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sikhtimesindia@gmail.com

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"Coming To Listen To Us": Omar Abdullah On Meeting US Envoy In J&K

Omar Abdullah said that he will not raise internal problems faced by Jammu and Kashmir with the US ambassador Sergio Gor during the meeting scheduled on Wednesday afternoon in Srinagar.



Srinagar. (Agency)

Hours before his meeting with US ambassador to India, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said that issues of Jammu and Kashmir have to be resolved by the central government and not Washington. The Chief Minister said that he will not raise internal problems faced by Jammu and Kashmir with the US ambassador Sergio Gor during the meeting scheduled on Wednesday afternoon in Srinagar. "The solution to our problems will not come from Washington. Our problems have to be resolved by our Central Government," Abdullah said.

Last month, J&K Chief Minister stoked a controversy when he said if he needed to stage a protest outside the White House and approach President Trump for restoration of

J&K's statehood if protests in Delhi are not enough to restore J&K's statehood. The BJP had blamed Omar Abdullah for trying to internationalise the Kashmir issue. Abdullah's comment came after BJP leaders said that proposed National Conference protests at Jantar Mantar in Delhi will not restore statehood of J&K. Today, Abdullah said that he will prefer to hear the US Ambassador. "I would prefer to listen more from him (US Ambassador). He is also coming to hear us. Let us see what kind of discussion will take place," Abdullah said. This is the first visit of top US diplomat, who also serves as President Trump's Special Envoy for South and Central Asia, to Kashmir after Operation Sindoor last year and Galwan Valley clashes in eastern Ladakh in May 2020.

'Go Meet Jharkhand Protesters': Rahul Gandhi's Letter To Ally Hemant Soren

New Delhi. (Agency)

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi has requested his ally and Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren to meet the students protesting against alleged irregularities in the state's recruitment examinations. In a letter to Soren on August 14, Gandhi said the protests, which entered day 24 on Monday, have been "peaceful" and the students' demands are "legitimate".

A large number of job aspirants have been staging a sit-in protest in Ranchi, demanding a probe into the alleged irregularities in the 14th Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) Civil Services Examination, the Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission Combined Graduate Level (JSSC-CGL) examination and other recruitment tests.

"The Congress party believes that the right to peaceful protest as enshrined in the Constitution of India is one of the central pillars of our democracy. We have, therefore, offered our full support to students protesting paper leaks and irregularities in the education system over the last few months," Gandhi said.

He also "appreciated" that the Jharkhand government has begun a dialogue with the students. "I believe that there is also agreement on several demands raised by the students. However, the protests continue, and some students remain on an indefinite hunger strike. I am writing to suggest that you

Gandhi, the leader of opposition in Lok Sabha, said the move will help "reinforce the government's commitment to resolve their remaining concerns".

Gandhi said the youth of India are its future and asserted that "we owe them our solidarity and support at this moment of crisis".

"Withdraw Coalition Support":

Jharkhand Protesters To Rahul Gandhi
The protesting students had on Saturday asked Rahul Gandhi to withdraw support from the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-led coalition if the "chief minister was not listening to him".

They also said that Gandhi had expressed support for them but that "no concrete action" had followed. They have also demanded the resignation of Soren, who is serving his fourth term since 2024, and announced that they would protest outside his residence on August 20.

What Are Jharkhand Protesters' Demands

Led by student leader Devendra Nath Mahto, thousands of job aspirants have been protesting at the Jaipal Singh Stadium in Ranchi since July 29.

Many students have been protesting alleged irregularities in Jharkhand's recruitment examinations.



sonally meet with representatives of the protesting students," he said.

Ahead of meet with Shah in Chennai, DKS says all southern states must stand united

BENGALURU. (Agency)

Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, who will take part in the Southern Zonal Council meeting chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah at Mahabalipuram near Chennai in Tamil Nadu on Thursday, said here on Tuesday that South Indian states must stand united.

"If the prime minister wants to turn the country into an economic powerhouse, it is only possible if South Indian states, including Karnataka, stand united. The talent and potential we possess is extraordinary," he said at the Legislative Assembly. "When the prime minister visited Mysuru, I briefed him on what needs to be done for the state's interest. I brought past historical developments to his attention and highlighted the strength of our local talent pool," he said.

He informed that Bengaluru has 2.6 million IT professionals and 200,000 foreign passport holders. "Many are running medical colleges, and 13,940 doctors are being trained here annually alongside 100,000 paramedical staff. Where else in India do you find such a talent pool? How should we recognise and support this talent? Both you and I need to think about this. The world is watching Bengaluru. I personally told the prime minister that the country should progress through Bengaluru and Karnataka. To make all this possible, let us work together," the CM told the House.

"People from the Northeast have settled in Bengaluru. In Hoskote, people from Assam have trained 10,000 young people. We must preserve the state's wealth. Let us keep politics outside. We must work for the future of the younger generation," he added.

Do families have resources: Ally Congress opposes Vijay govt's 3rd child move

Tamil Nadu. (Agency)

Karti Chidambaram has opposed Tamil Nadu's decision to grant one year of maternity leave for a third child to women government employees. He said maternity leave is welcome, and paternity leave should also be considered, but the state should not encourage larger families.

Congress MP Karti Chidambaram has opposed the Tamil Nadu government's decision to extend one year of maternity leave to women government employees for the birth of their third child, saying the government should not encourage families to have a third child.

"While maternity leave is most welcome, paternity leave should also be considered, but the government should not be encouraging a third child in families. Do families have the resources to support a 3rd child?"

Chidambaram said. The Tamil Nadu government on Tuesday announced that women government employees



would receive 365 days of maternity leave for the birth of their third child, up from the existing 12 weeks. The change brings the

benefit for a third child on par with the one-year leave available for the first two children.

Human Resources Management Minister D Sarathkumar announced the decision in the state Assembly during the debate on his department's demand for grants. "As the Tamil Nadu government is a welfare-oriented administration that prioritises social welfare and women's empowerment, the maternity leaves currently provided to women government employees for their third child will be increased from 12 weeks to 365 days," Sarathkumar said.

Maharashtra makes snakebite notifiable disease days after 3 schoolgirls' deaths

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Maharashtra government has declared snakebite a notifiable disease, making it compulsory for all hospitals, medical colleges and healthcare professionals to report every suspected or confirmed case and death. Health Minister Prakash Aitkar said on Tuesday that the step would strengthen monitoring, ensure timely treatment and improve planning for the availability of anti-snake venom (ASV).

The decision came days after three tribal schoolgirls died and three others were hospitalised after a venomous snake bit them at a state government-aided residential school in Japtalai village of Gadchiroli district on August 9. The government later cancelled the school's licence. Under the notification, every health institution and medical

practitioner will have to report snakebite cases to the district health officer or district surgeon concerned. Serious or fatal cases will have to be reported immediately through available



communication systems. Aitkar said the decision would make snakebite prevention and treatment more systematic, prompt and effective.

The Maharashtra government has made snakebite a notifiable disease days after three tribal schoolgirls died at a government-run school in Gadchiroli. The move aims to speed up treatment, track cases better and prevent anti-venom shortages.

The cases will be recorded through the Health Management Information System, Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme or any other reporting system specified by the government. The aim is to create updated and reliable data on snakebites in the state. The notification also provides for a nodal mechanism from the state to district level for prevention and control of snakebites.

The director of hospitals will oversee it at the state level, while district surgeons and health officers will act as nodal officers in districts. In municipal corporation areas, the medical health officer or additional medical health officer will be the nodal officer. Health institutions treating snakebite patients will also have to maintain updated records of ASV received, used and available in stock to ensure adequate supplies in areas reporting a higher incidence of snakebites.

BRICS Ministers reject carbon border adjustment mechanisms as trade barriers for developing nations

New Delhi. (Agency)

The environment and climate ministers of the BRICS grouping adopted a joint statement at the conclusion of their 12th ministerial meeting in Delhi, themed "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation, and Sustainability," under the chairmanship of India.

For the first time, the statement directly identified carbon border adjustment mechanisms (CBAM) as a significant trade barrier for developing countries like India, stating that it is inconsistent with international law.

The CBAM aims to tax imported carbon-intensive products in order to reduce carbon leakage especially by Developed countries on the products of developing countries.

The statement expressed opposition to "unilateral, punitive, discriminatory, and protectionist measures that are not in line with international law, such as carbon border adjustment mechanisms (CBAM)." It emphasized that such measures undermine the efforts of countries—in particular, developing nations—aimed at addressing the adverse impacts of climate change and enhancing adaptive capacity and resilience.

Additionally, the group agreed for the first time to celebrate BRICS Sustainable Lifestyle Week during the first week of November 2026. They also endorsed a country-led BRICS Green Conclave to promote sustainable consumption and production while respecting national priorities and advancing sustainable lifestyles.

The statement highlighted the importance of initiatives like the BRICS Green Conclave during the Sustainable Lifestyle Week celebrations in 2026 to raise awareness on environmental issues and encourage sustainable lifestyles through experiential learning activities, conducted in accordance with each country's priorities and capacities, on a voluntary and non-binding basis.

Vijay govt makes U-turn on order barring students from CJP, Left protests amid row

As per the now-withdrawn order, the Vijay government sought coordinated action to prevent students and youth from succumbing to the urge to participate in protests by the CJP and the Left.

Chennai. (Agency)

The Vijay-led Tamil Nadu government revoked a controversial order preventing students from participating in protests organised by Left parties and the Tamil Nadu Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) amid a fierce backlash. The order, issued to the school education and higher education departments on August 14, was withdrawn on Wednesday. The directive invited

intense criticism from the CJP, with national co-convenor Saurav Das calling it "unconstitutional" and an "illogical" and "irrational" move by the Vijay government. It, however, was backed by the BJP, with leader Vinod P Selvam dubbing the CJP and Left outfits "agents of chaos".

As per the now-withdrawn order, the TVK government sought coordinated action to prevent students and youth from "succumbing to the urge" to participate in protests and agitations by the Left parties and the CJP, which spearheaded the recent student protests in Delhi's Jantar Mantar. Interestingly, the Left parties had extended unconditional outside support to Vijay's TVK in June to help secure the numbers required for

government formation in Tamil Nadu. While the TVK emerged as the single-largest party in the Tamil Nadu Assembly polls, it fell short of a majority and had to depend on support



from smaller parties like the Congress and VCK to pass the floor test. The communication, marked "most immediate", also directed schools and colleges to submit an action-taken report to the government by August 20.

Kharge to chair CWC meet as Congress plans roadmap to take on Modi government

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Congress Working Committee (CWC) will meet on Wednesday to take stock of the political situation and chart the party's strategy on student and youth issues, Ram temple donation 'theft' as well as the upcoming Assembly elections.

The meeting will be held at 3 pm at Indira Bhawan and will be chaired by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge. Former party president Rahul Gandhi and general secretaries Jairam Ramesh and K C Venugopal are among the senior leaders expected to attend.

The meeting assumes significance as the Congress believes the agitation by students over examination irregularities, paper leaks and related issues has emerged as a major political issue and needs to be pursued beyond Parliament.

The party was at the forefront of the Opposition protests during the Monsoon Session over the alleged police action against protesting students and repeatedly demanded accountability from the government.

Sources said the CWC is expected to deliberate on how the campaign on youth and student issues should be taken forward, with LoP Rahul Gandhi stepping up his direct outreach to students. Gandhi will hold the next edition of his 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' programme in Pune on August 22, with the focus particularly on women students. The party will also deliberate on the just-concluded Monsoon Session, said the sources. Congress leaders feel the Opposition managed to keep the government under pressure by holding firm on its demand for a statement from Union Home Minister Amit Shah over the alleged.



News box

Cracks to craters: Greater Noida roads come undone after rain

Noida.(Agency)

Along its length of 500 metres or so, the surface of the road near Purvanchal Royal City in Sector Chi 5 is pockmarked with dozens of cracks, patches, divots and holes. In some spots where the surface has worn away entirely, three or more layers of road lie exposed. The stretch, which runs under Yamuna Expressway bridge, is one of many across Greater Noida that residents said have deteriorated significantly this monsoon, exposing years of civic neglect. While several high-speed corridors and major infrastructure projects are planned across the city, on the ground, several internal and residential roads remain riddled with potholes, waterlogging and slippery stretches — some in poor condition for as long as five years, residents claimed. “This area is home to 5,000 residential properties, but there are craters and stray animals everywhere,” said Rajiv Srivastava, a resident of the sector. Around the DFCC flyover, Tilapta Chowk and Makoda roundabout, water has collected in scores of craters beneath the underpasses. “Hundreds of people take the stretch to commute to their offices, but a large section of the road surface here has been washed out, and the rest is pockmarked with craters,” Vinod Pahlawat, a resident of Paramount Golf Foreste in Sector Zeta 1, said. He accused the Greater Noida Authority and UPSIDA of ignoring repeated complaints. In sectors Beta 1 and Gamma 1, residents said commuting had become dangerous. The service road between Gate No. 2 and Gate No. 5 in Beta 1 has been broken for over a year, with rainwater now collecting in the potholes. In Gamma 1, choked drains have left the sector waterlogged. “Instead of planting new saplings during the rainy season, the Authority has started repairing a dilapidated road. This work should have been done much before the onset of the monsoon,” resident Nidhi Sharma said.

Noida to get 5 university townships near industrial hubs off Yamuna Expressway

Noida.(Agency)

The city may soon have its own Kendall Square or Tsukuba Science City, with Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority planning five university townships — planned conglomerates of higher education institutions, research centres and skilling facilities — spanning 500 to 700 acres, located within or adjacent to a major industrial corridor. The layout is designed to enable universities and companies to collaborate on research, innovation, internships, and skill development. Officials said that though National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 promotes multidisciplinary education and stronger industry-research linkages, there is limited clustering of institutions, minimal sharing of high-quality infrastructure, and insufficient co-location with industry. This limits the ability of institutions to fully benefit from economies of scale, interdisciplinary collaboration, and integrated innovation ecosystems. Yamuna Authority CEO RK Singh said under the model, multiple public, private and PPP institutions would be allowed to establish campuses while retaining their academic, administrative and financial autonomy. Campuses will also have laboratories, libraries, housing complexes, incubation centres, internship and apprenticeship cells, sports facilities, roads, utilities and digital infrastructure.

Ghaziabad makes character verification must for school bus drivers

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

The district administration has made character verification and helth examinations mandatory for school vehicle drivers, officials said. The decision was taken at a meting of the special district school vehicle transport safety committee. A police character certificate or police clearance certificate (PCC) states whether a person has any criminal record or pending legal cases. It is commonly required for international travel, visa applications, employment background checks or govt services. These certificates for bus drivers so far had been optional.Assistant regional transport officer (enforcement) Amit Rajan Rai has directed the schools to ensure drivers undergo the checks. School managements have been instructed to allow only verified and medically fit drivers to operate these vehicles.The authorities have emphasised the safety of younger students. “Schools have been directed to ensure the presence of a male or female attendant in every school vehicle carrying young children. The attendant will assist students while boarding and getting off the vehicle and monitor their safety throughout the journey. Children will not be permitted to travel in school vehicles without an attendant,” he said.The latest directions come against the backdrop of repeated enforcement action against school vehicles in the district. TOI had reported last month that transport authorities had issued notices to 60 school buses in the district after a safety drive. The buses were found lacking mandatory safety provisions, including safety certificates and CCTV cameras, while officials were also checking fitness certificates, permits, insurance, pollution certificates and police verification of drivers and conductors.

SIR rules eased: No need to attend hearings, hand over documents to BLOs

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Rules have been eased for voters served notices during the first phase of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, with booth level officers (BLOs) now visiting colonies and societies to collect documents instead of residents having to attend hearings.A list of hearing venues where residents can submit their documents was earlier published by the administration. But the rules have been made more flexible for voters, who can now submit proofs to their respective BLOs either at the time of receiving the notice or at a convenient time in coordination with BLOs, said Sanjeev Singla, SDM-cum-election officer. The notices are typically delivered by a BLO or flagged directly on the official voter service portal. The last date for this phase of the exercise is

Aug 30.

Around 30% of the electorate has been struck off the rolls in the city. BLOs in Gurgaon had a tough time mapping voters and digitising enumeration forms because a large section of the population lives inside gated condominiums. Of 15.5 lakh registered voters before SIR, 4.5 lakh were struck off, 2.5 lakh were unmapped and 2.1 lakh had demographic anomalies. The process extends beyond those who have received notices. “People whose names have not appeared in the draft electoral roll for any reason can file claims for inclusion along with the required documents. Similarly, anyone seeking to challenge the inclusion of another person’s name can file an objection,” Singla said. Those who have recently turned 18 can also apply for inclusion by submitting the prescribed

form and supporting documents.

