

FSSAI analyses 5L food samples in 3 yrs; 88K penalties imposed

The surveillance drives are conducted throughout the year by the officials of Food Safety Departments of the respective States/UTs

Striving for Good Food

- Strengthening of the food testing ecosystem
- 56,259 risk based inspections were carried out
- Notices to 252 food testing laboratories
- Funded Mobile Food Testing Laboratories

NEW DELHI



FSSAI extends financial and technical assistance to states/UTs which includes strengthening enforcement and compliance such as licensing and registration, consumer grievance redressal, capacity building for officers

SURVEILLANCE drives, inspections and random sampling of food products, done by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), include 5,18,559 sample analysis which led to 88,192 penalties and 3,614 convictions, the government said on Tuesday.

The measures taken by FSSAI led to 1,161 licence cancellations over 2022-23 to 2024-25 after random sampling of various food products including milk, ghee,

spices, honey, paneer and other foods, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Prataprao Jadhav, said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha. The surveillance drives are conducted throughout the year by the officials of Food Safety Departments of the respective States/UTs and Regional Offices of FSSAI to check compliance with the quality and safety parameters and other requirements as laid down under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

A total of 56,259 risk based

inspections were carried out in the period, where frequency of inspection is decided based on risk associated with Food businesses and issued guidelines, the minister said. Annual inspections are to be conducted for all food categories identified as high risk.

Further, FSSAI has notified 252 food testing laboratories and 24 Referral Food Laboratories for the analysis of appellate samples.

It also funded Mobile Food Testing Laboratories — “Food Safety on Wheels” (FSWs)

— and deployed 305 of them across 35 states or UTs, to combat adulteration as FSWs are equipped with basic infrastructure for on spot testing of adulteration in various food commodities.

FSSAI extends financial and technical assistance to states/UTs which includes strengthening enforcement and compliance such as licensing and registration, consumer grievance redressal, capacity building for officers.

India's immunisation journey full of verified milestones

India has eradicated smallpox, polio and maternal and neonatal tetanus through vaccination, and continues to expand its immunisation programme

NEW DELHI



FROM eradicating smallpox in 1977 to eliminating polio and neonatal tetanus, administering 200 crore Covid-19 doses, and now pursuing Measles-Rubella elimination — India's immunisation journey is one of verified, milestone-by-milestone achievement, an official fact-sheet said on Tuesday.

India has eradicated smallpox, polio and maternal and neonatal tetanus through vaccination, and continues to expand its immunisation programme — most recently launched HPV and indigenous Td vaccines in 2026.

India's robust Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP), a wide-spread network of publicly funded healthcare centres, workers and cold-chain infrastructure, and a strong digital network, have delivered results.

“The UIP is one of the world's largest immunisation programmes, reaching 2.9

crore pregnant women and 2.54 crore newborns every year, free of cost. Full immunisation coverage has risen from 62 per cent in 2015 to 98.4 per cent in January 2026,” the fact-sheet said.

Percentage of zero-dose children to the total population has declined from 0.11 per cent in 2023 to 0.06 per cent in 2024.

In the past decade, various new vaccines were added to the programme — Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) (2015), Rotavirus Vaccine (RVV) (2016), Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccine (2017) and Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) (2017).

A nationwide Human Pap-

illomavirus (HPV) vaccination campaign was launched on February 28, 2026. The campaign was launched from Ajmer, Rajasthan by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

It targets 14-year-old girls to protect them from cervical cancer. Around 1.15 crore girls across India are expected to receive the vaccine free of cost at government health facilities.

India's vaccine cold chain is one of the largest in the world — spanning nearly 30,000 cold chain points, from Government Medical Supply Depots at the national level down to Primary Health Centres at the sub-district level.

Indians opt Japan, S Korea for spring travel: Klook

BIZZ BUZZ BUREAU HYDERABAD

KLOOK has released its Spring Readiness Index, offering a snapshot of how Indian travellers are planning for the spring travel season across Japan and South Korea. The Spring Readiness Index is based on insights from 900 travellers across nine Asia markets, Japan remains the top spring destination, with 78 per cent of respondents naming it as their preferred choice, followed by South Korea at 52 per cent.

