 1125.

Kharge, Priyanka pays tribute to Rajiv Gandhi on 81st birth anniversary

New Delhi: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge along with party MP Priyanka Gandhi, Robert Vadra and other leaders paid floral tribute to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his 81st birth anniversary at Vir Bhumi, New Delhi today.
The Indian National Congress also paid tribute to the Former Prime Minister on their social media handle X. INC wrote, "On the birth anniversary of the architect of modern India, 'Bharat Ratna' former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi ji, we offer countless salutations. On this Sadbhavana Divas, remembering Rajiv Gandhi ji's dreams, we reaffirm his resolve."
Rajiv Gandhi, India's sixth and the youngest Prime Minister, served the nation from 1984 to 1989.

Justice (Retd) Prasanta Kr Deka sworn-in as Arunachal Lokayukta Chairperson

Itanagar (UNI)
Former Judge of Gauhati High Court, Justice (Retd) Prasanta Kumar Deka today sworn-in as the new Chairperson of the Arunachal Pradesh Lokayukta.
Retired IAS officer from the State, Sang Phuntsok, also took oath as a Member of the anti-corruption ombudsman body.
Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt General (Retd) KT Parnaik administered the oath of office to the newly-appointed Chairperson and member in a brief ceremony held at the Vivekananda Hall of Raj Bhavan here.
Chief Minister Pema Khandu, Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein, Cabinet Ministers, senior offi-



cials, including Chief Secretary Manish Kumar Gupta, and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.
Following his swearing-in, Justice Deka called on Governor Parnaik.
During the interaction, the Governor underscored the pivotal role of the Lokayukta in strengthening democratic governance.
He described it as not merely a statutory body but a "moral

Shiv Sena-MNS alliance fails to win single seat in BEST credit society poll

Mumbai (UNI)
The alliance of Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) and Raj Thackeray-led Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) has suffered a defeat in the BEST Employees' Co-operative Credit Society elections, failing to secure even a single seat out of 21 contested positions.
The election results, declared this morning, showed that the much-hyped Thackeray brothers alliance, contesting under the 'Utkarsh Panel', could not open its account despite fielding candidates for 19 seats. The Shiv Sena (UBT) fielded 18 candidates whilst the MNS contested two



seats.
Transport union leader Shashank Rao's independent panel emerged as the clear winner, bagging 14 of the 21 seats in the prestigious cooperative society. The Mahayuti-backed 'Sa-

SRMIST inks MoU with SISA to shape Next gen workforce

Chennai (UNI)
The SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST) at suburban Kattankulathur, and SISA, a global cybersecurity company, today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on cybersecurity education and workforce development in India. The partnership aims to equip students with industry-relevant skills and provide practical experience to prepare them for roles in cybersecurity and AI, a release from SRMIST said.
Speaking at the event, Mr. Dharmashan Shanthamurthy, Founder and CEO of SISA, said, "India's shortfall of skilled professionals is a challenge that affects both digital trust and national security.
This MoU addresses the current skills gap and supports the develop-

ment of the next generation of cybersecurity professionals."
The MoU follows the announcement of the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana, which aims to support the creation of over 3.5 crore jobs in the next two years.
The initiative is expected to benefit both students and young professionals while providing opportunities for industry collaboration in skills development.
Under this partnership, SRMIST students will gain hands-on experience with enterprise-grade cybersecurity tools, co-develop frameworks, and work on solutions for emerging threats.
The collaboration was launched with a Hackathon Challenge, which saw participation from over 200 students.

hakar Samruddhi Panel', led by BJP MLC Prasad Lad and comprising leaders from the BJP, Eknath Shinde faction and other allies, managed to secure seven seats.
This electoral contest marked the first joint political collaboration between the Thackeray cousins after years of rivalry, dealt a huge blow to the 'Thackeray brand' that once dominated the city's labour unions and municipal politics.
The credit society, which has over 15,000 BEST employees as members, has been under the control of the Thackeray-led Kamgar Sena for the past nine years.

Mamata Banerjee slams Centre over constitutional amendment bill, calls it 'death knell for democracy'

Kolkata (UNI)
West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today launched a blistering attack on the BJP government at the Centre, hours before Union Home Minister Amit Shah was scheduled to table the 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha.
Banerjee accused the Centre of undermining democracy, attempting to topple elected state governments, and striking at the very foundations of the Constitution.
In a post on X, the Trinamool Congress supremo condemned the proposed Bill as "a step to end the democratic era of India forever."
She called it "a death knell for democracy and federalism" and described it as "nothing short of a Hitlerian assault on the very soul of Indi-