The draft electoral roll has three broad categories of voters: those mapped with the previous SIR (directly or through



family members); unmapped voters; and voters whose records show logical discrepancies. Notices are being issued to the latter two categories. Unmapped voters — those whose current electoral records could not be

linked to the previous database — must produce documents establishing identity, age and residence, wherever required. Officials clarified that Aadhaar can establish identity but cannot, by itself, serve as proof of age or residence during scrutiny. A list of acceptable documents has been put up. It includes birth certificate, passport and caste certificate.The administration has been coordinating with RWAs to organise camps at convenient times in societies, allowing notices to be served and documents collected together and reducing the need for separate visits to govt offices. Voters who prefer not to coordinate with BLOs can also submit documents at designated locations, including tehsil and SDM offices, block development and panchayat offices, and govt senior secondary schools linked to their polling stations.

Safai workers extend strike in Gurgaon by 3 days, warn of indefinite stir

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Sanitation and sewerage workers on Tuesday extended their strike by three days, citing the Haryana govt’s failure to issue orders on their demands, including regularisation of employees and an end to outsourcing. The unions warned that the strike would become indefinite if the govt does not act by Aug 21.The strike entered its 13th day on Tuesday, with hundreds of employees gathering outside the old MCG office. The protesters locked the main gate of the office between 9am and 11am and boycotted work. The other gate remained open for officials and the public. The protesters later marched through Agrasen Chowk and Aggarwal Dharamshala Chowk before reaching Siddheshwar Temple Chowk, where they burnt an effigy of Haryana urban local bodies minister Vipul Goel.According to Haryana Municipal Employees Union’s statement, protesters also had a heated



argument and a brief scuffle with police during the gate-locking protest.The unions said their demands are part of a 17-point agreement reached with the state govt on May 13. The union’s state president Naresh Kumar Shastri said the agitation would continue across the state until the govt implements the agreement. He said this included its commitment to regularise around 13,000 municipal-roll employees working in municipalities, municipal councils and corporations and end the outsourcing of sanitation and sewerage work.Union leaders alleged

that the govt had agreed to regularise these workers by June 30 but had not issued the required orders. They also claimed that the agreement provided for bringing contract workers onto departmental rolls.The unions questioned why sanitation and sewerage workers in urban local bodies continued to work through contractors despite, they claimed, a June 30, 2022 govt order providing for absorption of contract workers in various departments through the Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam. They alleged that continued outsourcing left workers with low wages and insecure employment.The unions have now extended the strike through Aug 19, 20 and 21. They warned that it would be converted into an indefinite strike if the govt failed to act by Aug 21.Residents, meanwhile, said the strike had affected sanitation services. “We have not had any worker coming for manual sweeping of roads since the last 25 days.

MCG seeks more time to clear landfill at Bandhwari in Haryana

Gurgaon.(Agency)

MCG has said that it’s not in a position to give a firm deadline on the Bandhwari landfill matter, ahead of a National Green Tribunal (NGT) hearing. NGT will hear the matter on Wednesday.In an affidavit filed before NGT on Monday, MCG has admitted that it cannot give any deadline for processing the entire legacy waste at the site and has sought time till Nov-Dec to determine the completion date.The civic body said the exact date for completion of processing of the entire legacy waste could be determined only in Nov-Dec 2026, after obtaining govt approval for processing the balance waste that will remain after the current contracts are exhausted.According to the MCG affidavit, there are currently 17.2 lakh

metric tonnes (MT) of waste to be processed at the landfill as of Aug 16. In the first eight months of 2026, 3.6 lakh MT was processed by the agencies up to Aug 16.Two agencies were initially contracted in Jan 2026 to process 14 lakh MT of legacy waste at Bandhwari landfill. MCG secured approval for an additional 2.8 lakh MT, taking the total quantity approved for remediation to 16.8 lakh MT. A monthly action plan targets cumulative processing of 14 lakh MT by Feb 2027. But even if that target is achieved, the Bandhwari problem will not be over.MCG says that, under the existing agreement, about 13.2 lakh MT is the balance quantity to be processed by March 2027. The agencies are contracted to process 16.8 lakh MT in total, which would leave about 4 lakh MT of existing legacy waste unprocessed.A parallel

problem is the continued addition of fresh municipal solid waste to the landfill. MCG says it has identified and finalised an alternative site for collection and treatment of daily generated fresh waste. The new facility is expected to become operational on Feb 25, 2027. Until then, fresh waste will continue to be transported to Bandhwari.The civic body estimates that approximately 3.25 lakh MT of additional fresh waste will be added to the landfill during this intervening period. That could leave roughly 7.2 lakh MT (3.2 lakh MT fresh waste + 4 lakh MT legacy waste unprocessed) of waste at the site by March 2027, according to the corporation’s calculation.“For this balance waste of over 7 lakh MT, we are planning another intervention and will send a proposal to the govt for administrative approval in advance.

Explain what steps taken to enact tree preservation law: NGT to Haryana govt

Gurgaon.(Agency)

National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed Haryana chief secretary to file an affidavit within four weeks stating what steps have been taken to bring in the Haryana Tree Preservation Act, 2026. The proposed law will regulate tree felling in areas that are not forest land. Flagging gaps in Haryana’s rules for cutting trees, NGT found that compensatory plantation was not carried out in several cases, even after the tribunal had put an interim system in place to regulate tree felling.A Haryana forest official said the state had already held meetings on the proposed law. “We are in the process of finalising the Act soon,” the official said. The state produced a memo dated Aug 10 showing that a meeting to discuss the proposed law, scheduled for Aug 4, had been moved to Aug 12.The order came on Aug 11 while hearing a petition filed by environmentalist Vaishali Rana and others over alleged illegal tree cutting in urban areas of the district. Rana said trees were being cut without permission, fines for violations were very low and

permissions to cut trees were being given without proper checks.Divisional forest officer Surender Dangi told the tribunal that “there is no regulation to restrict felling of trees on the private land not covered under Section 4 of Punjab Land Preservation Act, 1900.”In simple terms, this means private land that does not come under Section 4 of the Act is not covered by a specific restriction on cutting trees, according to the submission made before the tribunal.The direction comes at a time when Haryana is still relying on the temporary system put in place by the tribunal while its own law is being prepared.The matter will next be heard on Oct 30 before a bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava and expert member Dr Afroz Ahmad.Haryana’s counsel referred to an earlier NGT order of Sept 9, 2025, which had put in place temporary safeguards for tree felling until the state framed its own rules.But the tribunal found that these safeguards were not being followed in several cases. As Haryana does not yet have the comprehensive state law NGT wants, the tribunal created an interim system requiring DFO permission for

tree cutting. But NGT has now found that even this interim system was not being fully followed.Looking at records of tree-felling permissions submitted by the forest division, NGT said “even the interim regulatory framework set up by the tribunal by the aforesaid order has not been complied with.”The tribunal said that “the compensatory plantation for permission to cut the tree has not been carried out” in cases where permission to cut trees was given after the Sept 9, 2025 order.The order points to two separate problems. First, there is no specific restriction on tree cutting on private land that is outside Section 4 of PLPA, according to the forest department’s submission. Second, even where permission to cut trees was granted under the temporary system ordered by the tribunal, the required compensatory plantation was not carried out in several cases.The applicants had filed an affidavit on Aug 10, along with photographs which they said showed that illegal tree cutting was continuing. The tribunal asked the state to examine the photographs and respond in its next affidavit.NGT has not made a final

finding that all the tree cutting alleged by the applicants was illegal.

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Press Area, ITO, New Delhi
Editor-in-Chief
Gurcharan Singh Babbar
Mob : 9654077232, 9971359517
Website : www.thesikhimes.in
Email : sikhimesindia@gmail.com

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NEWS BOX

Gold mine collapses in Central African Republic, killing at least 30 miners

BANGUI, Central African Republic.(Agency)

A gold mining site collapsed Tuesday in the western part of Central African Republic, killing at least 30 miners and leaving others trapped, authorities and residents said.The low-tech, artisanal mine collapsed Tuesday morning in the Abba region of the Nana-Mambere prefecture, according to Florian Gaguende, one of the surviving miners. He said rescuers were searching for additional miners believed trapped, but that the chance of finding them alive “is getting slimmer.”The sub-prefecture’s deputy mayor, Souleymane Bi, said rescuers and residents managed over several hours to pull 30 bodies from the collapsed mine, and that injured miners were receiving treatment. “It is horrible and we are calling for help from organizations and all people of good will to help pull from the hole those who are unable to do so,” Bi said. Footage that appears to be from the scene captured chaotic rescue efforts. Miners, mostly young men and women covered in mud, could be seen pulling out a body from the pit while dozens of other miners and workers were scattered around the expansive site, some shouting for help.Government spokesman Evariste Ngamana sympathized with families of the victims and said authorities are “working hard to provide relief and assistance” to those affected.Artisanal mine collapses are common in the Central African Republic, where several thousand people work in small-scale extraction mining. The work is risky because miners typically do not have enough protection and the accidents are often deadly.

Harvard University To Pay Rs 507 Crore In Settlement After Morgue Manager Sold Body Parts In Black Market

world.(Agency)

Harvard University has agreed to pay a Rs 507 crore (\$53 million) settlement to resolve civil lawsuits after a former morgue manager at the Harvard Medical School (HMS) admitted to stealing dissected human heads, brains, skin, hands, faces, and other organs before selling them on the black market. Cedric Lodge, 58, was sentenced to eight years in prison last December after he pleaded guilty to the accusations.Daley and Dean for Medical Education Bernard Chang said Monday's settlement would allow Harvard and the complainants to avoid 'prolonged litigation'."While Lodge's sentencing concludes the criminal case against him, and the class action settlement agreement, when fulfilled, would conclude the civil cases, the process of recovering from this painful incident continues,” Daley and Chang wrote. The medical school said in a letter that multi-million-dollar settlement funds will be established for families once the court grants approval.If approved, two class action settlement funds totaling \$53 million will be established and a third-party administrator appointed to notify potential class members and distribute funds, a process HMS said is expected to take several months," read the statement.Affected families started filing lawsuits against Harvard in the summer of 2023, shortly after Lodge was indicted. The suits alleged negligence, breach of fiduciary duty, and infliction of emotional distress. Lodge's Trafficking Network Between 2018 and 2020, Lodge exploited his access to the morgue to remove body parts from cadavers that had already been used for academic purposes but had not yet been cremated, buried, or returned per the donor agreements. These remains, donated altruistically to the Harvard Anatomical Gift Programme, were taken without the knowledge or permission of Harvard, the donors, or their families.

Bear Steals Leftover KFC Meal After Breaking Into Woman's House In Kentucky

world.(Agency)

In a bizarre incident, a woman in the US state of Kentucky woke up to a bear breaking into her home and leaving with her leftover KFC meal on the kitchen table.



Kendra North was asleep when the animal entered her house, but her sister, who lives next door, witnessed the bear leaving the premises around 5 am on Thursday (Aug 13).As per North, she and her partner accidentally left their front door open on the night, as their living room and kitchen did not have air conditioning. The couple went to sleep in their bedroom and didn't realise the bear had entered their home before it

was too late. “My sister started calling me, like, five in the morning, and I declined her at least twice, and she just kept calling,” North was quoted as saying by Fox 56 News. Upon answering the call, North finally learned what had transpired in her home. “I answered the call, and she was like, ‘Bro, there's a bear, and it just walked out of your house, and it came down your steps,” North said. “It came and looked at me, dead in the eyes, on my side of the yard.'North said it must have been a big bear who was likely drawn into her home by the leftover food she had left on the table. “I'm a little sad over my KFC,” North said.North said she is now making sure the front door stays closed, even though the lack of air conditioning makes that difficult."North added that the table, which had a really thick glass, was completely shattered by the bear's force. Though she actually heard the noise of the table shattering, she believed it was a car wreck outside.John Hast, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Bear Program Coordinator, noted that outdoor food sources are a primary driver of these interactions.

The comments came after the UAE on Tuesday accused Iran of firing two ballistic missiles at shipping in the Gulf, an allegation later denied by Tehran.

Tehran.(Agency)

Iran has "categorically rejected" the United Arab Emirates' allegation that Tehran had launched ballistic missiles towards the Gulf state, calling the claim "baseless" and harmful to regional trust and security efforts. Iran's Foreign Ministry said such "baseless accusations" should be avoided as a principle of "good neighbourliness". But Iran has warned that the Strait of Hormuz -- through which shipping leaving UAE ports must pass to

exit the Gulf -- will remain closed until it reaches a peace agreement with the United States.In a statement, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said Tehran has "categorically rejected" the UAE's claim, saying such claims disrupts ongoing efforts to strengthen regional peace. “This behaviour is contrary to the principle of good neighbourliness and disrupts ongoing efforts to strengthen trust between regional countries and prevent the escalation of insecurity in the region," Baghaei said in a statement posted on the Ministry's Telegram channel. Calling regional countries to refrain from making "baseless accusations" against Tehran, Baghaei said the current situation in the Middle East was already complicated due to what he described as actions by the United States and Israel against regional peace and security.. Refrain from making

baseless accusations against the Islamic Republic of Iran, considering the existing complexities due to the ongoing evils of the US and the Zionist regime against regional peace and security, especially the history of numerous false flag operations," he said.Attack On UAE The comments came after the UAE on Tuesday accused Iran of firing two ballistic missiles at shipping in the Gulf, an allegation later denied by Tehran. "UAE air defenses detected two ballistic missiles launched from Iran toward the country, with the first falling outside the country's territorial waters, while the second fell within the territorial waters," the ministry said, in a statement posted to social media.A second statement released later said: "Assessments carried out showed that the two ballistic missiles detected coming from Iran were targeting maritime navigation and fell into the sea."

Citing regional escalations, the UAE also suspended all trade and financial dealings with Iran until further notice late Tuesday evening.The UAE statement came hours after a brief phone alert warned residents of a "potential missile threat". It was the first such alert since a false alarm in June and an alert in July for an attack that ultimately did not enter UAE territory. Before that, the last missile warning came in early May.Tankers belonging to state-owned oil company ADNOC have been repeatedly targeted in the past few weeks. When the Middle East war began on February 28, the UAE bore the brunt of Iran's attacks, with nearly 3,000 missiles and drones directed at the country -- more than anywhere else in the region. After a memorandum of understanding came into effect in June between the two parties, which has since collapsed, the UAE reported no attacks.

UAE accuses Iran of firing ballistic missiles at shipping

DUBAI.(Agency)

The United Arab Emirates on Tuesday accused Iran of firing two ballistic missiles at shipping in the Gulf, an allegation later denied by Tehran."UAE air defenses detected two ballistic missiles launched from Iran toward the country, with the first falling outside the country's territorial waters, while the second fell within the territorial waters," the ministry said, in a statement posted to social media.A second statement released later said: "Assessments carried out showed that the two ballistic missiles detected coming from Iran were targeting maritime navigation and fell into the sea."Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei "categorically rejected the United

Arab Emirates' claim that Iran had launched a missile toward that country", calling it harmful to



regional trust and security efforts. But Iran has warned that the Strait of Hormuz -- through which shipping leaving UAE ports must pass to exit the Gulf -- will remain closed until it reaches a peace agreement with the United States.Citing regional

escalations, the UAE also suspended all trade and financial dealings with Iran until further notice late Tuesday evening.The first UAE statement came nearly two hours after a brief phone alert warned residents of a "potential missile threat"."Due to the current situation, potential missile threats, immediately seek a safe place in the closest secure building," the interior ministry said in the phone alert, which was lifted shortly afterwards.It was the first such alert since a false alarm in June and an alert in July for an attack that ultimately did not enter UAE territory. Before that, the last missile warning came in early May. Tankers belonging to state-owned oil company ADNOC have been repeatedly targeted in the past few weeks.

