











## DKS meets PM Modi, requests Rs 36,950 cr to built tunnel roads, elevated corridors in Bengaluru

Bengaluru: Karnataka Deputy CM and Bengaluru Development Minister DK Shivakumar on July 31 said that the estimated cost to build two urban tunnels and two elevated corridors to ease traffic in Bengaluru will be Rs 36,950 crore. In a meeting with PM Narendra Modi, Shivakumar said that feasibility studies have shown that constructing these tunnels and corridors is crucial for reducing traffic congestion in the IT city. "We can fund these projects through the annual budget allocations

designated for improving former National Highways," he added. He added that studies have highlighted that urban tunnels are the best way to link National Highway-7 from Hosur to Bellary Road and KR Pura to Mysuru Road. This method can significantly reduce traffic congestion at street level and lowers the cost of land acquisition. The deputy CM requested the Centre for support to secure the necessary funds to assist the Karnataka government with this project. He added that Bengaluru is expanding

rapidly and budgets will be needed to aid the growth. "We have identified five new corridors to extend existing Metro lines, totaling 129 km. These will link the city's outskirts and nearby towns, meeting the growing need for public transportation," said Shivakumar. He urged the Centre to give a green signal to integrate Metro lines with road flyovers in future Metro projects in Bengaluru. In addition to this, the deputy CM also sought approval for the Rs 27,000 crore Peripheral Ring Road

project, which includes Rs 21,000 crore for land acquisition and Rs 6,000 crore for construction. The Peripheral Ring Road is a 73 km, eight-lane project being developed on a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) basis by the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA). The Deputy Chief Minister also requested the Union government's approval for a Rs 3,000 crore project funded by the World Bank to address flooding issues in Bengaluru.

## Maharashtra Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis Set To Become BJP President: Sources



Highly placed sources in the BJP told the FPJ on Wednesday night that the party high command has almost finalised Devendra Fadnavis' name for the position of BJP National President. Fadnavis may be resigning as Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister in the coming weeks and moving to New Delhi. This was communicated only to the top leaders of the party on Wednesday during the day. Just a few days ago in New Delhi after the official Niti Ayog meeting with state chief ministers, the Prime Minister held a meeting with all BJP Chief Ministers at party headquarters. After this meeting the PM held a closed door meeting only with Devendra Fadnavis. After the meeting Fadnavis family was also given a photo op with the Prime Minister. Sources in the BJP said that the decision about moving Devendra Fadnavis from Mumbai to New Delhi as BJP National President was discussed between PM Modi and Fadnavis at the meeting and opinions within the party were discussed in the next few days. Union Minister J.P. Nadda's term as party president ended a few weeks ago and there is a lot of speculation about who will be his successor. The next question being discussed now within the party is who will lead the BJP during the upcoming assembly poll campaign. One view was that Fadnavis will continue in Maharashtra till the assembly polls are over and then move to New Delhi. However the latest inputs from New Delhi suggest that there is some urgency coming in and Fadnavis may move to New Delhi sooner than earlier expected. One name coming from sources in New Delhi for Maharashtra leadership is that of party General Secretary Vinod Tawde, however sources within the BJP did not confirm the successor's name for Maharashtra

## Was it your failure or candidate's expertise? Court asks UPSC in Puja Khedkar case

Delhi's Patiala House Court on Wednesday questioned the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) about how Puja Khedkar wasn't caught for falsifying facts despite appearing for the prelims exam three times and the mains exam four times. The court of Additional Sessions Judge Devender Kumar Jangala was hearing an anticipatory bail plea filed by Khedkar. The prosecution pressed for the need for her custodial interrogation, claiming she had been changing her stand repeatedly. The court asked if the case was a result of the failure of UPSC or "the expertise of the candidate". "What was UPSC doing? How is this practically possible?" the court remarked. Senior Advocate Naresh Kaushik, appearing for the UPSC, responded that it wasn't caught since it was within the number of attempts allowed. UPSC's counsel told the court that more than 10 lakh candidates apply for the exam, and UPSC is not an investigating agency -- its job is to conduct the examination. Kaushik added that Khedkar's lawyer herself said she wrote the number of attempts "wrongly or mistakenly". "Name can be changed, but why do you change the spelling of your name? She is not entitled to change her parents' names," Kaushik said. He added that Khedkar is depriving legitimate can-