For Indian travellers, the main draw during the March-April travel window is seasonal attractions, reinforcing a broader shift toward experience-led travel shaped by natural spectacles, cultural moments, and limited-time opportunities. This is reinforced by Search interest on Klook's platform for spring-related terms such as “cherry blossom” and “sakura” rose 57 per cent from December 2025 to February 2026, highlighting strong momentum for seasonal travel. “Today, real-life experiences and moments of discovery are shaping how and why people travel,” said Shivam Tyagi, Head of Marketing — India, Klook.

India among most proactive adopters of AI in payroll processes: Report

Says additional areas being explored for AI transformation include audits, compliance management and data validation

NEW DELHI



INDIA is emerging as one of the most proactive markets globally in adopting artificial intelligence (AI) into payroll processes, with 34 per cent of Indian organisations planning near term AI implementation, a report said on Tuesday.

The report from HR solutions provider ADP said that AI use in India is expanding across critical payroll functions, with around half of companies applying it to automate workflows, streamline data entry and calculate taxes, benefits and overtime.

Additional areas being explored for AI transformation include audits, compliance management and data validation, the report further said. “In India, payroll sits at the

intersection of scale and scrutiny. Organisations are prioritising stronger controls, audit readiness, and high-quality data to support decision-making. As AI takes on repeatable tasks, payroll teams will shift their focus to data integrity, regulatory navigation and governance excellence,” said Rahul Goyal, Managing Director, ADP India and Southeast Asia.

The firm highlighted skills shortages challenging payroll teams in Asia Pacific region

(APAC), noting 80 per cent of organisations are reviewing how to run payroll with fewer people, above the global average of 72 per cent.

Reskilling and upskilling are top-of-mind priorities to address this, with around 74 per cent payroll leaders in APAC reporting that staff shortages have already impacted their payroll operations.

Around 49 per cent of respondents were exploring AI to support leaner operating models and 33 per cent of organisations identified AI as a key driver of payroll transformation over the next 2-3 years, the report further said.

Organisations are primarily using AI to detect fraudulent transactions, accelerate report generation, and automate data entry, the firm noted.

Apple unveils AirPods Max 2 with H2 chip, new AI features

NEW DELHI

APPLE has unveiled the new AirPods Max 2, bringing improved sound quality, stronger Active Noise Cancellation (ANC), and several intelligent features to its premium over-ear headphones.

The company said the new headphones are powered by the H2 chip, which allows better performance and introduces features such as Adaptive Audio, Conversation Awareness, Voice Isolation, and Live Translation for the first time on the AirPods Max lineup.

According to Apple, the new AirPods Max 2 offer up to 1.5 times more effective Active Noise Cancellation compared to the previous generation.

This helps block more background sounds such as airplane engines or train noise, allowing users to en-



joy music, calls, or work with fewer distractions.

The headphones also deliver improved sound quality with a new high dynamic range amplifier that provides cleaner audio.

Apple said the upgraded system enhances bass response and produces more natural mids and highs.

When paired with Personalised Spatial Audio, the headphones provide a more immersive listening experience for music, movies, and games.

For users who want the highest-quality audio, AirPods Max 2 support 24-bit, 48 kHz lossless audio when connected using the USB-C cable.

vivo unveils T5x smartphone

BIZZ BUZZ BUREAU HYDERABAD



VIVO India has introduced the first smartphone in the T5 series — the vivo T5x 5G. Designed for performance-driven users, the model sports a 7200mAh battery, built for extended usage. Powered by MediaTek Dimensity 7400 Turbo processor, it achieves AnTuTu score of over 1M.

The smartphone features military-grade certified durability and industry-leading IP68 & IP69 with water resistance feature. It is equipped with a 50 MP AI-powered main camera with a 4K video recording, along with a 32 MP front camera. Enabled with OriginOS 6, the smartphone reflects company's continued focus on user-centric innovation.

Tesla buyer in LG Energy's July battery deal

SEOUL



THE US government has confirmed that global electric vehicle (EV) giant Tesla was the customer in a battery supply deal secured by LG Energy Solution in July, industry sources said.