Australian court begins appeal hearing for mushroom murderer Erin Patterson

MELBOURNE.(Agency)

Australian toxic mushroom killer Erin Patterson began an appeal on Wednesday against her conviction in a triple-murder case that made headlines worldwide. The 51-year-old was found guilty last year of murdering her husband's parents and an elderly aunt in 2023 by serving them a beef Wellington lunch laced with lethal death cap mushrooms.Patterson was also convicted of the attempted murder of her husband's uncle, a small-town local pastor who survived the beef-and-pastry dish after weeks in hospital.A judge sentenced her to life imprisonment, eligible for parole after 33 years.Three judges at the Court of Appeal in Melbourne are hearing two appeals -- Patterson's attempt to overturn her conviction and the prosecution's demand for a stiffer sentence -- over two days starting on Wednesday. Proceedings kicked off at 10:15 am (0015 GMT) on Wednesday at Melbourne's Supreme Court. Patterson appeared via live video link from her jail, the maximum-security Dame Phyllis Frost Centre in Melbourne's western suburbs, wearing a blue prison jumper, national broadcaster ABC said. Patterson claims she suffered several counts of "substantial miscarriage of justice" because the trial judge erred in deciding what evidence could be presented.Some evidence accepted by the judge -- relating to Facebook messages, cell towers and posts of death cap mushroom sightings -- was not relevant or was unfairly prejudicial to her case, her lawyer said. Fatally undermined' Other evidence about mushroom images on a memory card in Patterson's home was wrongly excluded, the lawyer said in an appeal submission in November last year.A "fundamental irregularity" also took place while the jury was sequestered that "fatally undermined the integrity of the verdicts", he argued, without giving further details.Patterson's solicitor additionally accused the prosecution of an "unfair and oppressive" cross-examination during the trial. Before listening to the arguments in detail, the Court of Appeal judges must decide whether the grounds justify granting Patterson leave to challenge her conviction at all. On the other side, the prosecution has appealed against Patterson's sentence, saying the non-parole period of 33 years imposed by the judge was "manifestly inadequate".

Indian-Origin Man, 40, Arrested For Groping Young Woman In Canada Park

The British Columbia Prosecution Service subsequently approved two Criminal Code charges against Kurana, one count each of sexual assault and sexual interference.

Ottawa.(Agency)

A 40-year-old Indian-origin man has been arrested for the alleged sexual assault of a young woman at a park in Canada's Surrey city, police said. The accused, Jagendar Kurana, has been charged on two counts of sexual assault and sexual interference after the victim told police she was groped in Bear Creek Park by an "adult man" who then fled the area.According to Surrey Police Service, the incident was reported on August 9, following which officers conducted extensive patrols of the park and surrounding areas but were unable to locate the suspect. Fortunately, the victim was



not physically injured in the attack, police said. According to police, she described the suspect as a South Asian male who is approximately 5'8" tall. He was wearing a blue Adidas toque, a black t-shirt, black pants, and black flip-flops. Police launched an investigation into the incident and issued a public appeal last week seeking information

and released photographs of the suspect.Soon, a man matching the description was identified. Kurana was arrested on August 12, police said in a statement on Monday. Kurana was remanded in custody and the British Columbia Prosecution Service approved two Criminal Code charges against him and is awaiting a bail hearing, police said.

Police Search For Suspect Wearing Creepy 'Chucky' Mask, Terrorising Pedestrians In Philadelphia

During one of the encounters, the masked suspect stopped directly in front of a woman and chillingly asked, "Are you ready to die?"

world.(Agency)

Authorities in Philadelphia, US, are currently searching for an unidentified individual wearing a "Chucky" horror-doll mask who allegedly confronted, chased, and threatened at least six people in Center City, the New York Post reported. According to the Philadelphia Police Department, the disturbing incidents occurred early in the morning on August 12 near 15th and Chestnut streets, just outside City Hall. Investigators report that over a span of about

15 minutes, the suspect targeted random pedestrians to intimidate and harass them. The suspect was also seen holding a lit smartphone, leading police to suspect he may



have been recording the encounters for a social media prank or viral video trend. Police told NBC Philadelphia that the masked person held a phone in front of the woman and repeatedly asked, "Are you ready to die?"According to the media outlet, Jason

Smith, the Philadelphia Police Captain, told reporters at a presser Monday that the individual went into an eatery wearing the "distinctive, Chucky doll Halloween-style face mask" just after 5:20 am (local time). However, he was refused service because of his behaviour.\ Jogger injured while fleeing Police describe the suspect as a thin male, roughly 5-foot-8, believed to be between 16 and 20 years old. He was wearing dark clothing along with the horror-themed mask.During one of the encounters, the masked suspect stopped directly in front of a 40-year-old woman who was out for a morning jog. He blocked her path and chillingly asked, "Are you ready to die?" Terrified, the woman turned and sprinted away while screaming for help, sustaining a leg injury during her escape.Investigators are currently reviewing surveillance footage and scouring social media platforms to track down the suspect. If caught, he faces potential charges including assault and terroristic threats.

Railways declares 584 stations 'notified' for six months to ensure prompt removal of goods

Panchkula.(Agency)

The Ministry of Railways has declared 584 railway stations across the country as “Notified Stations” for six months from August 25, 2026, requiring goods booked by trains meant solely for freight carriage to be removed from these stations without delay. The Railway Board has invoked powers under Section 89(1) of the Railways Act, 1989, after being satisfied that goods booked to these stations by trains intended solely for carriage of goods need to be removed promptly. The notification states that the stations have been declared “Notified Stations” specifically for the purpose of the removal of goods without delay, and that the declaration will remain effective for six months beginning August 25. The notification assumes particular significance for the northern region, with a large number of stations under Northern Railway brought within its ambit. The Northern Railway list includes Ambala Cantt (Goods & Parcel), Chandigarh (Goods & Parcel), Bahadurgarh, Ballabgarh, Faridabad, Faridabad New Town, Farukh Nagar, Gohana, Gurgaon, Jakhal, Jhajjar, Kaithal, Karnal and Kurukshetra, among others. Other Haryana stations covered by the notification include Narwana, Palwal, Panipat, Rohtak, Safidon, Shahabad Markanda, Sonipat, Taraori, Tohana and Uchana.

Centre proposes new building rules for Ambala cantonment; 14-metre height cap, green incentives

Panchkula.(Agency)

The Ministry of Defence has published the draft Ambala Cantonment Building Bye-Laws, 2026, proposing a new regulatory framework for construction in the cantonment, including revised norms for Floor Space Index (FSI), site coverage, building height, setbacks, digital approvals, rainwater harvesting and accessibility. The draft seeks to supersede S.R.O. 342 dated December 30, 1950, except in respect of things already done or omitted before such supersession. It has been framed by the Cantonment Board, Ambala, under Section 251 of the Cantonments Act, 2006. The draft divides the cantonment into Zones I and II. Zone-I comprises lands in the notified civil areas, while Zone-II covers lands outside the civil areas, including Old Grant Bungalows and leases, private and freehold properties. In Zone-I, permissible FSI ranges from 2.20 for plots up to 60 square metres to 1.40 for plots above 450 square metres, while site coverage ranges from 85% to 50%. The maximum building height is proposed at 14 metres from ground level, including the stilt floor, and the maximum number of storeys will be G 2 or stilt 2. In Zone-II, FSI is proposed at 1.60 for plots up to 450 square metres, 1.40 for plots between 450 and 1,000 square metres, and 1.25 for plots above 1,000 square metres. No construction will be permitted on plots below 50 square metres.

Haryana: Wanted criminal arrested after police shoot him in leg

Kaithal.(Agency)

Kaithal police has achieved a significant success under the ongoing campaign against criminals, with arrest of a notorious wanted criminal. The accused wanted in the case of fatal knife attack on two youths in the government hospital was being brought to Kaithal after being arrested from Shamli area of Uttar Pradesh. Meanwhile, near Mandwal Minor, Assandh Road Rajound, the accused tried to escape from police custody by snatching the official pistol of a police officer and fired at the police team chasing him with the pistol. The police warned the accused to surrender, but the accused continuously fired at the police team from behind the trees. The police team took controlled retaliatory action in self-defense , in which the accused was shot in the left leg and was overpowered. DSP Sushil Prakash stated that yesterday, Govind, a resident of Kyodak, and Gokan, a resident of Gayong, attacked Kuldeep and Abhishek with knives at the Government Hospital in Kaithal and fled. Six police teams were deployed to apprehend the accused,. CIA- 1 iteam arrested Govind, a resident of Kyodak, wanted in the case, last night from village Chauntra , Shamli district (Uttar Pradesh). A case was registered against the accused at Rajound police station for attempted murder , escaping from police custody , and snatching a pistol from a police officer. The accused has previously been charged with robbery, snatching, the Arms Act , and attempted murder in six cases in Kaithal, Kurukshetra, and Ganaur.

Floods hit 173 villages in 13 UP districts, over 84,000 people affected

Floods have affected 173 villages across 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh, hitting 84,362 residents. The state government says the situation is under control as rescue, relief and warning operations continue.

Lucknow.(Agency)

Floods have affected 173 villages in 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh, with 84,362 people and around 13,058 hectares of area impacted, officials said on Tuesday. The state government said the flood situation was normal and under control. District administrations have been kept fully active to move affected people to safer places and provide food, medical care and essential relief material. In a statement, the Office of State Relief Commissioner Hrishikesh Bhaskar Yashod said, "So far, 173 villages in 13 districts have been affected by floods. These include Badaun, Bahraich, Ballia, Barabanki, Bijnor, Farrukhabad, Gautam Buddh Nagar, Gonda, Kasganj, Lakhimpur Kheri, Muzaffarnagar, Sitapur and Unnao." The control room of the Relief Commissioner's

Office is in continuous contact with flood-hit districts to monitor the situation, and complaints and information received on the 1070 helpline are being acted upon promptly.



Yashod reviewed the flood situation and relief and rescue operations on Tuesday, his office said. He directed district magistrates to shift affected people to relief camps or other safe places as required, and to ensure food, medical

facilities and essential relief material for families. He also ordered officials to keep all flood outposts fully operational, continuously monitor river water levels and the flood situation, and ensure adequate availability of boats, motorboats, rescue teams and other resources. A total of 1,589 flood outposts have been set up across the state. Of the 1,263 flood shelters prepared, 41 are currently in use, with 1,045 people staying there. So far, 4,845 people have been moved from flood-affected areas to safer locations. As part of the relief effort, 428 boats and motorboats and 1,101 local divers have been deployed. Officials have distributed 15,238 relief food-grain packets and 30,316 lunch packets among affected people so far. To handle emergencies, 16 National Disaster Response Force teams have been deployed across the state.

4,500 SIM cards, China malware: Pakistan links emerge in Ahmedabad cyber probe

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

An investigation into a Rs 1.5 crore ‘Boss Scam’ in Ahmedabad has blown open a sprawling international cybercrime network, with police uncovering around 4,500 SIM cards procured for cybercrime operations and tracing suspected links to China and Pakistan. The case began in June, when an employee was duped into transferring Rs 1.5 crore after fraudsters impersonated a senior executive or ‘boss’. Acting swiftly, Ahmedabad Cyber Crime Police recovered Rs 1.3 crore of the defrauded money and returned it to the victim. But what initially appeared to be a sophisticated impersonation fraud soon led investigators to a much larger cybercrime operation. During the probe, police arrested

Imran Ali Pyaada from West Bengal’s 24 Parganas and Injamul Mujibar Molla from Kolkata. Eight electronic devices were recovered from the accused, including one



capable of operating four SIM cards simultaneously. The breakthrough came during questioning, when investigators

discovered that the accused had procured around 4,500 SIM cards to facilitate cybercrime operations. CHINA-DEVELOPED MALWARE, PAKISTAN LINKS The investigation also uncovered suspected international links. Police found that malware developed in China was being used by the network and operated from Hong Kong. Investigators further traced a call centre linked to the network to Islamabad, while the proceeds of the fraud were reportedly routed through multiple countries to conceal the money trail. The international trail prompted the Ahmedabad Cyber Crime team to expand its investigation in coordination with the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C).

Priest dies after brain bleed; family alleges police assault over parking dispute

A 55-year-old priest in Tamil Nadu's Madurai died after a brain bleed, and his family alleged he was assaulted by police after a parking dispute. A court-ordered inquiry and post-mortem are now expected to clarify the circumstances of his death.

Madurai.(Agency)

A 55-year-old priest from Tamil Nadu's Madurai died days after suffering a brain bleed, with his family alleging that he was assaulted by police personnel following a dispute over parking. A judicial inquiry and post-

mortem examination were subsequently conducted after the family approached the Madurai bench of the Madras High Court.



Paramasivam, the victim, had a dispute with his neighbours, Muthiah and Malathi, over parking a vehicle on the night of July 17. Police registered cases against both sides on July 23, following which both parties were released on station bail. Paramasivam's family alleged that he was assaulted by police personnel from Chinthamani Police Station when he questioned them about the incident. According to the family, Paramasivam developed a headache

and began vomiting the following day. He initially sought treatment at a nearby primary health centre. However, when Paramasivam was admitted to Madurai Government Rajaji Hospital on August 5, he reportedly told doctors that he had sustained the injury after accidentally falling at home. His family later claimed that he had given this version because police personnel had allegedly threatened him. His condition later deteriorated and doctors reportedly found that he had suffered bleeding in the brain. He was shifted to a private hospital on August 11 for further treatment but died on August 15.

Karnataka FDA seizes spurious drugs worth Rs 5 crore from illegal facility

BENGALURU.(Agency)

The Karnataka Food Safety and Drug Administration has uncovered an alleged racket involving the repackaging and relabelling of spurious medicines as products of multinational pharmaceutical companies. Drugs worth more than Rs 5 crore were seized during the operation on Tuesday, officials said. The drive was conducted by the department's drug-control wing at premises near the Bidadi tollgate. Officials found that the facility was operating without a valid licence. According to the department, the spurious drugs were being repackaged and labelled to resemble medicines manufactured by multinational pharmaceutical companies. Further investigation is underway to determine the source of the seized drugs, identify those involved in the alleged racket and trace the intended distribution network. The revelation comes amid an intensified enforcement drive by Karnataka's food and drug regulator. Recent inspections across Bengaluru, Mysuru and Mangaluru have led to the seizure of more than 1,000 kg of unsafe food and uncovered expired products, rotten vegetables, fungal contamination and improper meat storage at several establishments, according to officials.

Gen Alpha protest in Bhopal: Regional School students oppose Kendriya Vidyalaya merger

Regional School students in Bhopal protested against the proposed merger with Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and submitted a memorandum. They said the move could dilute the schools' experimental identity and warned of phased agitation.

Bhopal.(Agency)

Bhopal witnessed a "Gen Alpha" protest as students of the Regional School demonstrated against the proposed merger of the Demonstration Multipurpose School (DMS) with the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS). The students staged a protest outside the school, raised slogans against the decision and expressed concern that the merger could undermine the institution's original purpose of promoting educational innovation and experimentation. The protesting students said the Demonstration Multipurpose Schools, also known as Regional Schools, have been functioning under the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) since December 1965. Such experimental schools were established in



four cities — Bhopal, Ajmer, Mysuru and Bhubaneswar — with the objective of developing innovative teaching methods and experimenting with new approaches to education. Students and members

associated with the school said they were opposed to the proposal to merge these institutions with the KVS. They argued that bringing the schools under a different administrative structure could affect their

distinctive identity and the academic experiments for which they were established. During the protest, students raised slogans and made it clear that they would not accept the merger. They later submitted a memorandum to Regional College principal Professor S K Gupta, formally placing their objections and demands on record. The protesters demanded that the decision be withdrawn and the existing system of the experimental schools be retained. They said the institutions should instead be strengthened as centres for educational innovation and research. Students also warned that if their demands were not considered soon, they would intensify their protest in a phased manner. They said they would continue to raise the issue through peaceful demonstrations and take their concerns to the authorities and the concerned departments.

Ahead of US envoy’s Kashmir visit, Omar says J&K’s issues will be resolved by New Delhi, not Washington

Srinagar.(Agency)

Ahead of the visit of United States Ambassador to India Sergio Gor, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday, said the Jammu and Kashmir's issues have to be resolved by New Delhi and not Washington, asserting that he would not complain to a foreign diplomat about the union territory's problems. Ambassador Gor, who is also the Special Envoy for South and Central Asia, is scheduled to land in Srinagar on Wednesday afternoon. Gor will spend the night in Srinagar before leaving for Ladakh on Thursday. Speaking to reporters in Srinagar after conducting an early morning tour of the city to inspect development projects and review the progress of key civic works, Omar said he was looking forward to meeting the American Ambassador but made it clear that he would not seek external intervention in matters concerning Jammu and Kashmir. "After a long time, a US ambassador is coming to Jammu and Kashmir, and I am meeting an American ambassador after a very long time. Let him come; we will talk to him," the Chief Minister said. He added he was keen to hear the envoy's views. "I would like to hear more from him. But he is also coming to listen. Let's see what kind of conversation we will have," he said. Omar said that discussions would focus on Jammu and Kashmir and the prevailing situation in the union territory. "... Whether he listens or not, our problems have nothing to do with him. It is not my habit to complain to an ambassador from another country," he said. Stressing that the responsibility for addressing the region's issues lies with the Centre, Omar said, "Washington will not solve our problems. Our central government has to solve our problems."

