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Insult to freedom fighters: Amit Shah attacks Congress's Vande Mataram stand

Srinagar. (Agency)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has attacked the Congress over its decision to defy the protocol on singing Vande Mataram at government functions, accusing the party of pursuing "appeasement politics" and insulting those who sacrificed their lives for India's Independence. Shah said that in 1937, the Congress split Vande Mataram into two parts for what he described as Muslim appeasement, and alleged that this laid the



foundation for the Partition of India. "I want to remind the entire country that in 1937, for Muslim appeasement, Vande Mataram was split into two parts. This laid the foundation for the Partition of the country and strengthened the two-nation theory, which ultimately led to the Partition and the birth of Pakistan," Shah said. Shah said the Narendra Modi government had sought to correct what he called a historical mistake during the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram by singing the complete song and strengthening national unity.

Bengal Cabinet approves dedicated ATS, anti-narcotics force in big move

Kolkata. (Agency)

In a big move to strengthen law enforcement, the West Bengal Cabinet on Thursday approved the formation of a dedicated Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and an Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) to counter terrorist networks and the growing drug trade in the state. The ATS will function under the state police with a renewed mandate to counter terrorist and subversive activities. The government has sanctioned 461 regular and permanent posts for the squad, besides five contractual positions for experts in digital data analysis, cyber surveillance



and technical support.

Four new ANTF police stations will be set up in Durgapur, Malda, Kharagpur and Nadia, according to administrative sources. The Cabinet has approved 591 new posts at various levels in the police and administration to support the anti-narcotics force. The decisions were taken at a Cabinet meeting, where the Suvendu Adhikari-led government also sanctioned more than 1,000 posts for the two specialised units and other security and administrative bodies. Officials said the new ATS will focus on tracking the digital footprints of suspected criminals and terrorist networks, strengthening cyber surveillance and enabling faster counter-operations with the help of modern technology.

Matter of great sorrow: Mayawati backs Gen Alpha protests over school facilities in UP

Mayawati has backed schoolchildren protesting for basic facilities in government schools. She urged states to address their demands quickly and avoid using force.

Lucknow. (Agency)

BSP chief Mayawati on Thursday backed the recent protests by Gen Alpha schoolchildren over basic amenities and infrastructure in schools, saying it is a matter of "great sorrow and concern" that students are being forced to take to the streets to demand facilities needed for elementary education. In a post on X, she said Gen Alpha, especially schoolchildren and their parents, are not only concerned about getting a good education for a better future but have also been continuously struggling for it. She said the deteriorating condition of schools across the country, especially in Uttar Pradesh and other north Indian states, has made them extremely vocal. Mayawati said Gen Alpha students are taking part "in large numbers and with full enthusiasm" in the nationwide 'School Thik Karo' campaign of the Cockroach Janta Party. "It is a matter of great sorrow and concern that innocent boys and girls, whose days are meant for laughing, playing, reading and writing, are being forced to struggle on the streets even for basic facilities for their elementary school education," she said. She said

education, particularly school education, has always been a matter of special concern for the Bahujan Samaj because of BR Ambedkar's call to "educate". The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said BSP governments in the state under her leadership had given "full attention" to the



interests, welfare and education of deprived and exploited sections so that families could live with self-respect and equality, with access to livelihood and education in line with the Constitution. Accusing successive governments of neglecting the government school system, Mayawati said adequate attention had not been paid to improving it. She alleged that a

"conspiracy" was being pursued to make the entire government education system largely ineffective, just as the reservation system for these sections had been made ineffective. "Thousands of government schools are also being closed in this process, which the BSP has continuously opposed," she said.

Mayawati said the shortage of basic amenities such as school buildings, teachers, drinking water, toilets and cleanliness had now made Gen Alpha highly vocal and pushed them to protest. Uttar Pradesh has seen a series of student protests in recent weeks, with schoolchildren taking to the streets and even approaching district collectorates to press for basic amenities, infrastructure improvements and other demands in Lucknow, Kannauj, Unnao, Fatehpur, Hamirpur, Mahoba and Azamgarh, among other places. In Lucknow, students twice within a week raised concerns such as a shortage of teachers in government-run residential schools by blocking road traffic during rains. Urging governments in Uttar Pradesh and other states to respond immediately, Mayawati said the needs and demands of Gen Alpha on education should be addressed "with full sympathy and with the right intent and policy".

30 conditions for Rahul Gandhi's Pune event; organisers told to ensure security

Pune. (Agency)

Pune Police have cleared Rahul Gandhi's 'Chhatron Ki Gunj' programme on August 22, subject to 30 conditions, with organisers liable for compliance and any law-and-order fallout.

Police have granted permission for Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's 'Chhatron Ki Gunj' programme in Pune on August 22, but have laid down 30 conditions for the event. These include a ban on displaying 'objectionable' images, pictures or banners, and a direction to organisers to ensure that no religious sentiments are hurt. The programme is scheduled at the SSPMS College ground near RTO Chowk from 4.30 pm to 9.30 pm, and police expect a crowd of 8,000 to 10,000 people. The event has been planned as an all-women special for female students, with

discussions on education, safety, equality, competitive exams and career opportunities. According to the permission order, the organisers



will be responsible if any untoward incident leads to a law-and-order situation. It states, "No one's religious sentiments should be hurt

during the programme and responsibility for ensuring this will be on the organisers".

Mohan Joshi, vice-president of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee, said the police have granted permission for the programme and that the organisers will comply with all the conditions laid down by them. He said there are 30 conditions in all.

The permission requires the organisers to make adequate security arrangements, separate facilities for men and women, sufficient entry and exit gates, drinking water, toilets, fire-safety equipment and parking.

Sergio Gor in Ladakh after J&K visit: Signal to China?

New Delhi. (Agency)

Sergio Gor has become the first US ambassador to visit Jammu and Kashmir in more than six years. A sitting US ambassador travelling to the politically sensitive Union Territory is an important signal from Washington. But the second leg of his visit sends an even more significant signal. Gor, 39, is the first US envoy to visit the Union Territory of Ladakh, an area off-limits to most foreign diplomats. Ladakh is a trijunction between India, China and Pakistan. The latter occupy two significant parts of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir—Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Aksai Chin.

Gor's visit to Ladakh is unlikely to go unnoticed in Beijing. A serving US ambassador's presence carries the state-to-state weight that Beijing would read as

Washington implicitly endorsing India's control over what it sees as a contested frontier. US Ambassador Ken Juster's January 2020 visit to Srinagar, came five months after the dissolution of Article 370. Four months



later, the focus shifted eastwards, to the newly created UT of Ladakh, where an India-China Himalayan standoff saw the first loss of lives on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in 45

Sergio Gor has become the first US ambassador to visit Jammu and Kashmir in more than six years. The visit to the politically sensitive Union Territory is an important signal from Washington.

years. Donald Trump's offer to mediate the border dispute was rejected by New Delhi, which said it was engaging directly with Beijing to resolve the issue. The standoff saw the US providing India with concrete real-time intelligence assistance, winter clothing, and a more assertive US diplomatic posture than seen during the 2017 Doklam standoff.

Six years later, India and China have pulled troops back from multiple confrontation spots in Ladakh, in what can be described as a tactical thaw.

Telangana principal stabbed 27 times, one word leads cops to Class 10 killers

Telangana police alleged that two minor former students killed school principal Roopa Reddy at her home in Nalgonda for cash. Investigators tracked them through CCTV footage, her final "Babu" clue and bloodstained currency notes recovered from one of the accused.

Hyderabad. (Agency)

A term that Roopa Reddy, a school principal in Telangana's Nalgonda district, used while addressing students has led police to her killers -- two Class 10 students who are accused of stabbing her 27 times. Both have now been detained for Reddy's murder, the investigation of which has uncovered a story of resentment, a house recce, and blood-stained currency.

The murder took place on August 11 and Nalgonda SP Sharath Chandra Pawar said that initially police formed five teams and examined footage from nearly 70 CCTV cameras as they worked to identify the killers. The breakthrough came from Roopa Reddy's conversation with her aunt over the phone sometime around the time of her murder. While the police haven't said exactly at what point the phone call took place, they revealed that during the conversation, she had addressed someone as "Babu".

Investigators learnt that this was a term she commonly used while addressing students at the school. That detail prompted police to look closely at students who had been absent from school around the time of the murder.



Amit Shah meets Tamil Nadu CM Vijay ahead of crucial southern states' gathering

Union Home Minister Amit Shah met Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Joseph Vijay in Chennai ahead of Thursday's Southern Zonal Council meeting in Kovalam, which will discuss inter-State issues and regional development.

Chennai. (Agency)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday met Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Joseph Vijay in Chennai, ahead of a key meeting of Chief Ministers from southern states and representatives of Union Territories on Thursday. The meeting comes as the Centre and southern states prepare to deliberate on a range of long-pending inter-state issues, including water-

sharing disputes and regional development. Shah shared photographs of the meeting on X and said he met Vijay ahead of the council meeting. The meeting was the first between the two after Vijay assumed office as Chief Minister in May.

