

No free bus travel for women without Pink card from Aug 1

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NEW Delhi: The Delhi government has asked women commuters to switch from the existing paper-based Pink Tickets to the NCMC-enabled Pink Saheli Smart Card before August 1, 2026, when the current ticket system will be phased out. From August 1 onwards, women will be able to avail the free bus travel facility in DTC buses only through

the Pink Saheli Smart Card. The government clarified that the free travel scheme is not being discontinued, but is being upgraded to a technology-driven system aimed at improving transparency, accountability and efficiency. The existing Pink Tickets will remain valid till July 31, giving commuters time to complete the transition.

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the smart card at the earliest, assuring that the benefit would continue uninterrupted. He said there was no need for panic or confusion, as the government was committed to ensuring that every eligible beneficiary continued to enjoy free travel.

According to the minister, nearly 15 lakh Pink Saheli Smart Cards have already been issued, with a majority of beneficiaries already using them for free travel. He reiterated that the scheme would remain operational on both DTC and Cluster buses.

"The free bus travel facility for Delhi's women will continue uninterrupted. We appeal to all eligible women to obtain their Pink Saheli Smart Card and avail its benefits with ease and convenience," Singh said. The minister also clarified that July 31 is not the final date for registration. While paper tickets will cease to be valid after that date, applications for new Pink Saheli Smart Cards will continue through designated DTC

depots, notified centres and special registration camps even after August 1. Officials said the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC)-based system would help streamline beneficiary management, reduce dependence on paper tickets and improve monitoring of the scheme. The digital platform is expected to enhance transparency and make implementation more efficient while preventing misuse.



Gold appraiser held for Rs 3.81 cr loan fraud

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NEW DELHI

A gold appraiser of a non-banking financial company (NBFC) has been arrested for allegedly conspiring with others to create 683 fake gold loan accounts using forged documents and artificial gold ornaments to fraudulently obtain loans worth over Rs 3.81 crore, an official of the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) said on Friday.

The accused, Pankaj Kumar, was working as a gold appraiser with a private company and was arrested on July 7 following an investigation into the alleged fraud,



he said. According to the EOW, the case came to light after the company's internal audit detected large-scale irregularities in its gold loan portfolio.

"The audit found that nine packets of original pledged gold ornaments worth around Rs 14.11 lakh were missing. The audit further revealed that 683 fake gold loan accounts had been cre-

ated between 2022 and 2025 using forged KYC documents, fake customer identities and artificial gold ornaments. Based on these accounts, loans amounting to about Rs 3.81 crore were fraudulently disbursed," the statement of the EOW read.

An FIR was registered at the EOW police station in August 2025, and further investigation was taken up.

During the investigation, police examined loan files, appraisal reports, KYC documents, audit records, bank statements and other financial records, besides recording statements of company officials and other witnesses.

Sonam Wangchuk's fast continues

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BRAVING heavy rain and inclement weather, protesters of the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) continued their agitation at Jantar Mantar for the 21st consecutive day on Friday, pressing for comprehensive reforms in India's competitive examination and government recruitment system. The demonstrators remained steadfast despite the down-pour, raising slogans and demanding greater transparency, accountability and a time-bound recruitment process.

The protest has gained momentum with the sup-

Rain fails to halt Jantar Mantar protest as exam reform stir enters Day 21

port of social activist Sonam Wangchuk, whose indefinite hunger strike entered its 13th day. Organisers said the movement aims to draw attention to the hardships faced by lakhs of government job aspirants due to delayed examinations, postponed results, recurring paper leaks and the absence of a predictable recruitment calendar.

In an effort to broaden the campaign, CJP founder Abhijeet Deepke visited Mukherjee Nagar, one of



Delhi's largest coaching hubs for UPSC and SSC aspirants, on Thursday

night. During interactions with students, candidates spoke about the uncer-

tainty surrounding government recruitment and the emotional, financial and social challenges they face after spending years preparing for competitive examinations.

Many aspirants said repeated delays in examinations, late declaration of results, prolonged appointment processes, paper leaks and cancellation of tests have severely affected their careers and confidence in the system.

They urged the government to introduce a transparent, fair and fixed recruitment mechanism that ensures equal opportunities and timely appointments.

Shradha Walkar case

Aftab to take MA exam, hearing cancelled

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A Delhi court has allowed the cancellation of proceedings in the Shradha Walkar murder case on July 20 after accused Aftab Amin Poonawala informed that he would be appearing for his final MA Sociology examination at Tihar Jail on that day.

Additional Sessions Judge Hargurvarinder Singh Jaggi noted that Poonawala's examinations, conducted by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), are scheduled from July 11 to July 20 at the examination centre inside Central Jail No.



3, Tihar, where he is lodged as an undertrial prisoner.

In an order dated July 8, the court said, "Accused/ UTP Aaftab Amin Poon-

awala stated in his application that he is scheduled to appear for his M.A. Sociology last exam on July 20, 2026 from 02:00P.M. till

05:00P.M. at IGNOU Exam Centre located at Central Jail No. 03, Tihar. (date sheet of examination scheduled from July 11, 2026 till July 20, 2026)."

Poonawala had moved an application seeking exemption from physical production before the court on July 20, saying that his final examination would be held from 2 pm to 5 pm on that day.

Accepting the plea, the court cancelled the July 20 hearing and directed that prosecution evidence be recorded from July 21 onwards at 2 pm, while the remaining dates fixed earlier would continue.

Zoo welcomes 3 Asiatic lion cubs in rare repeat breeding

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FRESH roars are set to echo through the Delhi zoo as Asiatic lioness Mahagauri has given birth to three cubs, adding a fresh chapter to the zoo's conservation efforts and marking a rare repeat breeding success after her earlier litter of five cubs last year, of which two survived.