How a ‘corruption’ story became a political story

In 2011, a set of labels was attached to one man: “silent,” “weak,” “complicit.” But today, they no longer withstand scrutiny. More than a decade after a special court summoned Dr Manmohan Singh as an accused in the Talabira-II coal-block allocation case, the Supreme Court accepted the CBI’s closure reports and held that there was no “sufficient material or good reason” to register a corruption case against him. The court has restored the honour of the man turned into the symbol of India’s “corruption”. That matters because the 2014 story claimed his government represented a rotting ancien regime that had to be swept away. What did the India Against Corruption movement actually achieve? We were told it was a movement to end corruption. But what if its deeper consequence was the opposite? What if corruption evolved — becoming more centralised, opaque, institutionalised and harder to detect?

When the movement peaked in 2011–12, television amplified a moral emergency: a political elite was stealing the country’s future. Under Manmohan Singh, India had witnessed its most corrupt government. 2G and coal became established facts of theft; “lakhs of crores” had vanished. Dr Manmohan Singh became the symbol of decay; the UPA chairperson, the Machiavellian puppeteer. The verdict was delivered: This government was corrupt. The system was rotten. Someone had to cleanse it. That is how a “corruption” story became a political story. In 2014, the replacement arrived promising to end corruption, restore transparency and clean up political life. But immediately, the architecture of Indian political finance began to change. Demonetisation rendered 86 per cent of currency invalid overnight. It was sold as a surgical strike on “black money”. It was a ploy to disrupt the informal system of political finance to the disadvantage of the opposition. In 2017, electoral bonds were introduced as a supposedly “cleaner” mechanism. Instead, they removed disclosure obligations and permitted unlimited corporate donations. The more dangerous possibility is that rules themselves can be redesigned so payment for access becomes legal, predictable and protected from scrutiny. The Supreme Court’s 2024 judgment striking down electoral bonds exposed this problem. Disclosures showed that more than 15 of the 30 largest corporate donors had faced investigation by the ED, CBI or Income Tax Department. What happens when political contributions, state power and commercial interests begin to overlap on such a scale? Corruption had not necessarily been eradicated.

It had been transformed. As Rahul Gandhi has repeatedly highlighted, as wealth becomes concentrated in fewer hands, political money and political power concentrate alongside it. During COVID-19, PM CARES was created. It carries the Prime Minister’s name and state emblem, yet is structured as a private trust, outside CAG audit and RTI obligations. Who gave, how much and where the money went remains beyond scrutiny. Reporting based on government documents indicates that firms linked to Chief Minister Mohan Yadav’s extended family acquired more than 250 acres around Ujjain since 2021, including 137 plots after he took office. Many are along routes benefiting from road projects or land-use changes under the Ujjain Master Plan 2035. The Chief Minister’s Office distinguishes his holdings from relatives. But the public has every right to ask questions. Old corruption was supposed to be dirty, cash-based, individual, and visible. The new corruption has become formal, institutional and legal — and therefore much harder to see. The godi media will not lead this post-mortem. There is little incentive to examine how one political era was discredited through a weaponised narrative while another was marketed as its cleansing alternative.

Taliban-Pakistan strife gives India a foothold

Five years of the Afghan regime marked by growing closeness to New Delhi

THE Taliban have completed five years of their rule in Afghanistan. They re-established their Emirate on August 15, 2021, as the Afghan republic collapsed. President Ashraf Ghani fled the country. Other leaders, with the exception of former President Hamid Karzai and former Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah, also left Afghanistan. With the end of the republic’s political system, its armed forces disintegrated; its personnel went back to their villages. Over the past five years, the Taliban regime under Haibatullah Akhundzada has cohered despite internal differences. It has reimposed the group’s basic ideological tenets, but not as rigorously as in the 1990s. Afghanistan’s economic situation continues to be dire, even though some foreign assistance and remittances have helped in preventing a meltdown. The Taliban have contained the activities of the Islamic State (Khorasan province). In recent months, though, there have been reports of some popular restlessness. There has also been some armed anti-Taliban activity in the Baghlan and Badakhshan provinces, but it is not of major proportions. All in all, the regime remains stable.

A remarkable development in the Taliban story over the past five years, if not since their emergence in 1994, is the breakdown in their relations with Pakistan. This has been best illustrated by Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, Director General (DG) of Pakistan’s Inter-Services Public Relations. Recently, he told the media that the Taliban were “massacring the Islamic faith”. He went on to ask if their conduct was Islamic. Chaudhry pointed to their treatment of women as well as children and fatwas against other Muslims. He concluded by asking if the Taliban represented any version of Islam. He reminded the media corps that the Taliban’s ties with India were contrary to the Quran’s Surah Al Imran, Ayat 28. According to him, this Ayat instructed Muslims not to befriend kafirs. Most Muslim scholars disagree with this interpretation. GeographicReferenceIt is ironic that the Pakistani establishment responsible for nurturing the Taliban and ensuring that they defeated the US and demolished the Afghan republic should now be so vituperative against them. This is especially because the Taliban have not changed their interpretation of the Islamic faith. That had not deterred the now-disgraced and in-custody Lt Gen Faiz Hameed (ret’d) as DG, ISI, in August 2021 from exulting at the Taliban victory over the republic. His ear-to-ear grin at the Serena Hotel in Kabul was captured in an iconic photograph. What then has caused the relatively rapid meltdown between Pakistan and the Taliban? Recently, a senior leader of the Afghan republic told me that a perceptive Pakistani official was worried during the 2021 Doha interaction between the republic and the Taliban about how Pakistan-Afghanistan relations would evolve if the Taliban came to power in Kabul. The official told the Afghan leader that Pakistan



and the Taliban were heading for a “divorce”. This Pakistani — a Pathan — was an outlier, for the prevailing opinion in Pakistan’s Punjabi-dominated military leadership was that it would reduce Afghanistan to almost the status of the country’s fifth province. However, the official, who had a clear understanding of the Taliban psyche, knew that they would eventually follow an independent course, including in their approach to India. This assessment was correct. After an initial period when the Taliban could not openly go against Rawalpindi, they insisted on opening up to India and wanted to establish warm and cooperative ties with it. New Delhi took its time, but eventually it reciprocated. The India-Taliban relationship has been a major reason for Pakistan’s rupture with the regime. More importantly, it was the Pakistani establishment’s complete misreading of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)’s solid ties with the Taliban that led Rawalpindi to expect that the Taliban would abandon the TTP. The TTP had sworn allegiance (bayat) to the Taliban emir. It had also developed the ability to influence intra-Taliban relations, which gave it a standing in Afghanistan. Since 2021, Pakistan has tried everything — from persuasion to coercion, including sending back Afghan refugees at a time when the country found it difficult to absorb them, to open use of armed force — but the Taliban-TTP relationship has not eroded. There is little chance that it will do so in the foreseeable future. Over and above these factors, there is the old and enduring prejudice of the Punjabi establishment towards Afghans, which got exacerbated when the Afghan State

disintegrated and millions of poor Afghans came to Pakistan. This Punjabi prejudice is also reflected in its attitude towards its own Pathans, though many of them have been co-opted in the Punjabi-dominated state.

The bias exhibited by Punjabi biradaris towards the Pathans who have long settled in Punjab is less than that towards those who live across the Indus, but it is there nonetheless. Former PM Imran Khan is of Pathan origin; he captured the popular imagination in Punjab, but that began with his cricketing success. He languished in politics till the Army built him up, but the Punjabi generals brought him down when he grew too big for his boots. GeographicReferenceThere has been a long history of an inimical attitude among the people on both sides of the Indus, and in particular those who live across the Durand Line. Analysts do not generally appreciate how much of a role this plays in Afghanistan-Pakistan relations. Only those who have spent endless hours with the Afghans, drinking pot after pot of chai sabz (green) or chai siyah (black), sometimes late into the night, get an inkling of their attitude towards the Punjabis and the role they play in the affairs of the State even now. To this has now been added the bitterness over the treatment meted out to the refugees by the Pakistani officialdom and even the public. And, finally, there is the Taliban feeling that Pakistan was playing both sides during the years it supported the group. Afghanistan-Pakistan tensions are not going to end anytime soon; this will naturally give opportunities to other powers. These have to be utilised constructively and wisely.

India's next leap will depend on delivering Sapta Dhara's promise

The architecture is ambitious. Its success, however, will depend on the constituency Modi repeatedly talked about: India’s youth. His pitch was forward-looking

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Independence Day speech was less a look back than a declaration of intent. Its proposition was clear: India cannot become Viksit Bharat merely by growing larger but by becoming more capable, self-reliant and globally competitive. Sapta Dhara, seven streams of national power, is the vehicle. The first, manufacturing, calls for owning value chains, from design to products. Agriculture and food processing form the second, taking millets, spices, fruits and foods from farm to shelf. Technology and innovation are the third, with AI, quantum computing, robotics, space, digital infrastructure and Made-in-India 6G. Gati Shakti, the fourth, focuses on rail, highways, airports, waterways and multimodal logistics. Defence is the fifth, with self-reliance in drones, counter-drone systems, hypersonics and cybersecurity. The sixth, the green and blue economy, links renewables, green hydrogen and storage with fisheries and ocean technology. The seventh is soft power: yoga, Ayurveda and the creative economy. The architecture is ambitious.



Its success, however, will depend on the constituency Modi repeatedly talked about: India’s youth. His pitch was forward-looking. More than 2.5 lakh startups, a ?1 lakh crore Innovation Fund, Atal Tinkering Labs, the opening

of the space sector, Skill India and plans to train one crore young people in AI point towards an India that wants to create technology, not merely consume it. This could be transformative. But the real challenge is execution. The to-do list returns every August 15. The more consequential question is whether the aspirations of India’s young people are keeping pace with what is being promised. India’s restless youth demand the future in the present, with accountability, faster delivery and reasons to stay. It needs quality education, relevant skills, access and pathways to productive work. Modi urged political parties to move swiftly towards 33 percent representation for women in Parliament and state legislatures. But its significance will depend on whether political representation is accompanied by greater economic participation and a stronger role in decision-making.

The larger message of Sapta Dhara is, therefore, about building seven engines of capability and ensuring that young Indians and women have the means to drive them.

Prisoners and the privilege of equal care

Asaram Bapu’s access to a full-time caregiver in jail highlights the stark disparities in India’s prison system, where many inmates struggle for medical care, dignity and even basic necessities

Asaram Bapu is 85. He has been hogging the limelight ever since the 1970s. As a self-proclaimed godman, he has many devotees who admire and worship him. A special court in Jodhpur convicted him and sentenced him to life imprisonment for the alleged rape of a minor girl. Both the Rajasthan High Court and the Supreme Court had granted him interim bail for limited periods on previous occasions. Of late, while refusing to grant further interim bail, the Supreme Court, considering his age and ailments, ordered that he can avail himself of the assistance of a trained full-time caregiver in prison. Asaram is a controversial person, facing many allegations against him. Yet he is rich and influential. Several political bigwigs still have close associations with him. When the Supreme Court granted him a full-time caregiver, many might have thought about the veteran Stan Swamy, who died while in judicial custody, and G N Saibaba, who died soon after his release from prison. Many would also recall the plight of Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam, who continue to languish in prisons without even a trial, with their bail pleas being stringently opposed by the State and rejected by courts. Let it be clear: A legal system that permits an 85-year-old person to have round-the-clock assistance in jail is not necessarily bad. It could even be ideal and an epitome of an advanced democracy that respects human rights. But a system that denies the same benefit to other similarly placed persons is not good at all. The situation is all the more disturbing when political prisoners, who are prisoners of conscience, are continuously mistreated by the State. Stan Swamy, the Jesuit priest, was 84 and suffering from Parkinson’s disease. At Taloja Central Jail, he had to beg not only for a straw but also for timely treatment for his ailment at a hospital of his choice. As we know, he died in another

hospital in Mumbai, following the State’s refusal to heed his legitimate request. G N Saibaba was put in an ‘anda cell’ and subjected to solitary confinement. This happened despite the Supreme Court in Sunil Batra (1978) that solitary confinement is generally impermissible even for death convicts. Saibaba suffered 90 percent disability and was in a wheelchair. He was denied timely treatment for a long time. Swamy’s and Saibaba’s predicaments are often cited, but many others have suffered in prison. In a 2024 paper, Bhavya Dore and Sukhada Tatke exposed the incredibly inhuman treatment, including denial of medical care, extended to political prisoners booked under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, going beyond the Swamy-Saibaba tragedies. It says the prison authorities denied even a mosquito net to people accused in the Bhima Koregaon case, including Anand Teltumbde, Vernon Gonsalves, Gautam Navlakha and Sagar Gorkhe. Law teacher and activist Sudha Baradwaj and English teacher Shoma Sen were lodged along the Phansi yard in Yerwada jail, says the paper. It also talks about Pandu Narote, who died due to swine flu while in Nagpur Central Jail, allegedly due to the denial of timely treatment. He was only 35 and was convicted along with Saibaba. Dore and Tatke tell us about Surendra Gadling, a lawyer and human rights activist who had diabetes, hypertension, syncope, lumbar and cervical spondylitis, and was denied Ayurvedic treatment in prison, which forced him to move the court. They also narrate that censored books were allotted to Sudha Baradwaj, and Gautam Navlakha was denied “access to sun and fresh air for an hour every day,” for which he had to move the court. Fyodor Dostoevsky’s classic The House of the Dead explains the agonies and

miseries that one undergoes while incarcerated. Indian prisons are overcrowded and under-equipped. They are emblematic of an unequal society and a dispensation rooted in exploitation, class bias and ideological prejudices. The inhuman treatment of prisoners in



subhuman conditions continues to be the hallmark of our jails. Political prisoners do not get the privilege that Asaram gets. The unequal treatment of prisoners makes a further case for closer judicial scrutiny and remedial action. Treating political opponents as if they are criminals and therefore dangerous to society has been a conventional method adopted by the State to discredit and eradicate the ideological challenges to the regime. This universal truth has been demonstrated throughout history. This behaviour of the State, well explained by philosopher Michel Foucault in his works, might also explain why the Indian State is orried about Saibaba and not Asaram. Unlike prisoners involved in political cases, thousands of ordinary prisoners are equally entitled to a

dignified life, subject to constitutionally justifiable prison conditions. What is exposed in the media is only the tip of the iceberg, given India’s prison population. The Supreme Court has, in Sukanya Shantha (2024), examined the caste bias and caste-based discrimination in Indian prisons. The court found that different states in India were operating prison manuals that perpetuate caste-based segregation and even untouchability. The court also noted that some manuals label certain tribes as habitual offenders. In Suhas Chakma (2026), the top court emphasised the need to make prisons more humane and to explore the possibility of more open correctional institutions to mitigate overcrowding in Indian prisons. The judgement by a bench consisting of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta is a sincere effort to humanise the system—a rare judicial gesture. Prisons come under the State List, as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. Therefore, state governments are supposed to work towards improving India’s prison environment. In the Suhas Chakma and Sathyan Naravoor (2025) cases, the Supreme Court has constituted a high-powered committee for prison reforms headed by Justice S Ravindra Bhat. This will also have to address the plight of people with disabilities. The committee should also look into facilities in Indian prisons. It is ideal to have a permanent committee for prison reforms in India that oversees how inmates are mistreated in jails. Prisoners need a grievance redress mechanism in which non-governmental organisations and human rights activists can play a proactive role. Justice Byron Raymond wrote that there is no iron curtain drawn between the prisons and the constitution. It needs constant judicial courage and executive will to materialise this idea on the ground.

Rains continue to lash UP: 18 deaths in resin-related incidents

Lucknow. (Agency)

Rain continues to lash Uttar Pradesh with more than 18 people lost their lives in this monsoon rain in the state. More than 18 people died in the state on Tuesday due to rains in the past 24 hours. Six of these people were killed in a house collapse in Hamirpur, while 4 people died in Prayagraj in different rain-related incidents. One died each in Kanpur, Unnao, Badaun, Kannauj, Hardoi, Ballia, Bahraich and Farrukhabad due to lightning and other incidents. On Tuesday, heavy rains accompanied by thunder and lightning were witnessed in many districts of Uttar Pradesh. Prayagraj, Sonbhadra, Chitrakoot and Mirzapur received heavy rains.

The Meteorological Department has issued a red alert for extremely heavy rains in nine districts adjoining Madhya Pradesh for Wednesday. There is a warning of heavy rains accompanied by thunder and lightning in 18 other districts.