The US Department of the Interior posted the results of the Indo-Pacific Energy Security Ministerial and Business Forum held in Tokyo over the weekend, which included the Tesla-LG Energy Solution deal, reports Yonhap news agency.

“Tesla and LG Energy Solution are expanding their partnership with a supply agreement to build a \$4.3 billion LFP prismatic battery cell manufacturing facility in Lansing, Michigan, launching production in 2027,” the US department said on its website.

“American-made cells will

power Tesla's Megapack 3 energy storage systems produced in Houston, creating a robust domestic battery supply chain,” it added.

In July, LG Energy Solution said it signed a lithium iron phosphate (LFP) battery supply deal with an overseas client, without disclosing the buyer.

The South Korean battery maker said it will supply LFP batteries to the unnamed client for three years, from Aug. 1, 2027, to July 31, 2030.

Industry watchers had speculated Tesla was the counterpart, but LG Energy Solution refrained from providing details, citing business confidentiality.

Democracy breathes through disagreement

Constitution does not recognise categories of liberty. Freedom is not meant to depend on political alignment, media attention or public visibility. It belongs equally to all



THE POLITICA Nothing political about it

POLITRICKS



BN Kumar

THE government's decision to withdraw the preventive detention order against Sonam Wangchuk should have been closed a chapter. Instead, it has opened a series of troubling questions.

If he is not a threat to national security today, how was he one six months ago?

For nearly half a year, the engineer-innovator from Ladakh lived under the shadow of the National Security Act — a law meant for genuine threats to the nation, not for voices of dissent.

The quiet withdrawal of the case has spared the government the embarrassment of having to justify the detention in open court. Yet it has not answered the central question: what justified those months in custody? And who is accountable for them?

Wangchuk is no obscure agitator suddenly discovered by the state. He is one of India's most respected innovators — a figure whose work has been admired even by governments that now appear uneasy with his activism.

An engineer by training, he founded the Students' Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SECMOL), an initiative

that transformed education in the region. His work on passive solar buildings and the now-famous ice stupas brought global attention to Ladakh's fragile ecology. He received the Ramon Magsaysay Award, often described as Asia's Nobel Prize. His ideas even inspired the character of the inventive student in the film 3 Idiots.

For years he symbolised the promise of innovation emerging from the Himalayas.

Yet in recent months he became something else: a detainee.

The story of that transformation is tied to the political evolution of Ladakh itself. When Narendra Modi's government reorganised Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 and carved out Ladakh as a separate Union Territory, many residents initially welcomed the move. Wangchuk was among those who publicly expressed hope.

For Ladakh, long overshadowed by the politics of Kashmir, the new status seemed to promise direct attention from New Delhi and faster development.

But optimism gradually gave way to unease. Local leaders began raising concerns about land protections, employment safeguards and the preservation of Ladakh's fragile environment. Demands emerged for constitutional safeguards under the Sixth Schedule — provisions that protect tribal regions through greater autonomy.

Wangchuk's activism evolved in that context. He organised climate fasts, led awareness marches and appealed for environmental protection and constitutional safeguards. His language was sharp but unmistakably constitutional.

It was dissent.

And dissent, in a democracy, is



not merely tolerated. It is essential. The Supreme Court itself has recognised this principle. Justice D. Y. Chandrachud famously observed that “dissent is the safety valve of democracy. If dissent is not allowed, the pressure cooker will burst.”

Courts understand this instinctively. Judges themselves dissent. Some of the most influential rulings in constitutional history began as minority opinions that later shaped the law.

Democracy breathes through disagreement.

But in Wangchuk's case, dissent began to be treated as disruption.

The protests intensified. So did the response.

Eventually Wangchuk was detained, and soon afterwards authorities invoked the National Security Act against him. Preventive detention laws allow the state to hold individuals without trial for extended periods if they are deemed threats to national security or public order.

Such powers exist in many countries. But they carry an inherent danger: they allow incarceration first and justification later.

In a democracy, that power must be used sparingly.

The detention triggered alarm

among civil liberties groups and lawyers. Wangchuk's wife moved court with a habeas corpus petition — one of the oldest remedies in constitutional law — demanding that the state justify the detention before a judge.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal appeared for the petitioner. The arguments were straightforward: the protests were peaceful, the activist's record was well known, and there was no material suggesting a threat to national security.