didates of employment and that she herself secured public employment unlawfully, which is an offense not only against the UPSC but also against society. The court questioned the public prosecutor over the need to seek Khedkar's custodial interrogation. "If your investigation is at such a nascent stage, what is the need to arrest her? What is the hurry to arrest her?" the court asked. The court also questioned the need for custodial interrogation considering all documents related to the case were already with them and the UPSC. The prosecution told the court that Khedkar had concealed relevant material in a "clever manner" to appear and pass the exam, committing cheating. The prosecution argued that her custody is needed because she changed her stands over the years, where earlier she cited mental illness and later claimed physical disability. The court said the present complaint is not about her disabilities but only the attempts taken by her. "FIR can't be an encyclopedia. She's been changing her stance again and again," the prosecution counsel said. Advocate Bina Madhavan, appearing for Khedkar, told the court that her client needs to be granted anticipatory bail so she has an opportunity to prove her innocence. She argued that the UPSC filed an FIR a day after sending a show cause no-



tice to Khedkar, and criminal prosecution couldn't be started unless UPSC held her guilty, as per the civil services rules. "Penalty is criminal prosecution, disqualification, debarment, etc. No penalty can be imposed without giving the candidate an opportunity to explain. They can do all this only after I have been held guilty for all this. I have only been given notice by UPSC," she said. Madhavan claimed that there is a witch hunt against Khedkar, but she had full faith in the system and the court. "She's a fighter. At every stage, she had to fight to get her candidature. Life is not easy for persons with physical disabilities," she said. According to her lawyer, Khedkar had written five attempts in her form in "good faith" since she only attempted the exam five times under the category of persons with disabilities. The court reserved its orders on Khedkar's anticipatory bail plea. The verdict will be pronounced at 4 pm on Thursday.

## 1,136 Km of Total 1,386 Km Ready, Oct 2025 Final Deadline, Govt Tells Parliament

Work on almost half of the packages in the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway has been completed as of June 2024 and constitution has been completed on 82% of the stretch, the ministry of road transport and highways (MoRTH) informed the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. In a written reply to Narhari Amin, BJP MP from Gujarat, union minister Nitin Gadkari said that out of the total length of 1,386 km, a cumulative length of 1,136 km has been constructed. "The physical progress of the work is 82% and a cumulative length of 1,136 km has been constructed... The revised scheduled completion date is October 2025," he said. The ministry, he added, has taken up construction of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway including spurs in 53 packages covering 1,386 km length. As of June 2024, a total of 26 packages have been completed. The corridor provides connectivity to major economic centres within Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra. It will offer alternate connectivity to



Jaipur, Kota, Chittorgarh, Indore, Ujjain, Bhopal, Ahmedabad, and Vadodara and will reduce distances and travel time, which in turn will save fuel and logistical costs. "As per the DPR, the impact includes reduction in distance from Delhi to JNPT by about 180 km and reduction in travel time of up to 50% to connected destinations," Gadkari added. Currently, Mumbai and Delhi are connected by NH-48, which is longer (1,440 km) as well as congested. Once completed, the 1,386-km expressway will be the longest in India. Last week, News18 reported that even before completion, the partially opened Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is the longest in India, surpassing all

the existing e-ways in the country. Out of the 1,386 km, 619 km of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is operational including the Delhi-Dausa-Sawai Madhopur section, Jhalawar-Ratlam-MP/Gujarat border, and the Vadodara-Bharuch section. In June, News18 reported that two additional almost 200 km sections of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway could be expected in the next six months. Majorly, the expressway is divided into two parts - the 845-km Delhi-Vadodara section and the 450-km Vadodara-Mumbai section. The section up to Vadodara is expected by March 2025 while that to Mumbai will be ready by October 2025. The 90-km DND Sohna and Jewar part of the road is expected by July 2025. As per the ministry, the Delhi-Mumbai greenfield expressway is generating employment of 50 lakh man-days during the construction phase. The expressway is being developed with an eight-lane configuration and has provision to expand to 12 lanes in future. Vehicles can operate on the road at a maximum speed of 120 km/hr.

# Wayanad tragedy: IMD bulletins expose HM Amit Shah's claim on advance warnings

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday countered Union Home Minister Amit Shah's claims about the state being forewarned about the possibility of floods and landslide in the state. Addressing media persons in Thiruvananthapuram, Chief Minister Vijayan stated that the India Meteorological Department (IMD) had issued an orange alert for the district prior to the landslides despite the area receiving over 500 millimeters of rainfall -- significantly exceeding the predicted amount. Vijayan noted that a red alert was only issued for the district after the landslides occurred on Tuesday morning. The chief minister, however, emphasized that this was not an opportune time for assigning blame. An orange alert indicates very heavy rain (6 cm to 20 cm), while a red alert signifies heavy to extremely heavy rain exceeding 20

cm in 24 hours.