Prayagraj recorded the highest rainfall of 192 mm on Tuesday. Bijpur received 162 mm, Sambhal 150 mm and Sonbhadra 123 mm. Atul Kumar Singh, senior scientist of Regional Meteorological Centre, Lucknow, said that during August 19 to 23, there is a possibility of heavy to very heavy rains in different parts of the state including the districts adjoining Madhya Pradesh.

Meanwhile, Relief Commissioner Hrishikesh Bhaskar Yashod on Tuesday conducted a detailed review of relief and rescue operations in the flood-affected areas of the state.

Couple among 3 killed in J&K's Reasi

Jammu. (Agency)

A couple among three persons were killed and two suffered injuries when a vehicle they were travelling met with an accident and fell into a deep gorge in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Police said that an SUV on Tuesday night plunged into a deep gorge when the driver lost its control while negotiating a curve near Panasa village on the way from Thanole to Thub village. Three members of a family were killed, and two others suffered injuries in the mishap, they said. The deceased were identified as Prem Singh (50), his wife Turi Devi (45) and Durgi Devi (72). Police along with locals retrieved their bodies from the wreckage. They said that two passengers who managed to jump out of the vehicle sustained injuries and were shifted to a hospital.

ED raids several locations linked to Azam Khan, including Jauhar University

Rampur. (Agency)

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has once again tightened its grip on jailed senior Samajwadi Party (SP) leader and general secretary Azam Khan and his dream project, the Mohammad Ali Jauhar University. On Wednesday morning, ED teams launched simultaneous raids at approximately 10 locations in Rampur, Saharanpur and Delhi, including the Jauhar University in Rampur and premises associated with the Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar Trust.

A team of 20 officers arrived at the Jauhar Ali University on Wednesday morning. The team is reviewing documents inside, while a force is deployed outside. Sources here said the raids are being conducted under Section 17 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, in connection with a money laundering case involving the Jauhar Trust and the university.

The investigation relates to the alleged misuse of government contract funds through private contractors and the subsequent use of those funds. The agency is also examining financial transactions related to the construction of the university and Trust's properties. The investigation has reportedly revealed alleged financial transactions between certain contractors and the trust. It is alleged that some contractors who secured government contracts provided significant benefits to the trust and the university in the form of donations, construction work, and other facilities. The ED's action aims to gather financial records, documents, and digital evidence related to these transactions and to investigate the alleged use and route of government funds.

According to sources, during the raid, the ED team seized several important documents and records from the university campus. The agency has previously conducted operations at Jauhar University. Azam Khan is currently in jail after being convicted in various cases. The latest action has also created a stir among his supporters and close associates. Earlier, Moradabad Commissioner and RDA Chairman Anjaneya Kumar Singh had put a stay on the Rampur Development Authority's (RDA) order to demolish 38 of Jauhar University's 40 buildings. After RDA Vice Chairman and Rampur District Magistrate Ajay Kumar Dwivedi issued the order to demolish the 38 buildings, which were constructed without approved maps, the university management and the Jauhar Trust filed an appeal in the court of the authority chairman and commissioner.

Co-ordinated efforts of NF Railway and Forest Department of Assam helping ensure elephant safety on Railway Tracks

The Sikh Times

Maligaon, 19th August: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), in close coordination with the Forest Department of Assam and through the alertness of its frontline railway staff, is taking proactive measures to ensure the safety of elephants in crossing railway tracks across Assam. In a recent instance on 19th August 2026, officials of the Assam Forest Department coordinated with railway officials to facilitate the timely stoppage of Train No. 20503 (Dibrugarh-New Delhi) Rajdhani Express in the Lumding-Habaipur section during the early morning hours. The prompt action enabled a herd of elephants to cross the railway track safely. Similar instances have also been reported in recent days, highlighting the vigilance of NFR's loco pilots. On 15th August 2026, the alertness of the loco pilot of Train No. 15665 (Guwahati-Mariani) Express enabled a herd of elephants to safely cross the track in the Lamsakhang - Patharkhola section. Likewise, on 16th August 2026, the loco pilot of Train No. 15650 (Narangi - Agartala) Express took timely action to facilitate the safe passage of elephants in the Habaipur - Lamsakhang section. These

instances reflect the effective coordination between NFR and the Forest Department,

protecting wildlife in elephant corridors. NFR has taken several proactive and tech-



along with the vigilance and sense of responsibility of railway running staff, in preventing elephant-train interactions and

nology-driven measures to prevent elephant-train collisions in vulnerable areas. These include deployment of AI-based

Intrusion Detection System (IDS) using Distributed Acoustic System (DAS) technology, which provides real-time alerts on elephant movement near tracks. Other preventive measures include night-time and temporary speed restrictions based on elephant sightings, enhanced patrolling, sensitisation of train crews, cautionary signage, vegetation clearance and real-time coordination with the Forest Department. The 'Plan Bee' system, using amplified honeybee sounds to deter elephants, has also been installed at vulnerable locations. NFR has further undertaken the construction of underpasses at identified locations to facilitate safer wildlife movement and keep elephants away from railway tracks. NFR remains committed to adopting innovative technologies, strengthening coordination with wildlife authorities and enhancing the vigilance of its frontline staff to ensure safe train operations while protecting the rich wildlife of the region. Timely interventions are particularly significant in the elephant corridors of NFR, where coordinated efforts by railway personnel and Forest Department of Assam officials play a crucial role in preventing elephant-train collisions.

Minutes after mediating in road rage incident, Ludhiana photographer shot dead

Additional DCP-1 Sameer Verma said the two groups were not known to each other and the incident followed an argument after a two-wheeler vehicle brushed against the Creta.

Ludhiana. (Agency)

A 39-year-old photographer, who mediated between a car owner and a two-wheeler driver after the latter's vehicle brushed against the four-wheeler, was shot dead and another man travelling with him sustained gunshot wound in Ludhiana's old City in a road rage-related shooting, police on Tuesday said.

The incident took place around on Monday around midnight, police said. The deceased, Raminder Singh alias Sonu and his friend Sanjeev Kumar, both from New Ashok Nagar, were returning from a birthday party when occupants of a Hyundai Creta car allegedly opened fire at them near JMD Mall, police said. Raminder, who was on the passenger seat of their Maruti Brezza car, suffered a bullet injury to his neck and died. Sanjeev



sustained a gunshot injury to his hand, police said. Additional DCP-1 Sameer Verma said the two groups were not known to each other and the incident followed an argument after a two-wheeler vehicle brushed against the Creta. "Prima facie, there was a minor altercation over giving way to a vehicle which led to firing," Verma said. He added that Raminder and his friends were travelling in multiple vehicles, including an Activa. The Activa allegedly brushed against the Creta, leading to a heated exchange.

Raminder and his friend stopped to mediate the dispute between the scooter rider and the Creta car driver. After the issue was sorted, they resumed their journey home. Minutes later, the Creta car overtook them and the occupants allegedly fired multiple shots.

Inspector Ashwani Kumar, SHO, Division

No. 1 police station, said the Creta, which had no number plate, came parallel to the Brezza before the occupants fired at Raminder. "The victim and the accused were not known to each other," the SHO added. Police have registered an FIR for murder against three identified accused and their unidentified accomplices.

Teams have been formed to arrest the suspects, Verma said. Raminder's family said he worked as a photographer and video editor and ran a studio from his home. He was the sole breadwinner and is survived by his parents, wife Jyoti and two sons, aged eight and two. His wife said Raminder had told her he would return within an hour after attending the birthday party.

"Around 1 am, I got a call from someone who said that my husband was hospitalized in a serious condition. When we reached there, he had died by then," she said.

"He was shot dead in cold blood for no reason. He was our everything. Now what shall we do?" she said, demanding justice from Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and DGP Gaurav Yadav.

5-year-old dies after 'paneer meal' in Surat

Surat. (Agency)

A FIVE-YEAR-OLD girl died of suspected food poisoning and her parents and two siblings were admitted at a private hospital after eating dinner bought from a hotel on August 15. Ashok Kalsariya, who works in a diamond unit and stays in Ranujadham society in Varachha area with his family, bought food - including a paneer dish - from the nearby Hotel Sheetal, along with other curries that had cashewnuts. On the way back, he also got pouches of buttermilk and the family had dinner with the rest of the food made at home. In the early hours on August 16, Kalsariya and his five-year-old daughter Arya complained of stomachache and vomiting. They reached a clinic nearby in the Ishwarnagar society, even as the wife and two other daughters also had similar complaints and soon joined the father and daughter at the clinic. The family

was discharged by Sunday afternoon. Varachha police inspector A R Wala said, "On Sunday late afternoon, Arya's health condition worsened and they were taken to a private hospital in Varachha by Babubhai Kalsariya (Ashok's elder brother). Later in



the afternoon, his wife and two daughters vomited again and they were also admitted in the same hospital. On Monday afternoon, Arya (5) was declared dead by doctors while

her parents and two siblings are still undergoing treatment in the same hospital." He added, "The cause of death is not yet known but it is suspected to be food poisoning. The doctors at SMIMER Hospital have sent viscera and other necessary samples for further testing. At present, it is premature to come to any conclusion in this incident."

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Praful Pansheriya told The Indian Express, "We will wait for the postmortem report and if signs of poisoning show, we will take legal action".

He added that he had spoken over a video call to the rest of the family members and their condition was "stable". Ranujadham Society falls in Pansheriya's constituency of Kamrej. He directed Surat district health officer Dr Anil Patel and Surat Municipal health officer Dr Pradeep Umrigar to conduct a probe and ensure the family gets proper medical treatment.

Girl, 13, plots to kill relative to fund iPhone, bike; watch murder over video call

Thiruvananthapuram. (Agency)

A 67-year-old man was killed while alone at his home in Kerala, his hands and legs tied and a cloth tightened around his neck. With his gold chain and other ornaments kept at the house found missing, the case initially appeared to be robbery gone wrong. But it took an unexpected turn when police identified the mastermind as a 13-year-old girl, the victim's close relative.

The Class 8 student, according to police, conspired with her 17-year-old boyfriend, a Plus Two student, to kill the man, Sivankutty Chettiyyar. Their motive was to steal his gold to fund an iPhone and a bike for the boy and his two friends, who were also involved in the crime. The murder took place on Saturday in Alappuzha. As police began piecing together the clues, they questioned close relatives, including the 13-year-old girl. However,



police immediately noticed repeated contradictions in her statements, raising their suspicion. Detailed questioning eventually uncovered the chilling plot.

The girl had conspired with her boyfriend and told him that gold could be stolen from the house, according to police. She also told police that the man had allegedly touched her inappropriately and that she held a grudge against him. Police, however, believe that the primary motive appeared to be theft, while the girl's allegation was being examined separately. "On Saturday evening, the boyfriend and his friends came here at the girl's instigation. They came to steal the gold and money kept in the house. Additionally, there is a revenge angle, as the girl has alleged that the man touched her inappropriately. But the main motive was stealing the gold," Alappuzha SP Vishnu Pradeep said.

Gujarat government tests AI to save lions along railway tracks: 6,682 lions diverted, zero killed by trains in 2 years

Vadodara. (Agency)

stepping onto a railway track in Saurashtra once meant a race against time: A tracker raising an alarm, a train slowing down and the animal being coaxed away from the tracks. After 19 lions were fatally hit by trains between 2014 and 2024, the Gujarat government has deployed technology alongside traditional safeguards and diverted 6682 lions from railway tracks running through the Asiatic Lion landscape spread majorly over Junagadh, Gir-Somnath, Amreli and Porbandar districts. The experiment has also ensured that no lion was killed by a train in the August 2024-May 2026 period. The detail is part of an affidavit by Conservator of Forest, Junagadh, Ram Ratan Nala before the Gujarat High Court as part of a suo motu Public Interest Litigation. As per the compliance report, apart from deploying 70 railway trackers, clearing 14.23 hectares of vegetation, installing watch towers, underpasses and effecting speed restrictions, the government has put in place an Intrusion Detection System (IDS)

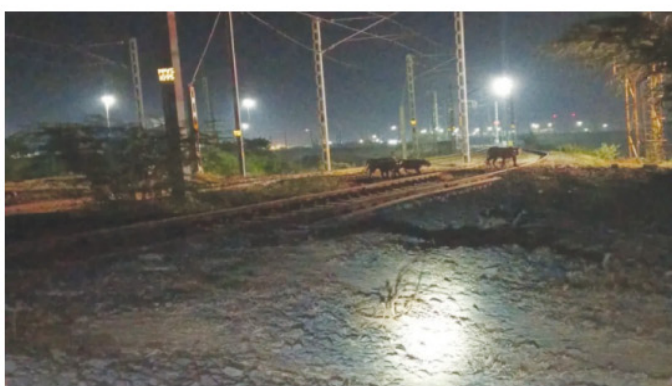
that includes Artificial Intelligence-based monitoring, CCTV surveillance, fitting LED lights on trains and laying Optic Fibre cables to detect lion movement along the railway tracks. The fibre optic sensing cables have been laid along the Liliya-Savarkundla section in Amreli district.

In an order dated July 31, 2026 (uploaded August 10), a Bench of Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal and Justice D N Ray perused the affidavit dated July 30 filed by the Junagadh CF Dr Ram Ratan Nala, through Additional Advocate General Manisha Luvkumar, in compliance with the June 12 HC order in the PIL concerning deaths of Gir lions caused by railway accidents. Nala is a member of the High-Level Committee directed by the HC to examine the incidents and prevent them.

Alone lion hit in 2025

For years, railway tracks cutting through Saurashtra's lion country were a deadly collision point between India's fastest-

growing lion population and its expanding transport network. But the court-monitored safety system is producing a striking reversal as the Asiatic lions expand beyond the traditional confines of the Gir landscape.



The state government's submission notes an incident on November 14, 2025, when a train hit a year-old cub between the Vadiya-Haveli and Vavdi stations. It suffered fractures and was taken to Sakkarbaug zoo where it recovered. As per the latest operational

figures: Between April and July 2026, 33.4 km of vegetation had been cleared, 1,104 lion-diversion operations undertaken, 70 railway trackers deployed and 1,356 caution orders issued. Around 100 wildlife-

movement hotspots had been identified. Fourteen railway underpasses had been assessed as requiring retrofitting, 13 new underpasses proposed, while 62 underpasses were assessed to be in good condition. Three training programmes had also been conducted for railway personnel. The broader compliance report placed before the court records 6,682 lions diverted from railway tracks and 1,148 other animals diverted under the safety regime. It lists nine permanent hotspots, 14.23 hectares of vegetation clearance, 66 signages, 26 watchtowers and 5,909 caution orders. Three loco-pilot training sessions had trained 136 loco pilots, while five joint inspections had been conducted between 2024 and 2026.

Due to Punjab polls: Satyendar Jain alleges politics behind arrest, BJP counters

AAP called Jain's arrest politically motivated and linked to Punjab polls, while the BJP said the ACB action was based on evidence.

Delhi. (Agency)

The arrest of AAP leader and former Delhi minister Satyendar Jain over alleged irregularities in the tendering process for sewage treatment plants has set off a major political firestorm in Delhi, with the ruling BJP and the Aam Aadmi Party trading accusations.

While Jain and other AAP leaders have denied the allegations and called the arrest politically motivated, the BJP has defended the action, saying the law is taking its course and those responsible for wrongdoing will be punished.

Jain, while being produced before a court, alleged that his arrest by the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) was linked to the upcoming Punjab Assembly elections, where the AAP is in power. Jain is the AAP's co-in-charge for Punjab, where Assembly polls are expected to be held in early 2027.

"This is being done because of the Punjab elections," Jain said as he entered the courtroom.

His lawyer told the court that Jain had no role in the tendering process and argued that the allegations were contrary to the official record.

"They say Jain arbitrarily changed the situation of one of the STPs. This is contrary to the notings and facts, which show that this change was never effected. They are making allegations contrary to the records," the lawyer said.

He further argued that the alleged loss of Rs 20 crore to the department was based on a noting that never existed. "They say a loss of Rs 20 crore happened to the department due to one noting. That noting never happened. I was in custody. I am not involved in the awarding of those tenders. Where is the live link?" he said.



KEJRIWAL ACCUSES AMIT SHAH OF DIRECTING ARREST

AAP chief and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal accused Union Home Minister Amit Shah of directing the ACB to arrest Jain. "ACB had no plans to arrest Jain until yesterday morning. ACB was told by Home Minister Shah to arrest Jain yesterday afternoon. HM Shah should explain why he pressured the agency to arrest Satyendar

Jain," Kejriwal said.