The meeting will be chaired by Shah, while Vijay, as the host Chief Minister, will serve as the council's vice-chairman. Chief Ministers of the participating states, along with Lieutenant Governors and Administrators of the Union Territories, are expected to attend.

The Southern Zonal Council comprises Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, along with the Union Territories of Puducherry, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. The council provides a forum for the Centre and states to resolve inter-State issues and strengthen regional cooperation.

Several contentious issues are expected to come up for discussion, including river water-sharing disputes involving Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

According to the Centre, the meeting



will also discuss the functioning of Fast Track Special Courts for the speedy investigation and disposal of cases involving crimes against women and children, including rape, as well as issues related to education.

Legal cockroaches unite: CJP joins protest seeking BCI chief's exit over NALSAR row

New Delhi. (Agency)

A protest seeking the resignation of Bar Council of India (BCI) Chairman Manan Kumar Mishra over the BCI's now-withdrawn order barring the enrolment of the 2026 graduating batch of NALSAR University of Law as advocates began on Thursday, with a group of lawyers gathering outside the council's headquarters in New Delhi. The protest was called by the All India Young Advocates Association and backed by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP). Around 10-15 lawyers gathered outside the BCI office and raised slogans against Mishra. The BCI had directed all State Bar Councils not to enrol students from NALSAR's 2026 graduating batch after a section of students opposed Chief Justice of India Surya Kant attending the university's convocation. The CJP's remarks on unemployed young Indians, including his reference to them as "cockroaches", had earlier triggered a massive student mobilisation under the banner of the CJP. CJP spokesperson Saurav Das said on X that "legal

cockroaches" would protest against Mishra, who is also a BJP Rajya Sabha MP, and demand his resignation. "It seems the Legal Cockroaches have united and will be protesting against the Chairman



of the Bar Council of India tomorrow at 10 AM and demanding his resignation. The protest has been called by the All India Young Advocates Association. I support any form of peaceful protest that seeks accountability and sets high standards for conduct in office," Das said.

News box

Scratch by ‘selfie’ tiger during Thailand visit gives 5-year-old girl sepsis

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Indian tourists’ fascination with petting tigers in Thailand almost cost a five-year-old her life. The girl developed life-threatening sepsis from a scratch the tiger left on her during a visit to a park in Pattaya that houses these ‘photo prop’ tigers, a practice that has drawn scrutiny globally for the abuse of naturally aggressive animals to turn them into docile selfie creatures that draw hordes of tourists.

The girl suffered the scratch in mid-June and was initially treated at a hospital in Thailand. After returning to India, she developed severe rashes on her thighs, face and torso within two weeks, followed by high-grade fever and worsening health. She was admitted to Max Hospital in Vaishali on July 10 with fever, vomiting, severe abdominal pain, dangerously low blood pressure, high heart rate and respiratory complications.Dr Priyanka Sinha of the hospital’s paediatrics and immunology department said she required broad-spectrum antibiotics, ventilator support for four to five days and intensive cardiovascular care. Her condition worsened further due to a bacterial respiratory infection after the fifth day.Dr Ramalingam Kalyan, principal director of paediatrics at the hospital, said her inflammatory markers gradually improved, and she was weaned from the ventilator to high-flow oxygen by the seventh day. “By the ninth day, she was able to maintain her oxygen levels on room air, and cardiovascular support was also discontinued by the eighth day,” he said.After 13 days in hospital, she was finally discharged without any neurological deficits. Doctors said the case was unusual because a seemingly small tiger paw scratch was followed by a potentially life-threatening infection. “Big cat bites and scratches transmit rare oral bacteria like Pasteurella multocida, Capnocytophaga species and Neisseria weaveri. These microbes live in the saliva of large felines and can cause rapid infections in humans.

Decomposed body found in drain, police starts probe

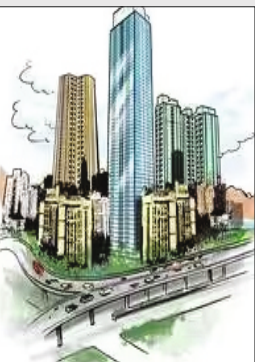
Noida.(Agency)

A decomposed body of an unidentified man was recovered from a drain in Sector 55 on Wednesday morning, with police suspectig that he may have died around a fortnight ago.Sanitation workers cleaning the drain outside the exit of a residential society spotted the body around 8am after removing an iron cover. The workers alerted the society’s security guard, who informed police through the emergency helpline 112.The man was wearing a T-shirt and lower. His body was in an advanced stage of decomposition, making it difficult for police to ascertain his age or identity. The drain is more than 10 feet deep, and officers said there was no open area around the spot where the body could have remained exposed.A security guard claimed the body was found wrapped in a polythene bag. Police, however, denied this, saying it was lodged beneath dirt and covered with debris. A large polythene sheet was found near the spot and is being examined as part of the probe.Police are also investigating whether the body could have been swept into the drain from the Khoda side. The body was sent for post-mortem to establish the cause of death and the deceased’s identity.Police stations in Noida and neighbouring districts have been alerted to check missing-person records. CCTV footage from the area is also being examined to determine how the body reached the drain.

GMC launches one-time settlement for 60k property tax defaulters

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation has launched a one-time settlement scheme for over 60,000 property tax defaulters, waiving penalty charges of 12% per annum if dues are paid in full.The scheme is valid until Dec 15, though defaulters must declare their intent to pay by Nov 14. Officials estimate around Rs 120 crore in penalties will be written off.“As per the scheme, defaulters who have not paid property tax till April 1, 2026, penalty amount which is charged at the rate of



12% annum will be written off if dues are paid in full. As per rough estimates, Rs 120 cr between 60,000 tax defaulters will be written off,” said a GMC official.Property tax, which comprises house, water and sewer taxes, is levied on all establishments within the jurisdiction of the city, which are roughly 5 lakh in number. The rates for commercial properties, however, vary with respect to residential rates, which are five times.The width of the road a property is located on determines how much property tax the owner has to pay for it. Properties located on roads wider than 24 metres or more have to pay tax at Rs 3.40 per sq foot. Properties on roads of width 12 to 24 metres have to pay tax at Rs 2.81 per sq foot while those on stretches less than 12 metres have to pay tax at a rate of Rs 2.28 per sq foot.

Separately, a state govt proposal is being worked out to slash property tax rates for small and medium enterprises and bring these on a par with residential rates. SME rates currently stand at three times the residential rate.

Gurgaon to expand air monitoring network with six new stations

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Six new air quality monitoring stations are expected to be installed across the city by Dec this year, with the latest plan revising the locations proposed earlier.

The issue of air pollution and compliance with norms prescribed by Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) was reviewed at a meeting on Tuesday. Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB) officials discussed the existing monitoring network and plans to expand it. HSPCB regional officer said the stations currently operational in the city include those at TERI Gram, Gwal Pahari, Vikas Sadan and Sector 51. Another station is operational at the HSIIDC building in Manesar.

The six new stations are proposed at Maharana Pratap Swaran Jayanti Park in

Sector 29, Basai water treatment plant, Tau Devi Lal Park in Sector 22, SGT University, KR Mangalam University and Starex University.The latest list marks a substantial revision of a five-station plan announced earlier. As reported by TOI, the stations were earlier proposed by HSPCB at Tau Devi Lal Park, Leisure Valley Park, Chandu water treatment plant and the sewage treatment plants at Jahaigarh and Dhanwapur. Only Tau Devi Lal Park has been retained in the latest plan.

The change follows several rounds of assessment and calibration. An HSPCB official said the board conducted a 5x5 grid analysis, ensured that proposed stations were at least 5km apart and held discussions with the Central Pollution Control Board before finalising the locations. “We have included rural, semi-urban, residential and industrial

locations for better assessment,” the official said.The board has also decided to shift the monitoring station at TERI Gram to Bhondsi because of its



proximity to the Gwal Pahari station.“The changes in the proposed locations are significant as the selection of monitoring sites determines how effectively the network captures pollution levels across different land-use and activity zones,” the official said.

The expansion assumes significance ahead of winter, when particulate pollution generally intensifies across NCR. Gurgaon’s existing network covers roughly 732 sq km, leaving large parts of the city, particularly newer sectors and fringe areas, without direct monitoring. A wider network can provide more location-specific data and help authorities identify pollution hotspots and assess the impact of local emission sources.The city’s monitoring network has also faced disruptions. In Oct last year, three of the four stations operating at the time — Gwal Pahari, TERI Gram and Sector 51 — went offline because of technical problems and delayed calibration, leaving Vikas Sadan as the only functional station.

had also reported concerns over dense tree cover around some stations and gaps in pollutant data.