India developing 75,000-kg rocket, says ISRO chief

Hyderabad (UNI)
India's space programme is poised for its next giant leap with the development of a 75,000-kg rocket, the size of a 40-storey building, ISRO Chairman and Secretary, Department of Space, Dr V. Narayanan, said today.
Delivering the convocation address at the 84th Annual Convocation of Osmania University, Dr. Narayanan said the journey from ferrying small rocket parts on bicycles in 1963 to building launchers capable of carrying 75,000 kg into orbit reflects the nation's extraordinary progress in space technology. "India, once decades behind, now stands shoulder to shoulder with advanced spacefaring nations," he said.
The ISRO chief recalled how India's first satellite-based communication experiment in 1975 connected 2,400 villages across six states, marking the start of the communication revolution. Since then, the country has launched high-throughput communication satellites, Earth observation platforms, and deep-space missions, including Chandrayaan-3's historic



South Pole landing and the Mars Orbiter Mission's first-attempt success.
Highlighting India's rising global stature, he pointed to recent achievements such as the 100th launch from Indian soil, a successful docking experiment placing India among four nations to master the technology. He said India's space capabilities have reached global benchmarks in safety and human-rated rockets.
Dr Narayanan underlined that ISRO currently operates 55 satellites in orbit, a number expected to triple in the coming years, supporting critical services from disaster management to telecommunications.

Chhattisgarh CM Sai expands cabinet: Three new faces signal generational shift in state politics

Raipur (UNI)
Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai expanded his cabinet today inducting three first-time legislators in a move aimed at balancing caste, community, and regional representation.
With this, the strength of the council of ministers has increased from 11 to 14, marking the first expansion of Sai's tenure. The inclusion of three first-time legislators brings new faces into the state's political mainstream, signaling a generational shift in Chhattisgarh politics.
The new ministers include Rajesh Agrawal from Ambikapur, Gajendra Yadav from Durg City, and Guru Kushwant Saheb from Arang. All three won their Assembly seats last year by defeating senior Congress leaders, underscoring the BJP's strategy of rewarding fresh faces with ministerial responsibility.
Agrawal, who narrowly defeated



former Deputy Chief Minister TS Singhdeo by just 94 votes, represents the influential trading community in northern Chhattisgarh.
Yadav, who is associated with the RSS, secured a decisive victory over Congress veteran Arun Vora, while Saheb, son of revered Satnami spiritual leader Guru Baldas, unseated minister Shiv Dehriya in Arang, giving the Satnami community enhanced represen-

tation in the state cabinet.
Political observers note that the expansion reflects the BJP's effort to strengthen its social coalition by drawing leaders from the Vaishya, Yadav, and Satnami communities, while ensuring regional parity with representation from Surguja, Durg, and Raipur divisions.
"This expansion demonstrates the Chief Minister's intent to empower new leaders and broaden the government's social outreach," senior BJP leader Shiv Narayan Pandey told The Statesman. "It also signals continuity with the party's strategy of promoting emerging faces over entrenched factions." The reshuffle comes amid speculation of further changes to existing portfolios. Analysts suggest that the move will consolidate Sai's leadership ahead of upcoming policy challenges, while giving the BJP a wider political base in Chhattisgarh.

Two students killed in tragic train accident near Lucknow

Lucknow: In a heart-wrenching incident, two students lost their lives after being hit by a train near the Mamapur railway crossing in the Bakshi Ka Talab (BKT) police station area of Lucknow.
The victims have been identified as Akshat Maurya (18), a resident of Faizullaganj, Madiyaon, and Karan Patel (18), from Hargao in Sitapur. Both were students of Class 12 at SR Global College and were residing in the college hostel.
According to police reports, the incident occurred late Tuesday night at around 10:30 PM, approximately 50 metres ahead of the Mamapur crossing in the direction of Sitapur. The two friends had reportedly gone out for a walk and did not return.

Stalin condemns slapping of sedition case against 2 journos

Chennai (UNI)
Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK President M K Stalin today condemned the Assam Police for booking two journalists on sedition charges and termed it as an attempt to suppress independent journalism.
He said if asking questions was treated as sedition then democracy could not survive.
In a post on X, he said "I strongly condemn the action of the Assam Police in issuing summons to senior journalists S.Varadarajan and Karan

Thapar of The Wire."
"The summons have been issued despite the Supreme Court granting protection in a related matter only days earlier", he said.
The Chief Minister said "No copy of the FIR and no particulars of the case have been furnished, leaving only the threat of arrest. Section 152 of the BNS is being misused as a substitute for the repealed sedition law to suppress independent journalism."
"A democracy cannot survive if asking questions is treated as sedition", he added.



death knell for democracy and federalism in India," she wrote.

The Bill that is likely to be tabled today states that if the Prime Minister, a Chief Minister, or any other minister is arrested or detained on serious criminal charges and remains in custody for 30 consecutive days, they must step down from their post.
The 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill also proposes that ministers who are removed under this provision may regain their position after being released.
The chief minister alleged that the legislation seeks to strip the judiciary of its constitutional role and hand sweeping powers to "partisan and unelected authorities" like the Enforcement Directorate and CBI, enabling them to interfere in the functioning of state governments.
"I condemn the 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill, proposed to be tabled, by the Government of India today. I condemn it as a step towards something that is more than a super- Emergency, a step to end the democratic era of India forever.
"This draconian step comes as a