Claiming that an ACB official had referred to Shah's alleged directions, Kejriwal said the arrests were increasingly being driven by political considerations rather than evidence of wrongdoing. "Clearly, arrests now are not based on whether someone has committed a crime, but on whom they want to arrest," he said.

AAP leader Atishi also condemned Jain's arrest, describing it as a BJP "conspiracy" and a "witch-hunt". "On one hand, there is the BJP, which is perpetrating one scam after another in Delhi, yet no action is being taken against them. On the other hand, we are witnessing a repeat of what happened in 2022-23. Back then, Satyendar Jain was implicated in a fabricated case; he was kept in jail for two years, only for it to be revealed later that there was no evidence and his arrest.

Delhi master plan proposes green energy push for 2047

Delhi. (Agency)

To enhance the renewable energy capacity of the capital in the future, the Master Plan of Delhi for 2047 (MPD-2047) proposes utilising existing canals and drains to generate renewable energy.

Approved by the Delhi Development Authority last week, the draft plan has been sent to the Centre for approval. It proposes the use of more greenfield areas under the 'agriculture-cum-solar farm scheme' and that bus depots and metro stations should meet their power requirements through renewable energy sources.

"Delhi has a number of canals and drains that can be utilised for harnessing solar and hydro energy as per feasibility. The agencies concerned are to leverage this potential for generation of energy as per feasibility," the draft reads.

Last year, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta had announced a 'green budget', promising a renewed push for solar power generation in the capital, and a separate budget was also allocated to create supporting infrastructure. The MPD suggestions are in line with the Delhi government's earlier announcement to install solar panels along the Najafgarh drain to generate power.

According to officials, one of the projects that the Delhi government is currently exploring is the installation of solar panels along the Najafgarh drain over a six-kilometre stretch from the Dhansa border to Ghummanhera. "Government buildings and institutional campuses with a rooftop area above 500 sqm are to install solar panels as per the Delhi Solar Policy," the draft states.

Recently, power minister Ashish Sood said that under the Solar Policy, the government is considering reducing the upfront cost through subsidies and advance payment of generation-based incentives to consumers.

Proposals on Delhi Ridge, forest land use under scrutiny

Delhi. (Agency)

Thirty-four proposals involving the use of Delhi Ridge and forest land for non-forestry purposes are under scrutiny of the Standing Committee of the Ridge Management Board, as per the official documents.

A proposal to use nearly 12.6 hectares of land at the President's Bodyguard (PBG) parade ground near Rashtrapati Bhavan, including about 7.58 hectares of additional land, for operational and training requirements is among the proposals, according to the minutes of the committee's second meeting held on July 29.



The proposals have not been approved yet and are currently being examined by the committee, the minutes said.

The list also includes construction of a permanent campus for the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development at Vasant Kunj and use of 2.262 hectares at JNU for a lecture hall complex, incubation centre and special centre for e-learning, according to a forest department letter.

The committee decided to conduct site inspections of several proposals.

Under the lens

A proposal to use 12.6 hectares of land at the President's Bodyguard parade ground near Rashtrapati Bhavan, are among the proposals under scrutiny of the Ridge Management Board.

mous Kdays, the pot runs empty by 3 pm," he said.

JNU can admit students using 'deprivation points': Delhi HC

The division bench observed that the policy of awarding deprivation points has been in vogue at JNU since 1974 and that the single judge's order had brought the entire admission process to a halt.

Delhi. (Agency)

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday allowed Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) to continue admitting students using "deprivation points", the additional marks awarded to candidates based on the geographical location of their previous schooling.

A division bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia, while hearing a plea filed by JNU against a single judge's order restraining the varsity from admitting students under the policy, said admissions would be subject to the outcome of the petition pending before the single judge.

The division bench observed that the policy of awarding deprivation points has been in vogue at JNU since 1974 and that the single judge's order had

brought the entire admission process to a halt.

"The university shall carry on with the admission process as per the provisions in the e-prospectus,



including the provisions which are under challenge before the single judge. However, any admission hence made will be subject to the outcome of the writ petition," the bench said.

Plea challenged an interim order passed on August 14

It also requested the single judge to expedite the proceedings and conclude the matter as soon as possible. In its petition before the division bench, Jawaharlal Nehru University claimed that awarding deprivation points was based on its policy of ensuring the inclusion of an adequate number of students from different regions of the country.

The petition challenged an interim order passed on August 14. In that order, Justice Jasmeet Singh had restrained JNU from admitting students using "deprivation points", saying that through the policy, JNU had altered the marks obtained by students in the Common University Entrance Test (CUET). The judge noted that JNU's 2026-27 prospectus provides for up to 12 deprivation points.

AAP MLA released after preventive detention; HC junks habeas corpus plea

Delhi. (Agency)

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday disposed of a petition alleging "illegal" custody of AAP MLA Kuldeep Kumar, who was leading a protest against the murder of a sanitation worker, after the police said that he was taken into preventive detention and has now been released.

The submission was made during the hearing of a 'habeas corpus petition' filed by Kumar's family. The petition claimed that "police personnel in plain clothes picked up the legislator at around 4am on Tuesday, and since then they have not been able to contact him". The counsel added that since then he has not been contactable until the matter was mentioned before the bench



headed by the chief justice.

According to the Delhi Police sources, the MLA was detained around 5am on Tuesday and released around 3.30pm. They said that Kumar had allegedly

asked the sanitation workers to not work.

"He had also asked the victim's family to not give permission for the autopsy, claiming that they would otherwise not get compensation and a government

job. The MLA was also planning to block the Delhi-Meerut Expressway if the postmortem examination is conducted," police sources added.

However, the AAP slammed the Delhi Police for detaining Kumar, stating that the police did not disclose Kumar's whereabouts or reason for his detention. AAP National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal said, "At 4 am, your police picked up Kumar from his home, broke the CCTV cameras at his residence and took away the DVR.

Now your police are not telling anyone anything about him. If a sitting MLA can be picked up from his home by the police in this manner, then where is the 'aam aadmi' supposed to go in this country? People will not tolerate such gundagardi."

Stir over sanitation worker death intensifies in Delhi

Delhi. (Agency)

A mound of waste has piled up along the road at the East Vinod Nagar depot in east Delhi's Khichripur area. The foul smell, flies and unhygienic conditions await the return of sanitation workers, who have been protesting a worker's death for the past two days.

For years, they have worked behind the scenes on the city's streets, collecting and handling its waste, often for 12-13 hours a day. They said that they are being pushed to the edge, alleging lack of basic safety gear, adequate healthcare, leave benefits and timely wages.

Hundreds employed through private agency Metro West continued their protest for a third day. The agitation intensified after a worker's death in Kalyanpuri, with demands for compensation for his family and greater protection for those still on the job.

Standing in front of the Khichripur bus stand just beside the civic body's depot, Aniket, a sanitation worker who has been working with the agency for nearly six years, said, "We want justice for him and demand that the company and the government provide compensation to his family."

However, for the workers, the death has brought to the surface a much larger set of grievances. Many allege that despite working for years, they have not received their provident fund, while Employees State Insurance (ESI) is provided, but it does not adequately meet their healthcare needs. They are also demanding insurance and a cashless health card so they can access treatment at hospitals closer to their workplaces. "We want our salary to increase at least twice a year. Our salary also comes after the 10th," Aniket stated, adding that most workers live on rent and struggle to manage expenses.

Although their work is integral to MCD's sanitation operations, the workers said the civic body treats them as employees of contractors and does not directly engage with them. "MCD says that we are contractors. They do not consider us their own. But we do all the work for MCD," Mahesh, another worker, said.

Workers said repeated attempts to raise their grievances with the agency drew no response. The protest has also come at a cost, with workers expecting salary deductions for the days they remain off duty. Still, they said they were willing to bear the loss. "We know our salaries will be deducted. But this is about our rights," a worker said.

Classroom learning of MCD schools to reach parents' WhatsApp groups soon

Delhi. (Agency)

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is set to launch a school-home engagement programme on WhatsApp with parents of nursery and KG students in order to share daily play-based learning activities and behavioural nudges that can be conducted with children at home.

The initiative named Pratibhagita is being rolled out in phases by the civic body's education department in collaboration with non-profit organisation Rocket Learning across all 12 MCD zones this month, officials said. The rollout will cover



three zones in each phase.

Under the project, parents of children aged three to six years in pre-primary classes will receive daily audio-visual content through teacher-parent WhatsApp groups. The activities will focus on literacy,

numeracy, cognitive, socio-emotional and physical development and will be mapped in the monthly academic planners of MCD.

It will introduce a digital mechanism to monitor and sustain parental participation. According to the programme's implementation plan accessed by the newspaper, parents will receive personalised digital nudges and certificates based on their participation in the learning activities.

This move will also mark a shift towards the usage of parents' existing digital communication channels to supplement classroom instruction, said officials.

The platform will be provided by Rocket Learning. It will automatically distribute

the foundational learning content. On the other hand, messages from MCD can also be shared through the same WhatsApp groups once a week.

For students from classes 1 to 5, the programme will have a different focus. Instead of academic content generated by Rocket Learning, parents will receive information from the education department on matters related to students, MCD initiatives and general announcements.

Students of primary school children will receive weekly posters, along with text messages and voice notes three times a week.

The content will be prepared at least two weeks in advance and scheduled through the digital platform a week before delivery. Officials said that the objective of Pratibhagita is to strengthen parental involvement in kid's education.

NEWS BOX

2026 TNPL: Ambrish, Shahrukh shine as Kovai grab big win



CHENNAI. (Agency)

The top-order batters of Vida Kovai Kings clicked as a unit as they beat Chepauk Super Gillies by five wickets in a TNPL tie at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Tuesday. S Radhakrishnan (38), S Lokeshwar (40) and B Sachin (37) played with responsibility and helped their team chase down the target of 168. Openers Radhakrishnan and Lokeshwar went hammer and tongs on the Chepauk attack. Radhakrishnan was fluent, timed the ball brilliantly and was spot on in his shot selection. He could place the ball where he wished and was in absolute control of the proceedings. Radhakrishnan's (38) end came when he was caught at long on by Dinesh Raj with Prem Kumar taking the wicket. By then, the duo had added 54 runs for the first wicket to give a solid start. hereafter Lokeshwar and B Sachin combined to help Kovai get past the 100-run mark. Sachin (37) was run out, while Lokeshwar (40) was castled by Swapnil Singh. At 127/4, skipper Shahrukh Khan and RS Ambrish guided the team home. Earlier, Ambrish (3/22) contributed with the ball to restrict Chepauk to an attainable score. Put in to bat, Chepauk openers Mokit Hariharan and N Jagadeesan showed intent. Mokit was at ease playing R Divakar. However, M Siddharth gave the first breakthrough for Kovai. He bowled a shorter one to Jagadeesan who miscued a lofted attempt as the ball went straight to Siddharth. This created a ripple effect as Chepauk lost two wickets in quick succession. K Ashiq was run out off his own call when he failed to outsmart a direct throw from G Kishoor at mid off. A lot depended upon Mokit who has a century to his credit in the Dindigul leg of the tournament to do the rescue act. But that was not to be. A sudden rush of blood saw him play across the line to a quicker one from Divakar and the skier was picked by Siddharth at backward point.

DVAC raids more than 50 locations over multi-crore EB conductors procurement

Chennai. (Agency)

Officials of the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) on Wednesday conducted searches at 51 locations across Tamil Nadu in connection with alleged irregularities in the procurement of aluminium conductors by the Electricity Board during the previous DMK regime. The searches are part of an investigation into the suspected financial misconduct, rule violations, and manipulation in multiple aluminum conductor procurement tenders. The searches are also on in places linked to close associates of former DMK Minister V. Senthilbalaji, who had served as Electricity Minister between 2021 and 2023. Officials were examining documents and other records relating to the procurement process at the locations covered by the searches. The searches assume ignificance in the wake of the Tamil Nadu government's allegations of large-scale irregularities in conductor procurement during the previous DMK regime. Energy Minister R. Nirmalkumar had, on June 25, while releasing the White Paper on TNEB department, flagging irregularities to the tune of about Rs 1,028 crore in nine conductor procurement tenders floated during the previous government. The Minister had said the government was examining the alleged irregularities and that appropriate action would be taken based on the findings. The agency is expected to scrutinise tender documents, procurement records, quotations, payments and other related transactions to establish whether there were violations of rules or financial misconduct. Officials are likely to question individuals connected with the procurement process based on the evidence gathered during the raids. It may be noted that a probe by the CBI was already on in connection with the Rs 397 crore transformer procurement scam during Senthilbalaji's tenure.

Jamal Musiala reveals neurological issue after collapse in friendly for Bayern Munich

Jamal Musiala revealed he had been diagnosed with temporary, easily treatable absence seizures after collapsing during Bayern Munich's preseason friendly against Heidenheim, three days after a similar incident against RB Leipzig.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Jamal Musiala revealed he was dealing with a neurological issue after collapsing during Bayern Munich's preseason friendly against Heidenheim, saying he had been diagnosed with temporary but easily treatable absence seizures. The 23-year-old Germany international went down shortly after coming on as a second-half substitute in Tuesday's friendly, just three days after a similar incident during Bayern's game against RB Leipzig. Players from both

teams immediately formed a circle around Musiala as he received medical attention on the pitch. He was later helped from the field. Musiala subsequently took to Instagram to reassure fans and explain what had happened, saying he understood why the recent incidents had caused concern but wanted to make clear that he was doing well. "I have been diagnosed with temporary, brief absence seizures that are easily treatable and are caused by a neurological dysfunction," Musiala wrote. "These can lead to the moments that have occurred recently, such as against Leipzig and now in Heidenheim." **MUSIALA EXPLAINS HIS CONDITION** Musiala said the episodes could appear alarming but had become part of his everyday life while he receives medical treatment, adding that he remained optimistic about his recovery. "I know that these moments can look scary at first glance, but for me, they are currently part of my everyday life," he said. "I am receiving

the best possible medical treatment for this and am very optimistic." The Bayern midfielder also stressed that there was no additional health risk and said he had been

private circle had been supporting him throughout the process and that he had taken responsibility for the decision to continue playing.

2ND INCIDENT IN 3 DAYS

Musiala's latest collapse came only three days after he went down during Bayern's friendly against Leipzig. German news agency DPA reported after that incident that the midfielder had left the field on his own but appeared dazed. Bayern's statement on Tuesday's match did not provide details of the neurological issue. The club said only that Musiala had suffered a setback and was

substituted after taking a knock minutes after coming on. The latest incident therefore raised further concerns about the midfielder's condition before Musiala provided his own explanation. The 23-year-old is now hoping to focus on his recovery while continuing to play football.



working closely with neurological specialists. "The important thing is that there is no additional health risk," Musiala added. He explained that, after consulting neurological experts, he had personally decided to continue living his everyday life and pursuing his career, with the approval of the specialists treating him. Musiala said Bayern Munich and his

In Kerala's Pala municipality Maya Rahul elected as chairperson, rebel Congress joins hands

Now all eyes are on the election to the post of vice chairman, which will fall vacant once Maya resigns from the position to assume chairperson's office.

KOTTAYAM. (Agency)

Nearly a month after UDF-backed chairperson of Pala municipality in Kottayam district of Kerala, Diya Pulikkakandam was ousted through a no-confidence motion. Maya Rahul, a member of the Save Congress Forum comprising rebel Congress councillors, has been elected as the new chairperson on Wednesday with the backing of the LDF. Maya defeated UDF candidate Riya Cheeramkuzhi securing 16 votes against UDF's 10 votes. Pala district educational officer in-charge, Jollimol Isaac was the

returning officer. Maya, who was serving as the vice chairperson, was elected to the



municipality from ward 19 as an independence candidate. Her victory is set to bring a major shift in the current political equations in the municipality. After being elected, Maya stated that she would work with all sections for the development of the municipality and address the needs of the people. The election was necessitated after Diya

Pulikkakandam, a member of the Independent Collective led by Pulikkakandam family, was ousted through a no-confidence motion moved by the LDF and supported by four Congress councillors and independent member Maya. A day before the chairperson election, the Save Congress Forum and the LDF formed an alliance, named as the 'Nagara Vikasana Munnani' (municipality development Front) to run the municipal administration. The alliance has also drawn up a common minimum programme as well. Kerala

Congress (M) councillor Biju Paloopadavan is the convener of the alliance. With the new political alignment taking shape, attention will now be turned to the administrative equations in the municipality and further political moves of councillor Binu Pulikkakandam and the UDF.