Delayed by 5 years, consumer forum orders builder to complete & hand over flat to buyers in 30 days

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

The district consumer disputes redressal commission has directed real estate developer Solitaire Real Infra to complete construction and hand over possession of a flat to a couple within 30 days, holding the builder guilty of deficiency in service for failing to honour its 2019 buyer agreement. The order has wider significance as several NCR homebuyers continue to await possession of flats delayed or stalled for nearly a decade.In an ex parte order passed on Aug 13, commission president Anil Kumar Pundir and member Anju Sharma ruled that the developer had failed to deliver the apartment within the promised timeline and continued raising payment demands despite the project remaining incomplete.The 665 sq ft apartment was booked by Lalit Saxena and Dheeraj, residents of Ghaziabad, in Solitarian

City project within JP Green Sports City in Greater Noida. The couple booked the flat on the 20th floor of Tower Turbo-T1 in 2019 for Rs 21 lakh. According to the complaint, they initially paid Rs 8.2 lakh



and later deposited another Rs 1.3 lakh after the developer sought additional payments.The agreement, signed on March 27, 2019, promised possession by 2021 and included a clause requiring the builder to pay delay compensation of Rs

5 per sq ft if the deadline was missed. The complainants told the commission that although construction failed to progress as agreed, the developer repeatedly issued demand letters seeking outstanding payments. They subsequently paid another Rs 2.3 lakh on different dates, but alleged that work on the tower had stopped.The couple also claimed that when they sought compensation for the delay and a revised completion schedule, company representatives threatened to cancel the booking and forfeit the money already deposited.After the complaint was filed before the consumer commission on July 11 last year, notices were issued to Solitaire Real Infra, but the company neither appeared before the commission nor filed a written response. The matter was therefore heard ex parte on the basis of affidavits and documentary evidence submitted by the complainants.

H1N1 cases up in Aug, highest monthly count this year

Gurgaon.(Agency)

The city recorded seven H1N1 (swine flu) cases in Aug so far — the highest monthly tally in 2026 and more than double the count from any other month this year, according to district health department data.Twenty-one H1N1 cases have been recorded in the city between Jan and Aug. The district reported three cases each in Jan, March, June and July, two in Feb, none in April and May, and seven in Aug — the sharpest single-month spike of the year.Health officials typically link such patterns to monsoon humidity, which favours the survival and spread of influenza viruses. However, the district’s case numbers remain too small to confirm a sustained upward

trend.Doctors cautioned against reading too much into the Aug figures, saying Sept’s numbers would be key to determining whether the spike is a temporary increase or the start of a broader seasonal surge.A significant number of patients are currently presenting with flu-like symptoms — high-grade fever (in some cases up to 103°F), chills, sore throat, cough, and a runny or blocked nose, said Dr Tushar Tayal, associate director of internal medicine at CK Birla Hospital. Some patients also report gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.Dr Santosh Kumar Agrawal, director of internal medicine at Faridabad’s Yatharth Super Speciality Hospital, added that headache, body ache and marked fatigue are also common. Both doctors said H1N1

symptoms overlap considerably with other seasonal influenza strains, making the infection difficult to identify on symptoms alone.“There is no distinct symptom that reliably separates swine flu from other flu-like respiratory illnesses. Laboratory confirmation therefore remains important, particularly from a surveillance perspective,” Dr Agrawal said.Dr Tayal said a large proportion of symptomatic patients are testing positive for influenza, including H1N1.“The reassuring aspect is that, in most otherwise healthy individuals, influenza is a self-limiting viral illness that can be managed with adequate rest, hydration and symptomatic treatment,” Dr Tayal said.Patients with severe symptoms or low immunity may require antiviral medication as advised by a doctor, he added.

Fake quotes, inflated bills: How lakhs drained from rural funds for streetlights

Gurgaon.(Agency)

State Vigilance & Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) registered an FIR on Aug 10 against public officials and private vendors for allegedly siphoning off lakhs of rupees earmarked for rural development between Jan 2010 and Dec 2015, under the guise of installing street lights and high-mast lights across gram panchayats in the district.

The FIR invokes sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy), 409 (criminal breach of trust by public servant), 420 (cheating), 467, 468 and 471 (forgery and fake documents) of Indian Penal Code (IPC), along with sections 13(1)(d) and 13(2) of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. Officials have ordered recovery proceedings to reclaim the siphoned amounts directly from the surviving sarpanches, gram sachivs, and involved vendor proprietors.The scam operated through a mechanism of procedural fraud, inflated cost estimates and ghost vendors, with officials from the Panchayati Raj engineering department routinely overstepping statutory jurisdictional boundaries to issue

exorbitant estimates. Instead of adhering to standard HAREDA (Haryana Renewable Energy Development Agency) rates — which fixed light installations at Rs 3,575 per unit, including labour — officials prepared inflated estimates reaching up to Rs 5,900 and Rs 6,500 per light.

To fulfil govt procurement rules requiring competitive bidding, village heads and secretaries allegedly fabricated false quotations, with vendors submitting bids alongside dummy quotations from non-existent firms. Once the inflated bills were approved, funds were swiftly released to favoured supplier accounts via cheques, while several lights remained unbranded or were never installed.

The scam unravelled following an inquiry initiated under Haryana govt vigilance directives of 2016 and subsequent tracking by the vigilance bureau. A detailed technical assessment led by executive engineer Suresh Pal Saini of the bureau examined physical installations, accounting ledgers and tax identification numbers (TIN).

“Cross-examinations with the excise and

taxation department in Sonipat revealed that key bidding entities — such as Rainbow Electronics, Ronak Electronics, and Bharat Electronics — had ‘no record found’ in govt tax databases. When physical site visits were conducted, supplier addresses were found to be completely fake or deserted, exposing the elaborate network of forged paperwork,” said the officer.The FIR points to a coordinated nexus of public servants and private vendors. Among engineering and public officials named: Jaiveer Singh Punia, SDO (electricity), Panchayati Raj, was charged with illegally preparing inflated estimates and authenticating bills outside his designated geographical jurisdiction, while Hari Prakash, junior engineer (Gurgaon), allegedly collaborated with him to prepare unauthorised cost projections. Sarpanches and gram sachivs of Bhondsi, Dhanawas, Sampka, Fazilpur Badli and Narheda panchayats are accused of clearing overbilled invoices worth lakhs without obtaining required resolution documentation, and of passing unverified bills from non-existent firms.“The investigation

confirmed multi-point financial leakages across every audited.

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NEWS BOX

Four workers hit and killed by train in Japan

TOKYO.(Agency)

Four people died in Japan on Thursday after being hit by a train, authorities said, in a country renowned for its normally excellent rail safety record. The incident involving four workers took place at Shin-Kanuma Station north of Tokyo, the fire department said."The four were confirmed dead," a fire department official told AFP.Another official had said earlier that when emergency services arrived, three workers were still trapped under the train, while one was on the platform."Before being taken to hospital, all four of them were unconscious," he told AFP.Emergency services were first called at 10:47 am (0147 GMT).Nippon TV reported that the workers were removing weeds from around the train track. Japanese railways have one of the best safety records in the world, with fatal accidents extremely rare due to high levels of maintenance and training, and use of advanced technology.Famously there has never been a passenger fatality from a derailment or a collision on Japan's network of "shinkansen" bullettrains.

Israeli military launches criminal probes into killings of Hind Rajab and Palestinian paramedics

JERUSALEM.(Agency)

Israel’s military on Wednesday announced its first criminal investigations into troop conduct in Gaza, focusing on the killings of 5-year-old Hind Rajab and her family and of 15 Palestinian paramedics. The military said it would not probe three other attacks that killed aid workers from World Central Kitchen and Doctors Without Borders. It said it had completed reviews of 150 incidents of troop conduct in Gaza and made decisions on the five cases. Chief José Andrés, founder of US-based World Central Kitchen, condemned the decision on X as “wrong and painful.”The investigations involve killings that drew a heavy international outcry. Hind was trapped in a vehicle with her slain relatives, pleading for help by phone before she too was killed in February 2024. After the shooting of the 15 medics in March 2025, troops bulldozed their bodies into a mass grave.Israel’s campaign in Gaza has killed more than 73,000 people, including tens of thousands of women and children, according to the territory’s Health Ministry.

United Arab Emirates suspends trade with Iran after coming under renewed missile fire

United Arab Emirates.(Agency)

The United Arab Emirates suspended all trade with Iran on Wednesday after the UAE said it had come under renewed fire from the country — a move that will further isolate the Islamic Republic, which is suffering under US sanctions and a blockade.Incoming ballistic missile fire triggered nationwide warnings Tuesday night for UAE residents to seek shelter, the first time in weeks such an alarm had sounded.arly in the conflict, the UAE regularly came under intense fire from Iran, and most trade between the countries, which had once been important trading partners, ground to a halt. In late June, as hostilities eased, some maritime trade resumed, Iran’s state-run IRNA news agency reported.Beyond the trade in domestically produced goods, “the UAE has been very important for Iran as a re-export hub and has helped the country absorb some of the shocks caused by sanctions,” Mohammad Farzanegan, a professor of Middle Eastern economics at Germany’s University of Marburg, told The Associated Press.