### Shah's 'Advance Warning' Claim

Addressing Rajya Sabha earlier in the day, Shah stated that the central government had issued multiple advance warnings to the Kerala government regarding potential floods and landslides, starting on July 23. Nine National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams were deployed to the state on the same day, Shah claimed, adding that, however, the Kerala government failed to heed these warnings and did not take adequate action despite the arrival of NDRF battalions. While assuring that the Narendra Modi government stands in solidarity with the Kerala government and people during this tragic time, Shah promised all necessary assistance from the central government. Shah remarks came in response to opposition claims that the lack of early warning

systems contributed to the loss of lives in the Wayanad landslide tragedy. The minister emphasized that the central government had provided timely warnings, citing specific dates: July 23, 24, 25, and 26. On July 26, the Kerala government was informed of the possibility of heavy rainfall exceeding 20 centimeters, landslides, and potential loss of life due to mudslides.

### Fact-checking Amit Shah

A closer examination of records shows that on July 23, the Meteorological Center issued an orange alert in the northern region, including Wayanad. An orange alert means that heavy or very heavy rain is forecast. 12 to 20 cm of rain in isolated places in 24 hours will come under Orange Alert. A red alert is issued for heavy to very-heavy rain. People are to be evacuated if possibility of flood-like conditions emerges. But



from July 23 to July 29, IMD gave only orange alert to Kerala. Even on the day of the disaster, the IMD issued an orange alert till August 2. However, the red alert was announced only in the bulletin that came at 6 am on the day of the disaster. The landslides occurred at Mundakkai and Chooralmala at 2am. Government sources also clarified that no special warning was issued for Wayanad apart from that of the IMD.

## Pinarayi Vijayan vs Amit Shah on Kerala landslides



Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has hit back at Union Home Minister Amit Shah after the latter said the state government was forewarned about the floods and landslides. Addressing the media in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said, "The central government should also realise that there are serious issues pertaining to climate change. In the past, did we witness extreme rainfall like what we are seeing now? We need climate change mitigation efforts. When something like this happens, you can't just try to shift blame onto others and shrug off responsibility. Like I said, I don't think this is the time for blame game." Pinarayi Vijayan was responding to Amit Shah's statement in Rajya Sabha, where the Home Minister said that an early warning was given to the Kerala government on July 23. "The Centre has spent over Rs 2,000 crore for developing the early warning system since 2014. I want to clarify that on July 23, the Centre gave an early warning to the Kerala government, seven days before the incident, and then on July 24 and 25, we warned them again. On July 26, a warning was given that there was a chance of heavy rainfall of more than 20 cm, and there were chances of landslides," Amit Shah said. The Home Minister said on July 23, nine NDRF teams were sent to Kerala considering the possibility of landslides. "What did the Kerala government do? Were the people shifted? And if they were shifted, then how did they die?" he asked. On this, Pinarayi Vijayan said the central government's weather warning was that Wayanad would receive rainfall between 115-204 mm. But in the next 48 hours, the area received 572 mm of rainfall. The Chief Minister further said that on the day of the landslide, only an orange alert was issued. "Before the tragedy struck, not even once was red alert issued in the area. Only after the landslide took place, on that morning at 6 am, did they issue a red alert," he said. The Chief Minister said on July 29, the Geological Survey of India issued a green alert for July 30 and 31, indicating a possibility of minor landslides or rock bursts. However, by that time, heavy rain had already occurred, and the landslide had taken place, he said. "From July 23 to 29, the Central Water Commission, which is responsible for issuing flood warnings, did not issue any warnings for either Iruvazhinji Puzha or Chaliyar. The Union Home Minister has presented information in Parliament that is inconsistent with these facts," he said. "When they (Amit Shah) proudly says we are the best (amongst the countries in giving prior alerts), I am just pointing out that such errors have also happened. I am not saying this to blame them," Pinarayi Vijayan said.