As the court examined the detention, uncomfortable questions began to surface.

Before those questions could sharpen further, the government withdrew the detention order.

Technically, the case ended there.

Morally, however, it has only begun.

The withdrawal leaves behind a stark contradiction. If Wangchuk does not endanger national security today, what made him one six months ago? Was the threat real, or was detention simply a convenient way to neutralise a prominent protester?

Preventive detention operates largely in the shadows. Evidence is often confidential. Decisions are administrative rather than judicial.

Precisely for that reason, accountability becomes crucial.

In Wangchuk's case, nearly 170 days of liberty were lost. Those months cannot simply be erased. They matter not only to the individual but to the democratic system itself.

Because when the state can detain someone under extraordinary laws and later withdraw the case without explanation, a troubling precedent is set.

The message is simple: detain now, justify later — or perhaps never.

The Wangchuk episode also fits into a wider pattern that has increasingly drawn attention. Opposition leaders, activists and critics of the government have found themselves entangled in prolonged investigations and detentions.

Arvind Kejriwal spent months fighting legal battles before receiving relief from the courts. Activists arrested in connection with the Bhima Koregaon case spent years in prison before trials even began, with some eventually granted bail because chargesheets were delayed.

Yet there are moments when the judicial system can move with remarkable speed. When television anchor Arnab Goswami was arrested in 2020, the Supreme Court heard his plea urgently and granted interim bail within days, emphasising the importance of protecting personal liberty.

The principle articulated then was sound. Liberty matters.

But the uneven pace of justice inevitably raises questions. Why do some cases move with lightning speed while others crawl through the system for months or years?

The Constitution does not rec-

ognise categories of liberty. Freedom is not meant to depend on political alignment, media attention or public visibility. It belongs equally to everyone.

This is why the Wangchuk episode becomes larger than one activist's ordeal. It touches the core principle that sustains democratic societies: the right to dissent.

Every major advance in democratic history began with dissent — independence movements, civil rights struggles and environmental campaigns. Dissenters may be inconvenient, sometimes irritating and occasionally wrong. Yet democracies grow stronger by confronting dissent, not by detaining it.

Even the judiciary has repeatedly emphasised this truth.

Justice Rohinton Fali Nariman once observed that the Constitution protects the right of citizens to disagree with the state.

And decades earlier, during the dark days of the Emergency in India, Justice H. R. Khanna demonstrated the courage of dissent. In his famous opinion in the ADM Jabalpur case, he warned that the Constitution does not permit life and liberty to be placed at the mercy of absolute executive power.

History vindicated that lone dissent. Today it stands as one of the moral landmarks of Indian constitutional law.

That is why the questions raised by Wangchuk's detention cannot simply disappear with the withdrawal of a legal order. Someone must explain why a respected innovator and environmental activist was considered a national security threat.

Someone must explain what evidence justified the use of one of

the country's harshest preventive laws. And someone must account for the months he spent in custody.

Because if such detentions can occur without scrutiny, the implications extend far beyond Ladakh.

The issue is not whether one agrees with Wangchuk's demands. The issue is whether peaceful protest can be treated as a security threat.

A democracy confident in its strength does not fear dissenting voices. It engages with them, debates them and answers them.

When dissent is silenced through detention rather than argument, democracy itself begins to weaken.

We often criticise other countries for suppressing dissent and silencing inconvenient voices. Democracies take pride in drawing that distinction. Yet what we are witnessing today is uncomfortably similar. When protest is treated as disruption and dissent as a threat to national security, the line between democracy and intolerance begins to blur.

This reminds me of something veteran journalist M. Chalapathi Rao once wrote in an autobiography to me: “Facts are sacred, comment is still free.” Those words were written during the shadow of the Emergency. Today they remain a guiding principle for any society that wishes to remain democratic.

A democracy that fears dissent does not grow weaker because of its critics. It grows weaker because it stops listening.

(The columnist is a Mumbai-based author and independent media veteran, running websites and a youtube channel known for his thought-provoking messaging)