Pakistan summons top US diplomat over envoy's remarks saying J&K part of India

world.(Agency)

Pakistan on Wednesday summoned US Chargé d’ Affaires Natalie Baker and lodged a “strong demarche” over remarks by US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor, who described Jammu and Kashmir as an “important part of India” during his visit to Srinagar.Gor, who is also US President Donald Trump’s Special Envoy to South and Central Asia, arrived in Srinagar on Wednesday on a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. He is scheduled to travel to Ladakh on Thursday.Speaking at a joint media briefing with Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Gor said the United States would review its travel advisory for Jammu and Kashmir, citing steps taken by the Centre and the Union Territory administration to improve security.”The United States puts out travel warnings and every so often, we re-evaluate those travel warnings. I cannot make any big announcements here today, but it is something we are going to look at,” Gor

said.He said ew Delhi and the Jammu and Kashmir government had taken “incredible steps” to make the region safer.“We will be looking at if the travel warning that is imposed and recommended by the United States is something that should be downgraded because, as I said earlier, this is a beautiful area. I think a lot of Americans would enjoy coming here and seeing the beauty and the opportunities that exist here,” he said.Gor also described Jammu and Kashmir as “an important part of India” and “an incredibly beautiful place”The US envoy met Abdullah at the Chief Minister’s residence soon after arriving in Srinagar. “I am thrilled to be here. We just had a very good meeting and we have some follow-ups that we hope to take back to Washington (and) back to Delhi. But a very warm, a very cordial meeting and we look forward to building this relationship forward,” Gor said.Abdullah said the discussions covered India-US relations, with a particular focus on Jammu and Kashmir.It was a very good meeting.

Zelenskyy, seeking to reconcile tensions between the Defense Ministry's young and tech-savvy innovators and Ukraine's seasoned, Soviet-trained battlefield leaders.

KYIV.(Agency)

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy fired one of his most senior officials Wednesday as corruption investigators named a deputy head of the presidential office among the suspects in a money-laundering case.The stunning developments came a day after Ukraine's recently fired defense minister demanded national elections, despite Russia's more than 4-year-old invasion.Although

Zelenskyy was not implicated in the graft investigation, it threatened to pull him into another political crisis and provide another test of his resilience.Investigators gave few details of the probe. It has identified a group of people alleged to have laundered 150 million hryvnias (\$3.4 million) to pay bail for a defendant in a major graft case last year, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau said.That case, involving the state-owned nuclear power company, brought the resignations of Ukraine's justice and energy ministers. The latest suspects include a former lawmaker, the chairperson of a state bank's board and the head of the bank's supervisory board, as well as a deputy head of the presidential office, the agency said.Zelenskyy made no public comment on the investigation but issued a decree dismissing Iryna Mudra as deputy head of the Office of the President. Investigators have not named her as a suspect.

Investigators searched Mudra's office Wednesday, said lawmaker Oleksii Honcharenko.Zelenskyy remains dogged by high-level graft investigations, although he has never been named as a



suspect even as the probes have engulfed officials close to him. Last year, his chief of staff Andriy Yermak resigned and later was named as a suspect in a major graft probe involving a luxury construction

project in the biggest threat to Zelenskyy's government since Russia's 2022 invasion. The European Union has identified deep-seated corruption as one of the major hurdles to Ukraine's desired membership in the bloc.Zelenskyy's former aide wants a wartime election Zelenskyy is already under pressure over his firing last month of Defense Minister Mykhailo Fedorov, one of the longest-standing members of his team and a close ally since helping him win the 2019 presidential election. Zelenskyy, seeking to reconcile tensions between the Defense Ministry's young and tech-savvy innovators and Ukraine's seasoned, Soviet-trained battlefield leaders, risked angering both sides by reshuffling his wartime leadership. He ousted both Fedorov, whose changes to military procurement aimed to stamp out corruption, and commander-in-chief Gen.

Safari helicopter crashes in northern Kenya, killing seven, including five Americans

NAIROBI.(Agency)

A safari helicopter crashed Wednesday morning in a remote part of northern Kenya, killing seven people, including five Americans, according to local police and the US State Department.Among those killed were an executive with Telemundo, the US-based Spanish-language network owned by NBCUniversal, and the director of Ecuador's national intelligence service.The helicopter crashed at 9:13 a.m. while flying from the Loisaba Conservancy to the Ewaso Nyiro area in Samburu County, according to the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority, which said in a statement that an investigation was underway. It said there were seven people on

board, six passengers and the pilot. Late on Wednesday, David Nkoroï, the police commander for Samburu, told reporters that all seven people on board had died.The US State Department said five of those killed were US citizens."The U.S. Embassy is in touch with local authorities and is providing consular assistance," it said. "We extend our deepest condolences to the families and loved ones on their loss."A safari helicopter crashed Wednesday morning in a remote part of northern Kenya, killing seven people, including five Americans, according to local police and the US State Department.Among those killed were an executive with Telemundo, the US-based Spanish-language network owned by NBCUniversal, and the director of

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A triple crisis: Earthquake takes a heavy toll on Colombia’s impoverished and neglected region

➡At least 312 people were killed by the Aug. 10 quake, according to figures published Wednesday by the central government, and 29,000 homes were destroyed.

BOGOTA, Colombia.(Agency)

Colombia: Ismael Arias was headed to the market when the devastating 7.4 magnitude earthquake hit western Colombia last week, sowing death and destruction. His home region of Choco was the epicenter.Leaving home early that day likely saved his life, he says — the two-story home he had spent years building with his modest wages collapsed during the quake.“The house is completely destroyed,” said the 66-year-old math teacher in Quibdo, the regional capital.At least 312 people were killed by the Aug. 10 quake, according to figures published Wednesday by the central



government, and 29,000 homes were destroyed.Recovery will be particularly challenging for Choco, which was already struggling with high poverty rates, poor infrastructure and underfunded health and education services.According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 69,000 people in Choco were affected or displaced by the earthquake — about 10% of its population.The regional government says more than 200 schools were damaged, and poor internet access will make it difficult for children to take online lessons.

With around 600,000 inhabitants, mostly Afro-Colombian or Indigenous people, Choco has long been one of the country’s most neglected regions.Largely covered by mountains and rainforests, onlytwo precarious roads connect Choco to the rest of Colombia. Many towns are only reachable by plane or boats, and the rivers can be dangerous. There are no roads linking communities along the more than 650 kilometers (406 miles) of Choco’s coastline hugging the Pacific Ocean to the interior.In large swaths of the region, rebel groups fight over the control of illegal mines and drug trafficking routes, displacing civilians or imposing lockdowns that prevent villagers from working their fields for days at a time.“We are facing a triple crisis,” said Luis Mora, the United Nations Population Fund’s representative in Colombia.

Russian strikes kill 9 in Kyiv, surrounding region

KYIV.(Agency)

Russian bombardments killed at least nine people and wounded dozens in Ukraine's capital and its surrounding region overnight, authorities said on Thursday.The foes have ramped up long-range attacks in recent months, driving up the civilian death toll on



both sides in the four-and-a-half-year war.The massive missile attack on Kyiv struck residential areas and warehouses, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko wrote on Telegram Thursday.A medical facility and an educational institution were also damaged, according to the city's military administration.Klitschko later said the death toll in the capital had risen to eight and that 33 people had been wounded.An attack in the Brovary district of the broader Kyiv region killed one man and wounded another, Kyiv regional governor Tymur Tkachenko said."One industrial facility has been damaged. All relevant services are on site, working to extinguish the fire," he added.Ukraine's air force had warned of Russian "Kalibr" missiles in the vicinity of the village of Kagarlyk within the Kyiv region, heading towards the capital.The attacks also prompted security responses in neighbouring NATO member states. Poland's military command said it had mobilised aircraft and activated air defences aimed at protecting Polish airspace, particularly in areas bordering Ukraine.Romania's defence ministry said radar systems detected aerial targets near the Ukrainian border overnight, prompting the scrambling of two Spanish fighter jets deployed on NATO missions and a Romanian air force helicopter. The ministry said a drone entered Romanian airspace near Galati beforecrashing in an unpopulated area in Tulcea county.Russia also reported a large Ukrainian drone attack.Moscow's Mayor Sergei Sobyanyin said 250 drones had flown toward the Moscow region between Wednesday night and Thursday morning, with most destroyed at a significant distance from the capital itself."Twenty-eight drones were destroyed in the Moscow region," Sobyanyin added.

Trump says will meet North Korea's Kim later this year

Trump told reporters at the White House it was important to "get along" with Kim, adding in an unusually precise assessment that Pyongyang now had 57 "very powerful" nuclear weapons.