## 'He should be tested': Kangana Ranaut says Rahul Gandhi comes to Parliament drunk or high on drugs

Newly-elected Mandi MP Kangana Ranaut stirred a controversy by alleging that Congress MP and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi could be taking drugs and should be drug tested. Kangana made the remark while reacting to Rahul's recent speech in the Lok Sabha where he had attacked the BJP-led government using the 'chakravayuh' metaphor as a leitmotif. Speaking to reporters, Kangana said, "The Prime Minister is elected democratically. The whole nation has chosen the Prime Minister. So does he (Rahul Gandhi) not respect democracy? Is the Prime Minister chosen on the basis of their gender, age, social status or caste? By making such comments, he constantly hurts the Constitution. Tomorrow he might say that the Prime Minister should be chosen by skin colour." "Sonu ji will direct his own Ramayana": Kangana Ranaut on Sonu Sood's 'HUMANITY' comment on food spitting incident on Kanwar Yatra route She further commented, "Doesn't he have any respect for de-



mocracy? Yesterday too he had performed a comedy show there (in the Parliament). He knows no limits. He went there (in Lok Sabha) and said 'We are Shivji's baaraat and they (BJP) are the chakravayuh'. So, I feel there he should be tested to see if he is consuming any drugs." "The state in which he comes to the Parliament and kind of things he says, I'm a new member, but looking at him I was completely shocked. If a person is talking about Shivji's baaraat and chakravayuh, then don't you think that person should be drug tested? I feel such a person should be tested. Either he arrives to the Parliament drunk or high on drugs, and I don't

think that it is a good thing," the actor and politician told reporters. When questioned further if she was accusing Rahul Gandhi of taking drugs, she said, "Do you think someone who speaks of such things like Shivji's baaraat and chakravayuh is in control of themselves? I don't think so." Gandhi's reference was to the Mahabharat legend according to which Abhimanyu was killed in a 'chakravayuh'. 'Chakravayuh' refers to a multi-layered military formation aimed at trapping a warrior by opponents placed strategically in an alignment resembling a lotus-shaped labyrinth. He said the 'chakravayuh' is also called a 'padmavyuh' for its resemblance to a lotus (BJP's election symbol) formation. "In the 21st century, another 'chakravayuh' has been prepared. It is in the form of lotus and the prime minister (Narendra Modi) wears the symbol on his chest. What was done with Abhinmanyu is being done with India, with its youth, women, farmers and small and medium businesses," he had said.

## US woman found chained to tree in Sindhudurg forest visited Mumbai in June: Police

Mumbai: A 50-year-old American woman, who was found tied to a tree with an iron chain in a forest in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district, had visited Mumbai in June but the motive behind it is still unclear, police said on Wednesday. The Sindhudurg police have got some information about the woman, Lalita Kayi, including the region in the US from where she hails, an official said. Various teams of cops are verifying the information and police will arrive at some conclusion once it is verified, the official said. The police have "very strong clues" about her, he said. Citing their investigation, the official said the woman had come to Tamil Nadu 10 years ago to learn yoga and medication. There, she married an Indian man, stayed with him for several years and also got an Aadhaar card, the official said. After a fallout with her husband, Kayi stayed in Goa for some time and also visited Mumbai in June, he said. The motive behind her Mumbai visit is being verified. It is still unclear whom she met in Mumbai and for how long

she stayed in the country's financial capital, the official said. A shepherd on July 27 found Kayi chained to a tree after he heard her cries in a forest at Sonurli village in the coastal Sindhudurg district, around 450 km from here. He alerted the police who found her Aadhaar card with a Tamil Nadu address and a photocopy of her American passport on her. Her visa had expired, police had said earlier. The woman was shifted to a hospital in neighbouring Goa for treatment. The Sindhudurg police had recovered a note from her in which she said that she had not eaten anything for the last 25 days, an official said. "The police have not recorded Lalita Kayi's statement yet. The verification of the information our teams have received so far is going on," said Saurabh Kumar Agrawal, Superintendent of Police, Sindhudurg. "It is yet to be ascertained for how long she was tied with the iron chain to the tree, but the note, which police recovered, mentions that she had not consumed anything for the last 25 days," he said. The investigation by the



Sindhudurg police is moving in the right direction, Agrawal said, adding that the police have "strong clues related to the woman". The Sindhudurg police have registered an attempt-to-murder case against her former husband for tying her to a tree with an iron chain in the forest. The case is based on the information mentioned in the note, which police recovered from her possession, he said, adding that the probe is underway. It is suspected that Kayi suffers from schizophrenia, police had said earlier, adding that teams were sent to Tamil Nadu and Goa to trace her ex-husband and other relatives.