SL vs IND: Yashavsi Jaiswal rage baits Dickwella into throwing away his wicket

New Delhi. (Agency)

India's Yashasvi Jaiswal rage-baited Sri Lanka wicketkeeper-batter Niroshan Dickwella into throwing away his wicket on Tuesday, August 19. The wicket took away Sri Lanka's chance of putting up a strong resistance against the visiting side, who were favourites to win the match at the start of the final day. Batting in the final innings on Day 5 of the Test match, Sri Lanka needed Niroshan Dickwella to dig deep and hold the fort for the hosts. Sri Lanka had done exceedingly well in the morning session of Day 5 to keep India at bay, with Dhananjaya de Silva and Sonal Dinusha, hitting their fifties, nullifying the Indian spin attack. However, India finally broke

through late in the morning session after Jadeja was able to trap Sri Lanka captain Dhananjaya de Silva at short fine leg. The wicket brought out the experienced



Niroshan Dickwella, who was expected to double down on the resistance of the Sri Lankan batters. However, as he walked out to the crease, young India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal constantly chirped at the batter

from behind the wickets. He got into a heated altercation with Dickwella, asking him to hit sixes through the leg side. In the very next over, India fast bowler Prasidh Krishna bowled a barrage of bouncers at Dickwella. The Sri Lanka batter tried to attack the pacer but ended up edging one of his short balls back to the keeper, ending his innings prematurely. With Dickwella falling for 10, Sri Lanka exposed their tailenders to the Indian bowling attack, putting the visiting team in a firm position to win the contest and take a 1-0 lead in the series. Earlier, India set up a huge target of 372 runs against Sri Lanka in the final innings of the match. The visitors were able to take 4 wickets in the final session of Day 4, leaving them to pick up 6 wickets on the final day of the opening Test.



in those sounds, but also something else: the feeling that, for a little while, this was their court, their moment, their World Championships.

WHEN THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CALLS

Ashith and Amrutha had arrived in Delhi almost by accident. They had been playing at the State Championships in Dharwad when they were told that withdrawals had opened up a place in the World Championships draw. They were on the reserves list and had been promoted to the main draw. The decision was almost immediate. They pulled out of the tournament in Dharwad, packed their bags and made the journey to Delhi.

What happens if India loses to Pakistan at Hockey World Cup 2026?

India's final Group D match against Pakistan isn't just about rivalry, but all about who makes it to the next round of the Hockey World Cup 2026. Harmanpreet and Co. will have their work cut out while taking on Pakistan.

New Delhi. (Agency)

To say that India have their work cut out against Pakistan at the Hockey World Cup 2026 would be an understatement. India may sit in the second spot in Group D, but their hopes of making it to phase two of the tournament will entirely rest on the result against their arch-rivals Pakistan on Wednesday, August 19.

HOCKEY WORLD CUP 2026: FULL COVERAGE

India won their first match of the campaign against Wales 3-1, albeit with some issues, especially at the back. But the cracks got left wide open when they took on England on Monday. After being pegged back early, India ensured that they took the lead heading into half-time with captain Harmanpreet Singh scoring from a penalty corner, before Dilpreet Singh got the first field goal of the tournament for his side. England fought back after the break and took the lead before the end of the third quarter before Nick Bandurak got his second goal and ensured that they qualified for the next round. Now, the pressure is all on Harmanpreet and Co. and if they can ensure that there are no more hiccups on the way and they can get to the next round. But



what if Pakistan can edge out a draw or produce an upset and get the win? Here's a look at India's qualification scenario heading into their final group game.

INDIA'S HOCKEY WORLD CUP 2026 SCENARIOS EXPLAINED

In order for India to qualify for the next round, they will need to beat Pakistan or at least get a draw. India currently have three

points from their first two games. England are top of the table, having won both of their opening matches.

Pakistan and Wales are at the bottom half with just a point each from their first two games.

WHAT IF INDIA BEATS PAKISTAN

This is the best case for the Indian team. The win takes you to six points, and you don't have to worry about what happens in the England vs Wales game.

WHAT IF INDIA DRAWS AGAINST WALES

A draw against Pakistan will mean that India will reach four points from three games. In that case, India will need Wales to either draw or lose to England.

If England beats Wales, then India will finish second in the group and qualify for the second round.

Markets fall in early trade amid rising crude oil prices

MUMBAI. (Agency)

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty declined in early trade on Wednesday as elevated crude oil prices and persistent geopolitical uncertainties dented investors' sentiment.The expiry of the temporary 60-day US-Iran ceasefire without any meaningful diplomatic breakthrough has renewed concerns over a prolonged disruption to energy supplies, driving crude oil prices higher, an expert said.The 30-share BSE Sensex was down 166.19 points to 77,070.93 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 59 points to 24,096.75. From the Sensex pack, Tata Steel, Larsen & Toubro, Bajaj Finance, Bharat Electronics, Power Grid and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the major laggards.HCL Tech, Infosys, Eternal, Sun Pharma and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the winners. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 0.67 per cent higher at USD 91.63 per barrel. "The expiry of the temporary 60-day US-Iran ceasefire without any meaningful diplomatic breakthrough has renewed concerns over a prolonged disruption to energy supplies, driving crude oil prices higher and pushing long-term US Treasury yields to multi-year highs. The combination has triggered a broad risk-off mood across global financial markets," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth-tech firm, said.In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi tanked 5.59 per cent.Japan's Nikkei 225 and Shanghai's SSE Composite index were also trading lower, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng index quoted marginally higher.

Do you have to close your PPF account if you are shifting abroad? Rules explained

New Delhi. (Agency)

As per rules Non Resident Indians (NRIs) are not eligible to open an account under the Public Provident Fund Scheme. However, if a resident, who subsequently becomes Non Resident Indian during the currency of the maturity period prescribed under Public Provident Fund Scheme, may continue to subscribe to the Fund till its maturity on a Non Repatriation Basis. Additionally, rules state that Non Resident Indians are not eligible to extend/continue PPF account after maturity. The accounts opened under such category cannot continue beyond maturity. Therefore any subscription made by the depositor is irregular and not entitled for interest. Amount deposited after maturity, shall be refunded to the account holder without interest. **PPF deposit and interest** If in any financial year, minimum deposit of Rs 500 in case of Public Provident Fund Account is not made, the said PPF account shall become discontinued. Discontinued account can be revived by the depositor before maturity of the account by deposit minimum subscription (i.e. Rs. 500) + Rs. 50 s default fee for each defaulted year. For Public Provident Fund, the interest rates are 7.1 % per annum (compounded yearly). The minimum balance for PPF IS Rs 500 while maximum Rs 1.5 lakh can be deposited in a financial year. Deposits can be made in lump-sum or in installments.

Sensex, Nifty dragged down in the red by West Asia tension: See gainers and laggards



New Delhi. (Agency)

Rising crude prices and lingering geo-political tension in the West Asia theatre pulled down the Indian benchmark indices in the red this morning. At 9:25 AM, while Sensex 30 was trading at 77,083.51, down 0.20% or 151.95 points, Nifty 50 was at 24,096.70, down 0.24% or 58.20 points. Yesterday, the markets closed in the red too. **Crude oil price** Responding to the lingering tension in West Asia, crude oil prices climbed up this morning — for the fourth consecutive day. Brent crude futures rose 26 cents, or 0.29%, to reach \$91.28, while West Texas Intermediate crude futures went up 37 cents to touch \$85.31 a barrel. Both contracts closed on Tuesday at their highest since July 24, stated Reuters.Similarly, against the targeted production of Rs 4,56,500 crore, the approved projects are now expected to generate production worth Rs 5,34,101 crore. "We are yet to reach the employment target, but we expect that to increase shortly," Krishnan added. **Rupee vs dollar** The rupee crawled up 1 paisa to reach 95.73 against the US dollar in early trade today.

Govt rolls out incentives to expand PNG connections

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said the incentive could help companies recover their investment in new connections in around three years, compared with about 10 years currently.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The government is offering incentives to city gas distributors to increase the number of households using piped natural gas (PNG), as the US-Iran conflict disrupts fuel supplies and pushes up import costs, reported Reuters.The move is aimed at encouraging more households to move from LPG cylinders to piped gas. It could also help India reduce its dependence on imported LPG and lower the cost of subsidies. **WHAT IS THE NEW INCENTIVE?** The new incentive scheme will come into effect in September. Under the scheme, city gas distribution companies will get

an additional 200 standard cubic metres of cheaper domestic gas for every household that they connect and that starts using and paying for PNG. The government expects the additional gas allocation to bring down the overall cost of sourcing gas for these companies.The scheme will also encourage distributors to make use of existing PNG connections that are currently inactive and expand their networks to reach more households. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said the incentive could help companies recover their investment in new connections in around three years, compared with about 10 years currently. It must be mentioned that India is the world's second-largest LPG importer and depends on overseas supplies for around 60% of its LPG needs.A large part of India's LPG imports comes from the Middle East. The ongoing conflict in the region has disrupted fuel shipments and increased

concerns over supply and costs.India imported around 22 million metric tonnes of LPG in 2025, spending nearly \$12 billion. Most of these imports came from the Middle East.The government is now looking to use the current supply



pressure to speed up the expansion of piped gas connections. India currently has around 17.4 million domestic PNG connections, according to the government.In comparison, the country had around 331.4 million active

household LPG customers as of July 1. The large difference highlights the huge potential for city gas companies to add more PNG customers.For households, PNG provides cooking gas directly through a pipeline, removing the need to order and replace LPG cylinders. **GAS COMPANIES OFFER INCENTIVES** City gas distributors have already started offering benefits to attract more PNG customers since the conflict began. Companies such as Indraprastha Gas, Mahanagar Gas, GAIL Gas and Bharat Petroleum have offered measures including lower installation charges for new piped gas connections.The government's new scheme is expected to give distributors another reason to expand their networks and turn unused connections into active, paying customers.

Beware: IT Department launches nationwide probe into suspicious foreign remittances

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Income Tax Department has launched a nationwide verification exercise into suspicious foreign remittances after identifying entities that allegedly sent large amounts of money overseas despite reporting little or no business activity. The department announced the exercise in a post on X, saying it had identified significant overseas remittances that did not appear to match the reported financial activity of some entities.The exercise, launched on August 18, is based on data analysis and ground-level intelligence. The department is examining the entities making these remittances, the people behind them and professionals who issued certificates linked to the transactions.

WHAT RAISED THE TAX DEPARTMENT'S CONCERNS?

The investigation began after the department found several entities that had remitted significant amounts of foreign exchange over the past three years.According to the Finance Ministry, some of these entities were either not filing income-tax returns or were reporting very small turnovers. This appeared inconsistent with the large sums they were sending abroad.The department also found that the stated reasons for some remittances, such as payments for freight, software imports and consulting services, did not appear to match the actual activities of the entities.In some cases, ground verification showed that the entities were not operating from the addresses declared by them.

LINK TO FICTITIOUS CHARITABLE TRUSTS

The investigation also followed a search operation involving a group of fictitious charitable trusts allegedly involved in providing accommodation entries against bogus donations and contributions. The search helped the department uncover what it described as a nationwide network of entities involved in sending funds overseas. Further analysis of the data raised additional questions about the professionals involved in certifying these transactions.

FOCUS ON FORM 15CB CERTIFICATES

The Income Tax Department found that many Form 15CB certificates had been issued by a relatively small group of professionals.

Man claims Rs 1,200 late fee over 46 paise, questions credit card charge



MUMBAI. (Agency)

A credit-card customer has claimed that he was charged more than Rs 1,200 in late-payment fees and related charges after falling short of his Rs 10,649.46 bill by just 46 paise.Dr Samir Kagalkar raised the issue on X, tagging HDFC Bank, and said he had paid Rs 10,649 against a total bill of Rs 10,649.46, leaving 46 paise unpaid.According to Kagalkar, the small shortfall was followed by more than Rs 1,200 in late-payment charges and other related fees. The amount he claims was charged is more than 2,600 times the unpaid amount."You sent me a credit card bill for Rs 10,649.46.

By error – I paid Rs 10,649/-00 (missing out 46 paise)," Kagalkar wrote on X."And you have slapped me with over INR 1200/- late payment charges etc for miss of 46 PAISE???" he added, asking the bank to reverse the charges. Kagalkar also shared the reference number of his interaction with the bank's customer-service team. **RBI HAS RULES ON ROUNDING OFF AND CREDIT CARD LATE FEES** The 46-paise shortfall is notable because the RBI has instructions on rounding off transactions. The central bank has said transactions should be rounded to the nearest rupee, with fractions of less than 50 paise ignored and fractions of 50 paise or more rounded up to the next rupee. Under that principle, Rs 10,649.46 would be rounded down to Rs 10,649, while Rs 10,649.50 would be rounded up to Rs 10,650.However, the rounding-off instruction by itself does not establish that a credit-card bill with a 46-paise shortfall must automatically be treated as fully paid. The way a payment is credited to an individual card account, the outstanding amount recorded by the issuer and the calculation of any charges are separate issues. The RBI has also laid down specific rules for late-payment charges on credit cards.

Shiprocket shares jump 43% after IPO: Buy, hold or book profits now?

New Delhi. (Agency)

Shiprocket shares extended their strong debut on the stock market on Wednesday, rising further after listing and taking the stock's gains to more than 40% over its IPO price. The shares listed at Rs 130 on the NSE, a 34.02% premium over the IPO price of Rs 97. On the BSE, the stock debuted at Rs 129.50, up 33.51%. The rally continued after the listing. Shiprocket shares were trading at Rs 138.56, up 7% from the previous level, taking the gain over the Rs 97 IPO price to around 42.85%, according to the latest price available.That means investors who received shares in the IPO have already seen substantial gains on their investment. So, what should they do now, buy more, hold or book profits?Shivani Nyati, Head of Wealth at Swastika Investmart, said that IPO allottees can consider booking partial profits while holding the remaining shares for the longer term.SHIPROCKET IPO INVESTORS ALREADY UP 43% Shiprocket's strong market debut came after its IPO received enormous demand from investors The Rs 1,617.48 crore issue was subscribed 102.28 times overall. The retail portion was subscribed 48.38 times, while the QIB portion, excluding the anchor portion, was subscribed 125.20 times. The NII category was subscribed 92.58 times.The IPO was priced at Rs 97 per share at the upper end of its price band.At the NSE listing price of Rs 130, investors who received one lot of 154 shares were sitting on a notional gain of Rs 5,082. With the stock subsequently rising to Rs 138.56, the gain on one lot would have increased to around Rs 6,395.That represents a gain of about 42.85% over the IPO price. **SHOULD INVESTORS BOOK PROFITS?** The sharp post-listing rally makes partial profit-booking an option for investors who received Shiprocket shares in the IPO. Nyati has recommended booking some gains while holding the remaining shares for the longer term, rather than exiting the entire position after the strong debut."Booked-gain / partial profit-booking for allottees, hold the rest for the longer-term platform story with stop-loss of 110," Nyati said.The strategy allows IPO investors to lock in a portion of their gains after the stock's sharp rise, while retaining some exposure to Shiprocket's longer-term growth potential.Shiprocket's financial performance has also been improving.Between FY24 and FY26, the company recorded a 24% revenue CAGR, according to Nyati.At the same time, its adjusted loss narrowed sharply from Rs 351 crore in FY24 to Rs 76 crore in FY26.

Make banking cool: Sitharaman wants state-run banks to crack the Gen Z code

TOKYO. (Agency)

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has urged public sector banks (PSBs) to shed their "government bank" image and become "cool" enough to appeal to Gen Z and young Indians.Addressing the concluding session of the two-day PSB Confluence 2026 on Tuesday, Sitharaman called on PSBs to focus on customers aged 16 years and above and provide simple, personalised and round-the-clock banking services. **FROM CAMPUSES TO FITNESS PERKS: BANKS TOLD TO WOO YOUTH** Sitharaman suggested that banks offer free online learning content in collaboration with reputed educational platforms and institutions. She said learning and skill development could help banks engage with youth and bring them into the formal banking system.The

Finance Minister also suggested lifestyle-linked benefits such as coupons and vouchers for fitness centres, yoga centres and credible mental wellness platforms.She proposed dedicated youth banking spaces at physical branches, including 'Yuva Kiosks' or 'Yuva Banking Mitra'. A dedicated employee at these facilities could help young customers navigate their financial journey and understand banking services. **PRIVATE BANKS ARE COOL: SITHARAMAN FLAGS PERCEPTION GAP** The Finance Minister highlighted the perception gap between public and private sector banks among young customers. She said PSBs still carry the image of being "government banks" and are often viewed as less attractive than private lenders.Recalling a recent

conversation with young people, Sitharaman said they preferred private sector banks for opening accounts



because they considered them "cool". She asked PSBs to engage with young people directly to understand what would make their services more appealing. "Somewhere, private banks seem to have that picture of being banks, but good enough as well... I need public sector

banks not to be not cool," Sitharaman said. She urged banks to speak to young people and understand what makes a banking service appear "cool". **BE COOL, BUT DON'T COMPROMISE ON PRUDENTIAL BANKING'** At the same time, Sitharaman asked PSBs to maintain the prudential standards and seriousness associated with banking. "We should keep pace with expectations of youth," she said, calling for a balance between being "cool" and maintaining responsible banking practices.She said PSBs should aim to become the first and most trusted choice for young Indians across different stages of their financial lives, including opening their first account, receiving their first salary, pursuing higher education, starting an enterprise or making their first investment.