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

US President Donald Trump said Wednesday that he would meet Kim Jong Un later this year, seeking to revive the bond he claims to have forged with the leader of nuclear-armed North Korea in his first term. Trump told reporters at the White House it was important to "get along" with Kim, adding in an unusually precise assessment that Pyongyang now had 57 "very powerful" nuclear weapons.But Trump's sudden focus on Kim and his scaling back of joint US-South Korean military drills have alarmed Asian allies -- while sparking speculation that he is seeking a foreign policy win as his Iran war stalls."Yeah, I will be," Trump said during a tour of a new helipad at the White House, when asked if he planned to meet



powerful nuclear weapons. Should have never allowed it to happen... If I were president, I wouldn't have allowed it," Trump said, referring to Kim.But he's got them. I get along with him very well. I can't let Iran have a nuclear weapon. And I know Kim Jong Un very well, and he's going to be fine." Trump gave no details, but the Wall Street Journal reported that he was eying a meeting

Kim later in 2026.Trump defended planning to meet the North Korean leader even as he wages a war with Iran that he has justified on the grounds of preventing Tehran from getting a nuclear bomb."He has 57 very when he travels to Shenzhen, China for an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in November.Hours later, South Korea's defense minister said Thursday that North Korea is estimated to have around 80 to 120 nuclear weapons."We usually estimate it to be around 80 to 120," Ahn Gyu-back told lawmakers, declining to give a specific figure.He said Seoul remained opposed to officially recognizing the North as a nuclear weapons state.Asked whether Washington had "given up" on North Korea's denuclearization, Ahn said he did not believe so. President Lee Jae Myung — who has long pushed for stronger homegrown defenses to reduce South Korea's reliance on the US -- said late Wednesday he would "do his utmost" to support and contribute to Trump's peacemaking efforts with the North. "Very insulting" While acknowledging Pyongyang possesses nuclear weapons, the US does not officially recognize North Korea as a nuclear state and it is unusual for a president to publicly offer such a specific assessment of its stockpiles.

Tukaram Mundhe effect? Idli replaces vada pav, chaas for cola in Mumbai school canteens

Mumbai.(Agency)

Vada pav and samosa are off the canteen menu at schools run by the Archdiocesan Board of Education (ABE), replaced by idli, dosa, poha, sheera and upma. Aerated drinks are banned outright. Across Mumbai, schools have been rewriting canteen menus and writing to parents about what goes into tiffin boxes.

The changes follow a warning from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to schools against the sale of junk food on their premises, part of its ongoing food safety crackdown. The state school education department followed it with a circular asking schools across Maharashtra to strictly implement the Food Safety and Standards (Safe food and balanced diets for children in school) Regulations, 2020.

The harder instruction reaches past the school gate. Schools have been asked to ensure that nobody sells High Fat, Sugar and Salt (HFSS) food within a 50-metre radius of their premises, and to write to the FDA if food business operators do not comply. In rural areas, they can approach gram panchayats and sarpanchs. Schools have no power to remove a seller themselves, and the rule places the burden of reporting on principals. According to sources, FDA Commissioner Tukaram Mundhe held an online meeting on Monday with Zilla Parishad chief executive officers and the Education Commissioner on compliance in the state’s interior. He directed that the order be implemented within a week and that awareness programmes be conducted for principals, headmasters and heads of food committees.

Maharashtra’s new healthcare Bill offers price transparency but misses key gap

Mumbai.(Agency)

From multilingual medicine prices on display to a no-deposit mandate for emergency cases to itemised bills – these are some of the key features of Maharashtra’s new healthcare Bill that seeks to replace the 77-year-old law and regulate hospitals, clinics, laboratories and diagnostic centres.

The Maharashtra Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Bill, 2026, introduced in the Assembly on July 3, seeks to make registration mandatory, set minimum standards and strengthen patient rights. However, even as the Bill seeks to make hospital prices transparent, it does not regulate them, the health rights groups have highlighted. They have also raised concerns over grievance redressal and the omission of some patient protections introduced in 2021.

What will the new healthcare Bill cover? Maharashtra’s new healthcare Bill will cover hospitals, nursing and maternity homes, clinics, laboratories and diagnostic centres, and provide services under recognised systems of medicine, including allopathy, Ayurveda, homoeopathy, Siddha and Unani.

She hired the house maid and her family to kill her daughter-in-law

Kaithal.(Agency)

The 35-year-old woman’s death in Ghatkopar has now led to four more arrests, with police saying that her mother-in-law, the key accused, paid Rs 3 lakh to her domestic help and her family members for committing the murder. The mother-in-law, 65-year-old Dhanlaxmi Ghanji arrested on Tuesday, had initially tried to pass off the death of Sapna Ghanji as a fall in the bathroom, police said. However, police said, the nature of injuries, CCTV cameras and



call records led them to the accused. On Wednesday, police arrested Mangala Jadhav, the domestic help, her husband Suresh, daughter Shivani (21) and son Sajjan (19). DCP Ganesh Shinde told The Indian Express, “After the body of Sapna was found with injury marks in the bathroom on Sunday night, we registered a murder case and arrested her mother-in-law. It was during her interrogation and technical clues that we found that she had hired four others to murder her daughter-in-law on Sunday. She later tried to pass the death off as an accidental fault Sapna had in the bathroom as she was under the influence of alcohol.”

‘Custodial’ death at Surat station | Nigerian man was arrested twice in Mumbai for drug trafficking: GRP Police officials said the man was booked in two cases of drug trafficking that were registered at the Malwani and Malad police stations in Mumbai.

Surat.(Agency)

Government Railway Police (GRP) on Wednesday initiated an inquiry into the alleged custodial death of a foreign national who died under suspicious circumstances after questioning by RPF officials at the Surat Railway Station. While the man has been identified as a Nigerian national, the officials didn’t disclose his name. He was travelling from Mumbai to Delhi on the Golden Temple Express before his detention at the Surat railway station. He was detained and questioned after an alleged brawl with co-passengers when the train was near Vapi in Valsad, they added.

Police officials said the man was booked in two cases of drug trafficking that were registered at the Malwani and Malad police stations in Mumbai. According to Surat GRP, a passenger on board the train complained to the railway helpline ‘139’ on August 17 that a Nigerian national and another co-passenger were fighting over standing near



the RPF office, where he collapsed. He was rushed to SMIMER Hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival. While the postmortem was held on August 18, its report

was still awaited till Wednesday evening, the officials said. Meanwhile, Surat GRP has registered a case of accidental death and started the probe. Western Railway Superintendent of Police Abhay Soni told The Indian Express: “After primary investigations, it is believed that the deceased was a Nigerian national. When Surat RPF caught him, he didn’t have any of his identity cards with him. He lived in Vasai (Mumbai) and was arrested twice by Malwani and Malad police in Mumbai for drug (cocaine) trafficking cases in 2018.” Stating that the purpose of his visit to Delhi was still under probe, Soni said the Nigerian boarded the Golden Temple Express from Borivali in Mumbai. “We have started an inquiry. Statements from the police officials who caught him and those present at the police station will be taken. We are also waiting for the autopsy report. The investigation of the custodial death is being carried out by Deputy Superintendent of Police DH Gaur.”

One student protest goes viral, another follows: Why UP schools are seeing more unrest

Lucknow.(Agency)

Over the past month, students across Uttar Pradesh have taken school grievances to the streets — blocking roads in Lucknow and Unnao, marching to a Collectorate in Hamirpur and locking themselves inside a hostel in Kannauj — until officials heard them out. Their demands have been basic: more teachers, better food, drinking water, functioning fans, cleaner campuses and better infrastructure.

Three of the protests — at Sarvodaya residential schools in Lucknow and Unnao — took place within days of each other, prompting the Uttar Pradesh government to order inspections of all 103 such schools, which are run by the Social Welfare department, in the state. Back-to-back protests On Wednesday, students of Jai Prakash Narayan Sarvodaya Vidyalaya in Unnao



drinking water, inappropriate behaviour by teachers and cleanliness issues. Police, Social Welfare Department and district administration officials reached the spot and tried to persuade the students to withdraw the

protest. The agitation was called off after around half an hour. Additional District Magistrate Sushil Kumar Gaur said the students were protesting over several demands. A day before Independence Day, more than 100 boys from Jai Prakash Narayan Sarvodaya Vidyalaya blocked Mohan Road in Lucknow over a shortage of teachers, poor-quality food and other facilities. Three days later, around 200 girls from another Sarvodaya Vidyalaya blocked the Lucknow-Dubbuga Bypass in pouring rain, raising similar complaints. The first protest ended after Social Welfare Department Minister Asim Arun, whose vehicle was caught in the traffic jam, reached the spot and offered to hear the students’ grievances. The second drew senior officials from the Social Welfare Department and district administration to the spot.