The three Asiatic lion cubs were born on Tuesday at the National Zoological Park to the breeding pair of Mahagauri and Maheshwar. The newborns are currently kept with their mother in a secure maternity enclosure, zoo Director Sanjeet Kumar said. The official said the cubs are being provided a calm and undisturbed environment crucial for their early development,



with veterinary and animal care teams monitoring their health through CCTV surveillance and regular observation.

The successful breeding of Mahagauri and Maheshwar is considered significant as the pair had earlier produced two healthy cubs - Kartik and Karni - on April 27, 2025.

Mahagauri became the first lioness at the Delhi zoo since 2009 to conceive again

within around a year of giving birth, a rare occurrence in the facility's recent breeding history, Kumar said.

According to him, lion breeding at the zoo remained stable until 2009, with cubs born every few years. However, the programme witnessed a sharp decline thereafter, with births becoming increasingly infrequent and nearly coming to a standstill at one point.

Rajpal Yadav to go to jail, court upholds conviction



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THE Delhi High Court on Friday upheld the conviction of Bollywood actor Rajpal Yadav in multiple cheque bounce cases, affirming the trial court's judgment and refusing to extend the benefit of probation in view of his conduct during the proceedings.

Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma dismissed Yadav's revision petitions and upheld the sentence awarded by the trial court under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act.

The High Court directed that the amount of Rs 2.25 crore already deposited before the Court and released to the complainant shall be adjusted while computing the liability payable by Yadav.

The Court further ordered that the actor shall undergo three months' imprisonment in each of the seven cheque bounce cases, with all the sentences running concurrently. It also directed him to pay the fine imposed by the trial court, observing that failure to pay the fine would entail six months' imprisonment. The Court granted Yadav two months' time to either comply with the judgment or avail of legal remedies before the appropriate forum.

Constitution of fee regulation panel

HC seeks govt stand on pvt schools' plea

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THE Delhi High Court on Friday sought the Delhi government's stand on pleas by private schools against a Directorate of Education circular to constitute the 'School Level Fee Regulation Committee' (SLFRC) in accordance with the latest fee regulation law. The applications form part of the petitions assailing the Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees) Act, 2025 on grounds of it being malafide, biased, arbitrary and malicious in nature. A bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia issued notice on applications by the schools and asked the government to file its objections. The counsel for Action Committee Unaided Recognised Private Schools urged the court to protect them from any coercive action by the authori-



ties over failure to constitute the SLFRC. The bench said the main case was listed for hearing on July 20 and the petitioner can approach it if any adverse action is taken in the meantime. "If they precipitate, inform us. Wait till July 20," the court stated. The counsel for the petitioner submitted that despite the court putting in abeyance the government's February 1

mandate to private schools to constitute the SLFRC for the ongoing academic session, the authorities issued an "identical" circular on June 30. The circular "reiterates and resurrects" the very same directions to constitute the SLFRC and submit the proposals of fee for a block of three years, including the session 2026-27, the application by Action Committee said.

NHRC chief says helpline can aid victims of bonded labour

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NHRC chairperson Justice V Ramasubramanian (ret'd) has urged officers to remain vigilant while dealing with cases of bonded labour and emphasised the need to launch a helpline so that labourers can seek help when needed. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on July 9 heard online 86 cases of alleged bonded labour in brick kilns across various districts of Haryana, the rights panel said on Friday.

Justice Ramasubramanian presided over the hearing that saw participation of several senior officials of the state government and various district magistrates in Haryana. He said in most of the cases, the records had "not been properly examined" by the government functionaries concerned. "Therefore, they did not have credible evidence to declare the labourers as bonded labourers," the rights panel said in a statement. The NHRC chief urged the officers to remain vigilant while dealing with cases of bonded labour.

BJP fields candidates in 11 MCD zones, key posts go to ex-IVP councillors

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

THE Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday unveiled its candidates for the upcoming Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Ward Committee and Standing Committee elections, fielding nominees in 11 of the city's 12 zones while opting out of the Karol Bagh Zone. The nominations, filed on the last day of the process, underline the party's strategy to strengthen its hold over the

civic body's administrative structure. A key feature of the BJP's candidate list is the prominent role assigned to councillors who recently joined the party from the Indraprastha Vikas Party (IVP). Several former IVP leaders have been nominated for the posts of chairperson, vice-chairperson and Standing Committee member, signalling the BJP's confidence in its newly expanded ranks. For the Narela Zone, the BJP has nominated Shanti Devi for chairperson, Divesh Ku-

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mar for vice-chairperson and Pawan Kumar for the Standing Committee. In Keshavpuram, Vinita Behra, Meenu Goyal and Sushil have been fielded for the three posts respectively, while Suman Rana, Seema and Hemchand Goyal will contest from the Rohini Zone. In the Central Zone, the party has

nominated Sumi Bhati Chaudhary for chairperson, Praveen Kumar for vice-chairperson and Sunil Kumar Chadha for the Standing Committee. Jaiveer Singh Rana, Sushma Ravi and Shashi Yadav have been fielded in the Najafgarh Zone. For the West Zone, Harish Oberoi will contest for chairper-

son and Sunil Chadha for vice-chairperson. In the South Zone, Dharmveer Singh and Mamta Yadav have been nominated for chairperson and vice-chairperson respectively. The BJP has also named Pankaj Luthra and Brijesh Singh for chairperson and vice-chairperson in Shahdara North, while Yashpal, Raju Sachdeva and Munesh will contest the chairperson, vice-chairperson and Standing Committee posts respectively in Shahdara South.



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