Kiara Advani

Saif Ali Khan To Share Screen For First Time In Supernatural Thriller

Bollywood fans are in for a treat as two of their favourite stars, Saif Ali Khan and Kiara Advani, are pairing up for the first time. The duo will be sharing the screen space in an intense thriller with a supernatural element. Interestingly, this untitled project will be writer-producer Kanika Dhillon's directorial debut. Reports suggest that the film is being backed by Excel Entertainment.

As per a Pinkvilla report, the project is still being developed, with the script being written keeping Saif Ali Khan and Kiara Advani in mind. The makers are reportedly looking to take the film on floors later this year. A source close to the project informed the portal, "Saif and Kiara are coming together for Kanika's next. It is an intense thriller with a supernatural element, and the script is being developed keeping both actors in mind. Kanika, Excel Entertainment and the writing team have been working on this story for a very long time, and the makers are now looking to take it forward."

As of now, there is no additional information yet. Once the script is locked, the makers



might open up more about the film.

Kanika Dhillon has worked across several Hindi films, often writing stories with strong characters and unusual themes. Her credits include Manmarziyaan, Kedarnath, Judgementall Hai Kya, Haseen Dillruba, Rashmi Rocket, Raksha Bandhan and Dunki. She has also explored the thriller space through Haseen Dillruba and its sequel Phir Aayi Haseen Dillruba, both of which mixed relationship drama with mystery and suspense. Dhillon has also expanded into production under her banner Kathha Pictures. Do Patti, which she wrote and produced, was among her projects in that space.

Talking about Kiara Advani, she is gearing up for the release of Toxic which stars Yash in a dual role, alongside Nayanthara, Huma Qureshi, Tara Sutaria and Rukmini Vasanth. Toxic is scheduled to release worldwide on 26 August 2026.

On the other hand, Saif Ali Khan will be seen next in Haiwaan, a crime thriller film co-written and directed by Priyadarshan. Produced under KVN Productions and Thespian Films, it is a remake of Priyadarshan's own 2016 Malayalam film Oppam. It also stars Akshay Kumar, Boman Irani, Shriya Pilgaonkar and Saiyami Kher.

Niki Walia

Says Shefali Shah's Role In Dil Dhadakne Do Was First Offered To Her: 'Wapas Le Liya Gaya Mujhse'

Niki Walia has opened up about a role she came very close to playing in Zoya Akhtar's 2015 film Dil Dhadakne Do. The actress revealed that she was initially chosen for the part that eventually went to Shefali Shah. For the unversed, Shefali played Neelam, the wife of Anil Kapoor's character in the film. Niki recalled how everything seemed to be in place before the project slipped away, and Zoya informed her about the sudden casting change.

Niki Walia Says Shefali Shah Replaced Her In Dil Dhadakne Do

In a conversation with Buzzzooka Prime, Niki revealed she had already gone quite far in the casting process. She said Zoya Akhtar had specifically flown her in from the UK, and she had attended scene readings and meetings with the team.

"Woh yaha tak aakar, wapas le liya gaya mujhse. Unke apne reasons honge. But meri cruise ki dates sab fixed thi. Sab kuch ho gaya tha. Zoya Akhtar ne mujhe UK se khaas fly karke bulaya tha. (After it came this far, it was taken away from me. They must have had their own reasons. But all my cruise dates were fixed. Everything was done. Zoya Akhtar had specifically flown me in from the UK)," said Niki.

Niki Walia Recalls Zoya Akhtar's Call

"We did the scene readings, everything. They were okay with it. They even took my passport. The dates were booked too. And I was returning home after meeting them in India to prepare my family for the fact that I would be on a cruise for two to three months. So, the day before I was leaving, Zoya called me and said, 'Niki, I am really sorry, but because of an internal decision, we are not going ahead with you.' I always

have this thought that I wish I had got that role. But it's okay. What doesn't happen, doesn't happen. What is meant to be is what is meant to be," said Niki.

Niki said she was disappointed, especially because everything had seemed final by then. However, she made it clear that she did not hold the decision against Zoya or the team.

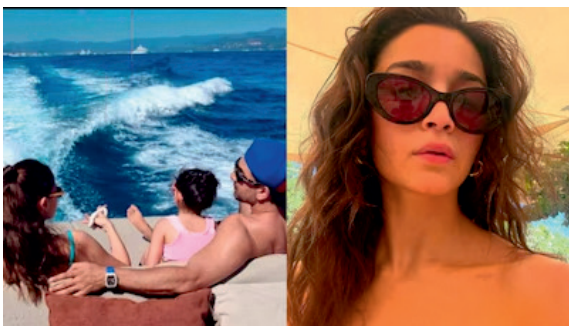


Why Was The Role Eventually Given To Shefali Shah?

Niki believes it was ultimately a creative choice, and the filmmakers may have felt that her personality came across as too strong for the character they had in mind. "I felt I was completely suited to the character, but I think they made that decision creatively because they may have felt that, between my personality and Shefali's, I perhaps came across as stronger. They may have felt that the wife needed to appear like someone who could appear vulnerable. Maybe because that is also Shefali ji's zone- she does sentimental roles and vulnerable characters.



Alia Bhatt Drops Rare Family Photo With Ranbir Kapoor And Raha From Their Holiday; See Pics



Alia Bhatt has opened her family album once again. On Monday, the actress shared a carousel of photographs on Instagram, offering glimpses from what appears to be a sun-soaked family getaway with husband Ranbir Kapoor and their daughter Raha Kapoor. Keeping the caption short, Alia wrote, "good old days, cuddles and all ☀️". The eight-photo dump moves between family time, holiday selfies and little details from the trip. While Alia appears in several frames, it is the rare photograph featuring Ranbir and Raha that is likely to grab the most attention.

Alia Bhatt Shares Family Moment With Ranbir And Raha

Alia began the carousel with a photograph of herself, Ranbir and Raha spending time together on a boat. The family of three can be seen sitting with their backs towards the camera as the boat moves through the sea.

Alia sits on one side while Raha is positioned between her parents. Ranbir, dressed casually and wearing a cap, has his arm stretched behind Alia as they look out at the water.

The photograph keeps Raha's face away from the camera and captures an unposed family moment from their holiday.

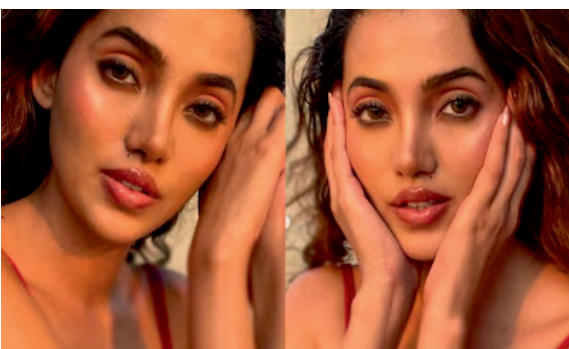
Another particularly personal picture in the carousel is a close-up of Alia cuddling Raha. The actress can be seen resting with her eyes closed, while only her daughter's little hand is visible near her face.

Alia has largely been selective about the pictures of Raha that she posts on social media, and the latest carousel follows the same approach.

Alia Bhatt Drops Holiday Selfies

The actress also included a couple of solo photographs from the getaway. In one mirror selfie, Alia is dressed in a white bikini top layered with a white lace cover-up. Her hair is tied back as she holds her phone in front of the mirror.

Ananya Raj Death: AICWA Mourns Actress' Untimely Death At 27, Calls It: 'Loss For The Film Fraternity'



The All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) has paid a tribute to actress Ananya Raj after she passed away on Sunday at the age of 27. The body took to their X, formerly Twitter, and penned a long note for the actress. They wrote, "With profound grief and a heavy heart, the All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) mourns the untimely demise of actress Ananya Raj, who passed away at the young age of just 27 on 15 July 2026. Her family has now made the news of her passing public, nearly a month after her demise. According to the family, Ananya had been battling health issues for the past year, during which she went through immense physical and mental challenges.

Despite these difficult circumstances, her family remembered her as a strong-spirited girl who lived like a Queen". They further mentioned, "Ananya Raj was a part of several Bollywood films, including 7 Hours to Go (2016), The Final Exit (2017), and Ghost (2019). Her untimely passing has sent shockwaves across Bollywood and the entire Indian film industry. The loss of a young artist is not just a loss for her family, it is a loss for the entire film fraternity. A member of our extended film-industry family has left us far too soon. Her work, her presence and her memories will always remain a part of the Indian film industry".

The actress had been dealing with physical and mental health issues for over a year and passed away peacefully in her sleep on July 15.

"The All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) expresses its deepest condolences to the bereaved family and loved ones. We pray that the departed soul finds eternal peace and that her family receives the strength and courage to bear this irreparable loss.

Ananya Raj will always be remembered. Her journey may have ended, but her memories will live on forever. All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA)", they added.



Your guide to body-polish treatments

Stress, pollution and constant pressure at work not only take a toll on your health but your skin as well. Read on to know how body polishing can pamper and energise your skin.

Body polish is a treatment for skin which is normally done by using natural abrasive products that are massaged, scrubbed and rubbed onto your skin. "A body polish is a popular body treatment that exfoliates and hydrates your skin, leaving it smooth and soft," says Dipikka Topiwala, beauty expert says. "It's like a spa where you scrub your body and remove the dead skin cells," she adds. This in turn rejuvenates your skin making it look healthy and supple. Body polish treatments stimulate blood and lymphatic circulation. They help improve your skin texture and complexion.

Consider your skin type

One of the most important aspects of body polishing is to ensure that you select the right polish depending on your skin type. Choosing the one that suits your skin will ensure that your skin is well-hydrated and will avoid buildup of rashes and acne.

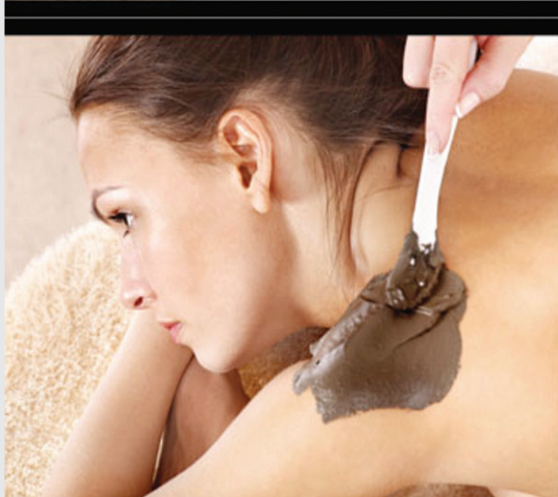
For dry skin: A brown sugar based polish is ideal for your skin. It involves a gentle moisturising scrub treatment for the body. The scrub contains moisturising and hydrating properties. Blended with fresh scents of sandalwood, rose aroma oils and

geranium — the antibacterial properties also help in revitalising your skin.

For sensitive skin: "Those with sensitive skin, should ideally opt for a gentle and soothing body polish. Shea butter blended with Chamomile or lavender aroma oils will give a calming effect on your skin, as well as your mind." You can also choose one that contains vitamins A, E and C or anti-inflammatory and natural healing properties."

For oily skin: If you have oily skin, opt for treatments with sea salts. Sea salt exfoliates your skin while killing bacteria that causes acne. It also contains vital minerals like potassium, sodium, calcium and chloride which help the skin stay healthy, young and glowing. Essential oils like lemon, tea tree, basil and eucalyptus also help due to their anti-bacterial and germicidal effects.

For normal skin: Coffee grounds, rice bran, pecan hulls and sugar work best for those with normal skin. Mix these ingredients with massage oils that contain avocado, grape seed, sesame and other aromatic essential oils. Says Mohd. A mjad, "Some key ingredients like real fruit pulp (papaya or pineapple) can be used along with rose petals to enhance your body polish." Fruits are especially



blended to moisturise and nourish your skin. The natural fruit acids cleanse and detoxify the body to give you a radiant and glowing complexion.

Benefits of body polish

Not only are body polishing sessions relaxing and rejuvenating, the experience leaves you with healthier, smoother and glowing skin. It is also an effective way to treat sun-damaged, dry and dehydrated skin, clogged pores and acne conditions. The aim of a body polish treatment is to exfoliate dead skin cells from head to toe and oxygenate your skin to encourage new cell growth.

It is also often used before a massage or other therapeutic treatments such as a body wrap.

Make your own polish at home

Says K. Veena, beauty expert, "Body polish treatments with oatmeal scrub, yoghurt milk or cream and jojoba oil works wonders for your skin. Also, it is extremely easy to make your own body polish at home using ingredients which are easily available in the market."

Brown sugar and oatmeal polish

Mix three tablespoons of brown sugar with three tablespoon of olive oil and

one teaspoon of instant oatmeal. Stir all ingredients until evenly distributed. Apply all over your body. Massage it for about five minutes in circular motion slowly. Then rinse.

Sea salt polish

Mix one cup of pure fine sea salt, ½ cup honey, 10 drops of tea tree oil and two tablespoons of aloe vera gel. Apply the mixture on your skin, leave it on for 10 minutes and then rinse.



Home remedies for supple, pretty feet

Beauty expert Shahnaz Husain gives you easy tips that you can use to maintain them

Foot lotion: Mix together three tablespoons of rose water, two tablespoons of lemon juice and one teaspoon pure glycerin. Apply on your feet and leave on for half an hour.

Cooling foot bath: Add rose water, lemon juice and a splash of eau de cologne in cold water and soak your feet in it. This method cools, cleans and removes odour.

Cooling massage oil: Take 100 ml olive oil and add two drops of eucalyptus oil, two drops rosemary oil and three drops khus, or rose oil. Mix together and keep in an airtight glass jar. Use a little of this for a foot massage. It cools and protects the skin.



Post workout skin care

Everyone follows a morning and before bed skin care routine, but do you have a after gym routine? Here are some ways you can take care of your skin post workout

Workout without make-up

Make sure you are not exercising with make-up on. Not only will you end up looking ridiculous but also it will keep your pores blocked while you are exercising. Thus, skip the make-up and arrive at the gym bare-faced. Be ready to get all sweaty from your workout and don't worry about how you look with all the perspiration on your face!

Don't use hot water

After a workout, your muscles are sore and you are already very exhausted. Even though washing your face or taking a shower with hot water might ease your muscles, but it will also strip your skin of vital oils, leaving you dry and itchy.

Re-hydrate your skin

The best time to re-hydrate your skin is when you are right out of the shower. Take a few minutes and apply a generous dollop of your moisturiser and body lotion. This will keep your skin supple and moist.

Be gentle

If you've been sweating for the past hour, you might be tempted to scrub yourself from tip to toe to feel clean, but it could only spell disaster for you! Use a gentle shampoo and cleanser which will ensure that you stay clean and your skin stays soft.



For smooth and itch-free armpits

We suggest some ways to keep your armpits smooth and free from itchy rashes

There are some parts of our body, which are sensitive to a lot of things, especially areas where hair removal is a common practise, including armpits and private areas. Certain people get rashes when they use a deodorant near their armpit because of the chemicals. Here are certain tips for sensitive armpits that can keep you comfortable and irritation free.

Razor

If you are a regular user of razors then pay a little more attention to the blades. Try and get the best ones. Disposable razors or blades work best for people who are sensitive. When you use a normal razor hair and soap gets stuck in the blade and become a breeding ground for bacteria. So it's advisable to change the blade every week.

Wax

Waxing is the best method for people who have sensitive armpits. Since you only have to wax every four to six weeks, you will not be irritating the skin in the armpit between sessions.

Deodorant

Chemicals from deodorants and antiperspirants can further irritate sensitive armpits. If you know that deos do not suit you, consult a doctor. Otherwise, using a talcum is the best option.

Fungus

Sweating leaves the armpits moist and warm, which may result in fungal growth in that area. You should dry your armpits well after showering and try not to keep them wet to avoid any infection.