Prayagraj rain chaos: Worst-hit UP district under 3 feet of water, boats rescue residents

Lucknow.(Agency)

Two days of relentless rain have left Prayagraj inundated — the worst-affected district in Uttar Pradesh this monsoon — with up to three feet of water flooding residential areas, families fleeing their homes and rescue teams using boats to reach those stranded. The situation has been particularly severe in low-lying areas such as George Town, Tagore Town, Allapur and Kareli, where water was knee deep, said officials. The George Town police station was also waterlogged. Rising levels of the Ganga and Yamuna have added to concerns in riverfront neighbourhoods, although both rivers remain below the danger mark, officials said. Boats reach stranded residents



from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has also been deployed for rescue and evacuation operations. Boats are being used to reach residents trapped inside their homes and move

them to safer locations. Several families have taken shelter with relatives or neighbours after their homes were inundated. Those who have stayed back have been confined indoors as water continues to cover roads and residential lanes. Furniture, vehicles, electronic appliances and other household belongings have been damaged after being submerged in floodwater, leaving many facing significant losses.

“It has been raining almost continuously since Monday,” said Abhinav Gupta, a Prayagraj resident.

“Several areas are waterlogged, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that nearly one-third of Prayagraj is affected. Although the rain has eased a little on Wednesday, it is still continuing.”

After prison, a laptop, 40 hens, and Rs 50,000 to start again

Mumbai.(Agency)

When the 44-year-old walked out of Kolhapur Central Jail in 2022 after nearly two decades in prison, he had a BA in History, a master’s in History and Sociology and a plan to study law. He did not have a laptop.

A Maharashtra government grant meant for released prisoners gave him Rs 25,000. He borrowed another Rs 5,000 and bought a secondhand one. Today he works as a legal assistant at a private firm in Mumbai. The man, who was convicted in a murder case, did not want to be identified. From August 18, the grant that helped him take that first step is worth twice as much.

A Government Resolution issued by the Maharashtra Women and Child Development (WCD) department on August 18 has raised the grant-in-aid for released prisoners from Rs 25,000 to Rs 50,000. The scheme will also, for the first time, cover people acquitted after spending at least a year in custody, in addition to convicts and probationers under the Maharashtra Probation of Offenders Act, 1958. The increased grant applies to those released on or after August 18. The state Cabinet had cleared the proposal on July 14, and the GR states that the scheme will be reviewed every three years at the level of the Commissioner, WCD, Pune.

Four dead, 8 critical after consuming spurious liquor in Gujarat’s Bhavnagar

18 people under treatment at five hospitals, duplicate liquor of a popular IMFL brand was brought from Madhya Pradesh, say police

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

Four persons have died and 18 others were hospitalised, eight of them in critical condition, in Gujarat’s Bhavnagar district after consuming spurious liquor that had been illegally brought from Madhya Pradesh, police said.

Four bootleggers have been detained in this connection, they said, adding that the victims had consumed duplicate liquor of a popular Indian-Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) brand. Gujarat is a ‘dry’ state where manufacturing, sale and consumption of alcohol are banned. The first death was reported on Tuesday evening, another one in the night of the same day and two others died on Wednesday, police said. Bhavnagar District Collector Manish Kumar Bansal on Wednesday said the spurious liquor affected at least 22 people. While deaths of three persons – Kartik Makwana (40), Upendra Gohil (25), and Ghanshyamsinh Jadeja (50) – had been confirmed due to consumption of

spurious liquor, the postmortem and toxicology reports of the fourth victim, identified as Narendra Yadav, are awaited, Bansal said. All the deceased are from Bhavnagar district.

Of the 18 people currently admitted to five hospitals including Sir Takhtasinhji General Hospital and four private hospitals, two remained in critical condition, four are in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), two are on ventilator support and 10 others are in stable condition, the collector said. In a video statement, Bansal said the district administration received information around 6 pm on Tuesday about a group of four persons falling ill after consuming illicit liquor during a party held at Kharkadi village in Ghogha taluka of the district on August 16. The collector said that one person from Surat was currently undergoing treatment there, while the person from Jamnagar is asymptomatic. Bansal said that senior government doctors

had been deputed at the private hospitals for supervision. A nephrologist team from the Institute of Kidney Diseases and Research Centre (IKDRC), Ahmedabad, was on the



way to offer expert help, he added. While the initial death and hospitalisations came from the party held in Kharakadi village in the afternoon on Sunday, the same batch of spurious liquor was allegedly sold

to several people across at least two talukas — Ghogha and Bhavnagar.

FIR names 21 people

The Bhavnagar Police on Tuesday night detained four bootleggers suspected to be involved in the illegal transport of spurious liquor from Madhya Pradesh and then selling it in Bhavnagar. Earlier in the day, Superintendent of Police Nitesh Pandey told mediapersons that it primarily appeared that the deaths had taken place due to consumption of duplicate IMFL liquor.

“When the incident came to our attention, we formed 16 police teams and began the hunt to apprehend the accused bootleggers and to find out the extent of the distribution of the particular liquor consignment,” Pandey told reporters in Bhavnagar. He said that teams from the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) had also been involved in the investigation and samples have been sent for testing.

The burden of potential: Why India Inc must trade comfort for scale

There is a growing impatience in New Delhi, and it is no longer being masked by diplomatic policy-speak. When Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the nation from the Red Fort, his message to India Inc was less of a congratulatory pat on the back and more of a stringent performance review. He set a daunting benchmark for the next decade: 50 Indian companies in the Fortune 500, and at least one bank in the global top five.The subtext was clear. For too long, Indian businesses have been content riding the demographic dividend of a captive consumer market. The Prime Minister's exhortation was a sharp reminder that to be a true economic superpower, India must transition from being a pulsating consumer market to a global innovation hub.The ‘Hanuman Paradox’ and the Q1 Reality Check

The government’s frustration with the private sector's reluctance to scale up is not new, but it is growing louder. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has primarily played the role of a macroeconomic pro, waiting for the private sector to unleash its Keynesian "animal spirits." In a memorable exchange, she once compared India Inc to Lord Hanuman—infinitely powerful, but needing to be reminded of its own strength before taking the leap.Yet, from the government's vantage point, the leap remains hesitant. In 2019, the state delivered a historic corporate tax cut, a move universally hailed as the definitive catalyst needed to fire up private capital expenditure. The expectation was that massive tax savings would be immediately ploughed back into greenfield projects, capacity expansion, and job creation. Instead, officials argue that much of that capital was used by companies to deleverage balance sheets and boost profit margins.Primary brokerages analysis of the latest corporate scorecards reveals a telling trend: while top-line revenue growth has shown signs of moderation, bottom-line profitability and EBITDA margins remain historically robust. India Inc is sitting on massive cash reserves.According to Motilal Oswal the corporate profit-to-GDP ratio for Nifty-500 firms has surged past 5.2%, effectively doubling overall profits over the last few years. The financial scorecard is undeniably exceptional, but it reflects a philosophy of margin-protection rather than empire-building. It is precisely this financial conservatism that fuels New Delhi's argument: Corporate India has the capital; it simply lacks the appetite for risk.

Over the last few years, the gradual increase in India's total capital formation (from sub-30% levels to 33.5%) has been disproportionately driven by the government's aggressive push into public infrastructure—highways, railways, and logistics. The state's goal has been to lay the groundwork to "crowd in" private investment. And then thereare limitations to public capex.India Inc's POV: Precision over ExuberanceCorporate leaders, however, bristle at the accusation of sitting on the sidelines. Industry bodies like the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) offer a sturdy, data-backed defence of the current investment cycle.

Articulating the corporate viewpoint, CII leadership counters that the 'animal spirits' are not missing—they are simply operating with calculated precision rather than investment recklessness.With capacity utilization in several core manufacturing sectors pushing close to the critical 75% threshold (Reserve Bank of India's Order Books, Inventories and Capacity Utilisation Survey (OBICUS Study) corporate India argues that massive, targeted investments are actively unfolding across strategic sectorsBut the government would argue that the 75% threshold should ideally trigger a new cycle of private investment.

In Vijay’s politics and student protests, the concept of youth is reflected as a dream for alternatives. Let’s not narrow its potential by tagging it merely as an aspirational group with grievances

I want to begin with a small anecdote, though I admit anecdotes may seem out of place in all of this. I also admit that in August, India confronts the monumentality of events like independence. Yet, I believe history is the combination of the personal and the public. The anecdote and the event. Mine is a simple story. A few years ago, I used to spend time in cafes frequented by journalists. It was an enormous learning event. One understood journalism as a craft. One realised the difficulties of reportage. I was told that reportage is generally presented as a linear event when events are much more complex in time and space. I realised the importance of this again in the last few weeks, when I was listening to the protest movements. Protest is presented as a linear event—as a simple opposition between protest and governance—when it is much more complicated. I also realised that government language is important. The ruling regime sometimes regiments words, so that meaning becomes an act of conscription. Journalists pointed out that both the word ‘history’ and the nation state have been subject to officialisation. History is often communalised and the nation state ignores the plurality of the national movement.I remembered this discussion during the recent weeks when two other concepts came up for constant discussion—one was the word ‘youth’ and other was the future.Two events changed the landscape of discussion. The first was the victory of Vijay in Tamil Nadu politics. Vijay has to be understood semiotically. His movies convey the same message. It is the dreams of youth. Youth is not a cadre, like the DMK, but a network of friendships, a coordination of peer groups. Vijay swept the elections this time and people are still trying to understand his victory. Vijay can be best understood with the metaphor of

NEARLY eighty years ago, the people of India did something remarkable. They finally came together to throw off oppressive rule, and they did so by peaceful methods. That worked because the idea of Independence galvanised a nation. Today, perhaps it is time to look at our situation again, carefully, and with an eye to see which institutions have failed us, and which even retain a semblance of what they are supposed to do. The Election Commission of India, of course, will fall into a particular category all of its own, of jockeying to lackey. Most of the established and conventional media houses may rank just a bit better. But the institution we must pay closest attention to is the judiciary. This is not just because it is the ultimate resolver of disputes between people, corporates and other entities. It is because the judiciary is vested with the power to interpret the Constitution. The judiciary is the arbiter, enforcer and protector of the Constitution.Why does the Constitution matter? It matters because this is what brings us all together as citizens of India. It matters because it embodies the best ideas of India — those ideas which the best of us want to see as embodying India. A free society where the individual matters, and the State exists to serve the individual. A society where the people have the ultimate say. A society which is liberal, inclusive and seeks the best development and fulfilment for all. A society which is sensitive to minorities and to those with handicaps and disabilities. We are a privileged country. We are the world’s largest and best mosaic of cultures and faiths — the most amazing house of diversity. This is an India which is worth fighting for. GeographicReference

It is the Constitution which overarches above us, protects India and gives it its shape and structure, fabric and form. So it is our Constitution around which we must rally. It will provide us succour and safety. There is no better and no more powerful icon than this for modern India at the stage we are in. But only if we protect it. It is therefore a matter of particular dismay when we see judicial institutions crumbling — not under the weight of external pressure, but because of the weakness of those who inhabit them, who cannot shore up the foundations, present a workable interior and a fair outlook, who cannot make a sparkling judicial mansion of law, justice, equity and service to the people.In the early years of the 19th century, John Marshall, Chief Justice of the United States of America, fashioned the doctrine of judicial review, by which the Court assumed the power to strike down Acts of Parliament which were contrary to the Constitution.

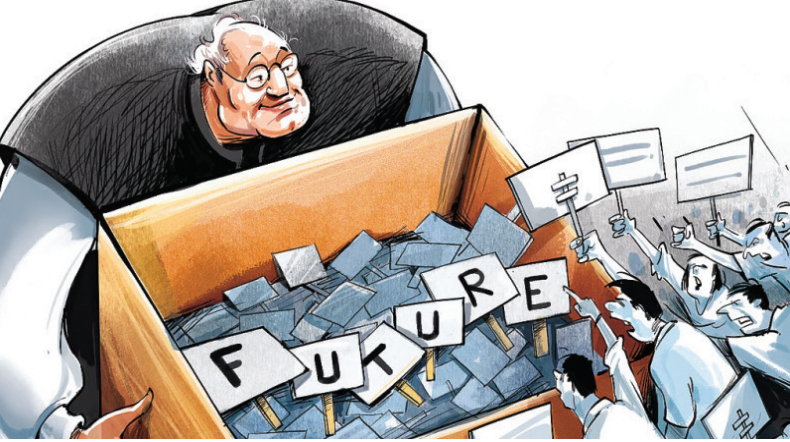
Deft diplomacy needed to mend Bangladesh ties after Hasina salvo

Making ties hostage to one issue is not in anybody’s interest. Delhi certainly does not want Dhaka to lean heavily towards Beijing

Nothing happens in politics by accident. The evolving India-Bangladesh relationship could be yet another situation proving the aphorism right. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent invite to his Bangladeshi counterpart Tarique Rahman for the upcoming BRICS summit appeared to have been dramatically dented on August 5 by Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina. The exiled leader is a thorn in the bilateral ties that went south after she fled to Delhi in 2024 following a youth uprising. Rahman, son of Hasina’s arch-enemy Khaleda Zia, wants her extradited as a tribunal has sentenced her in absentia to death for the loss of lives during the 2024 coup. On August 5, she disparaged the ruling dispensation in Dhaka in a monologue delivered on screen, reiterated her plan to return home by December and demanded that the ban on her Awami League party be lifted forthwith. India allowed the media event but distanced itself, claiming it was organised by a private entity. Delhi also said it does not endorse her comments against the duly constituted government in



Dhaka. But the damage was done. Diplomacy moved into high gear, with Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Dinesh Trivedi having a one-on-one with Rahman in Dhaka before flying to Delhi to brief Prime Minister



second point is that protest is usually narrowly read as a law-and-order problem. Lathi-charge appears to be an inevitable reaction of the regime. The regime also tries to take over the concept of youth. The ministers talk of youth as potential citizens, as progressives whose grievances must be attended to. Protest is not seen in the language of generality. It is reduced to a few social science indicators. One is reminded of W H Auden’s lines: “Thou shalt not answer questionnaires... Thou shalt not sit with statisticians nor commit a social science.” Protest is eventually reduced to

where doubt, dissent and eccentricity mix to create an alternative world of understanding.

The future cannot be appropriated. It cannot be a mere extrapolation of current tendencies. It must be an omnibus of alternative worlds and understanding.

One must ensure that the future and the concept of youth are not appropriated, not provincialised, not confined to cadres. It is strange that in August one does not use the words youth or future to dream of alternative possibilities. One has to understand that protest itself is an alternative dream for future possibilities.

presented by civil society. Such a report must include descriptions about the levels of violence, possibility of dialogue, the question of whether the protests connected to other doubts and complaints to become a general sociology of youth.Youth is a concept the regime is trying to capture. Rather than becoming a dream of the future, a sense of doubt, youth is restricted to an aspirational community with grievances. The questionnaire captures the aridity of response to the poetics of protest.

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Why a rights body member's visit to Punjab schools has triggered an I-Day row

Ludhiana. (Agency)

Teachers from Punjab's Fazilka and Ferozepur districts on Wednesday said it was not practically possible to hold Independence Day functions in all the government schools on August 15 as educationists and students often attend tehsil or district level functions while educational institutions remain closed on account of the day being a national holiday.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Tuesday issued an order directing the Punjab chief secretary to undertake a statewide verification exercise with district-wise details of schools where the Independence Day celebrations were held or not held, along with documentary evidence and explanations, and to submit an Action Taken Report (ATR) within four weeks.

The notice has been issued by a single bench of the NHRC, headed by Priyank Kanoongo, who took cognizance of a complaint by an NGO alleging "non-observance" of I-Day function in some state-run schools in Punjab, especially in rural and border areas.

In a series of posts on X, Kanoongo said he had visited some schools in Punjab's border district Fazilka on August 15 and participated in the I-Day at Government Primary School (GPS) at Dona Nanka, claiming that it was "the 'only village' where such a programme was held. 'Rest all schools we visited were lying locked,'" he claimed.

Kataria conducts ground survey as 73 mm rain leaves city waterlogged, roads damaged

Chandigarh. (Agency)

UT Administrator Gulab Chand Kataria on Wednesday conducted a ground survey of affected areas a day after heavy rain left several parts of Chandigarh waterlogged and roads damaged, and directed officials to undertake immediate repairs and clear obstructions.

Kataria, accompanied by Chief Secretary H Rajesh Prasad, Additional Chief Secretary to the Governor V P Singh, Home Secretary Mandip Singh Brar and Finance Secretary Dirpava Lakra, visited affected areas in a Chandigarh Transport Undertaking (CTU) bus, and inspected Sectors 17, 22, 43, 46, 47, Sector 26 Mandi, Jagatpura, Tribune Chowk, Shastri Nagar-Manimajra and Babu Dham, among other areas. The administrator assessed the situation on the ground and reviewed the problems faced, or likely to be faced, by residents and commuters following the heavy rainfall. Officials said the administrator's ground visit was aimed at reviewing the post-rain situation and ensuring timely action by the concerned departments.

The India Meteorological Department's Chandigarh observatory recorded 73 mm of rainfall in the past 24 hours till 8.30 am on Wednesday, with another 0.5 mm recorded between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm. The latest spell has taken the seasonal rainfall in Chandigarh to 549.7 mm since June 1, against the normal rainfall for the period, with the department recording a 12.3 per cent deficit as of 8.30 am Wednesday.

Amid Punjab leadership tussle, Channi skips key Congress meet for another MA exam

Chandigarh. (Agency)

At a time when the senior Congress leadership is busy dousing the organisational fireworks lit by Jalandhar MP Charanjit Singh Channi and his supporters in Punjab, the former Chief Minister is burning the midnight oil for an MA examination and skipped the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meet in New Delhi on Wednesday.

Channi is pursuing masters degree in Public Administration from Panjab University, Chandigarh. One of the papers for the course is scheduled for Thursday. Channi, who had once declared himself a "lifelong student", is a qualified lawyer with two two postgraduate degrees, one in business administration and another in political science, as well as a PhD in political science under his belt. While he pursues another academic qualification, his absence at the CWC meeting, attended by party president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, did not go unnoticed.

This is the second time in recent weeks that Channi has skipped an event where Gandhi was to be present. He was absent from Lok Sabha on July 29 when Gandhi made a speech attacking the government. At that time Channi had chosen instead to appear at a function organised by his supporters in Faridkot in Punjab. His absence at the CWC meet, which discussed among others, the political situation in the country, including the roadmap to step up pressure on the Government on issues of students and the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram temple, led to lots of chatter within the party.

Smooth traffic, tight security: Delhi L-G directs BRICS Summit preparations

New Delhi. (Agency)

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu has directed all stakeholder agencies to ensure smooth traffic and security management, strong civic upkeep and emergency medical readiness for the upcoming BRICS Summit 2026. The summit is scheduled to be held in September, and the directions cover key venues as well as movement corridors.

In a post on X on Thursday, Sandhu said Delhi was fully prepared to host the visiting delegates in an orderly and secure manner. He said the city was ready to offer a warm welcome to all those attending the summit.

Sandhu reviewed preparations for the summit at a meeting with senior officers. He asked all stakeholder departments and agencies to ensure smooth traffic and security management, robust civic upkeep and emergency medical readiness across key venues and movement corridors. He also stressed the need for seamless coordination



among multiple agencies and for work to be completed within set timelines, underlining the importance of Delhi being chosen as the summit venue. "Guided by our timeless

ethos of Atithi Devo Bhava, Delhi is fully geared up to extend an orderly, secure and warm welcome to all visiting delegates," he said in the post. BRICS represents 11 major market economies of the world. The group was formed in 2006 when Brazil, Russia, India and China came together to ensure greater cooperation among them. South Africa joined in 2011, after which the acronym became BRICS.

In a further expansion, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE became full members of BRICS in January 2024, and Indonesia joined in January 2025. Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Vietnam joined BRICS as partner countries in 2025. With the summit due in September, the Delhi administration has focused on traffic, security, civic arrangements, medical preparedness and coordination among agencies as the city prepares to host delegates from the expanded BRICS grouping.

N.F. Railway Launches Three-Month Vigilance Awareness Campaign

The Sikh Times

Maligaon, 20th August: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has launched a three-month campaign on vigilance awareness, being conducted from 17th of August to 18th of November, 2026, as a prelude to Vigilance Awareness Week. The campaign aims to promote integrity, transparency and ethical conduct among railway officials and employees, while creating greater awareness about the importance of maintaining vigilance in public service. As part of the campaign, Shri Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager, N. F. Railway, administered the Integrity Pledge at the N. F. Railway Headquarters complex, while Shri Ashish Bansal, General Manager of N. F. Railway (Construction), led the pledge at the office premises of GM (CON), Maligaon on 20th of August, 2026. Divisional Railway Managers across all divisions, along with officers and staff of the entire N. F. Railway family, also participated

in taking the Integrity Pledge. The motto of this pledge is to bring about integrity and trans-

"Probity for Prosperity." As part of the awareness initiative, a Walkathon/Vigilance

campaign aims to strengthen a culture of integrity, transparency, vigilance and



parency in all spheres of activities thus eradicating corruption in every aspect of life including the working environment. The theme that will lead the Vigilance Awareness Week of 2026 will be based on

Awareness March was also flagged off from the N. F. Railway Headquarters complex where railway officials, along with Scouts & Guides of N. F. Railway participated in the march. The

accountability at all levels of railway functioning, while encouraging all stakeholders to contribute towards a transparent and corruption-free working environment.

Kerala High Court pauses teacher's suspension over Savarkar quiz amid row

Kochi. (Agency)

The Kerala High Court on Wednesday paused for one month the suspension of an aided upper primary school teacher who was suspended over a quiz question on Hindutva ideologue V D Savarkar. The interim order came on a plea by teacher Guruprasad Rai K, who challenged his suspension after Savarkar was listed as the answer to the question, "Who is the freedom fighter who received the maximum punishment at the hands of the British?"

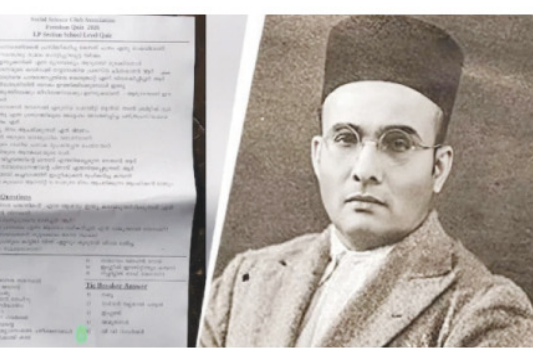
Justice Viju Abraham said the inquiry against Rai should continue, but added that his continued suspension was not necessary for its proper conduct given the nature of the allegations. The court listed the matter for September 18. In the order, the judge said: "Taking into consideration the allegation raised against the petitioner (Rai),

I am of the opinion that the enquiry initiated shall continue, but at the same time, I am of the view that the continued suspension of the petitioner is not required for the proper

suspension for a period of one month."

The court also noted that the Additional Educational Officer was aware of the wrong question because Rai had sent the question

paper to him, but no objection was raised and the paper was distributed to schools. The order recorded that no action had been taken against the AEO. Earlier, on August 13, the court had asked the government what illegal act had been committed by the teacher to warrant suspension. "The teacher may have had other intentions, but can he be suspended only for putting a wrong question? What is the illegal act done by him," it had asked. The question appeared in one of the papers prepared for the school-level Social Science Club Freedom Quiz 2026 held on August 6 for students in the Lower Primary, Upper Primary and High School sections in areas of Kasargod district.



conduct of the enquiry, taking into consideration the nature of allegations raised against him. In the light of the above discussion, I am inclined to pass an interim order staying the operation of the order of

Bengaluru. (Agency)

The Karnataka State Range Forest Officers' Association has defended the forest personnel involved in the August 15 firing in Karnataka's Chamarajanagar district in which three suspected poachers were killed, saying they opened fire only in self-defence and to protect wildlife.

The statement comes as the incident continues to draw attention, with the deaths of the Tamil-origin men triggering outrage, especially in Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay has condemned the killings and sought an investigation, while political leaders in the state have demanded a probe into the firing. The Karnataka government, however, has maintained that the men had entered the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary for illegal hunting, even as the circumstances surrounding the firing remain under scrutiny. According to the association, the firing took place inside a reserve forest in the Hanur Wildlife Range of the Cauvery Wildlife Division when forest personnel were



trying to trace and apprehend suspected wildlife poachers. It said, "Forest department officers and staff work 24x7 in shifts to protect forests and wildlife. In the said operation, they opened fire only in self-defence and in the interest of protecting forests and wildlife, and had no other intention," while adding that the deaths were regrettable. The association strongly condemned the registration of a police case against forest department officials and alleged that relatives of the deceased had continuously attacked forest personnel and forest department properties. "It has been observed that various forms of pressure are being exerted on the government to take action against forest department personnel, and that this is being continuously propagated on social media," it said, calling the development highly regrettable.

Punjab turns to bamboo as new diversification option; Centre approves Rs 2.49cr

Chandigarh. (Agency)

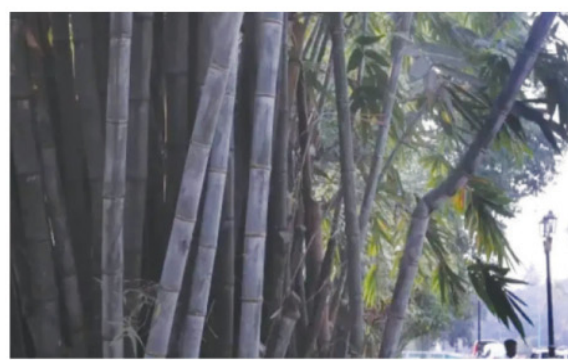
Punjab is set to take its first organised step towards bringing bamboo into its crop diversification strategy, with the Centre approving Rs 2.49 crore for the state under the National Bamboo Mission (NBM) for 2026-27. The allocation, Rs 2.49 crore, was approved under the 60:40 Centre-state funding pattern, with Rs 1.49 crore as the central share and Rs 99.94 lakh as the Punjab government's share.

The Agriculture Department of Punjab has drawn up a roadmap under which bamboo will initially be planted on more than 857 acres — the land has already been earmarked — across the state as government demonstration plantations. The exercise is intended to assess the crop's performance under Punjab's agro-climatic conditions and, importantly, to demonstrate to farmers that bamboo can be a commercially viable alternative to the traditional paddy-wheat

cycle. Three market-oriented varieties — Bambusa nutans, Bambusa tulda and Bambusa balcooa — are proposed to be taken up in the initial plantations. These varieties have applications in industries such as pulp and paper, textiles, and handicrafts.

The director of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (Punjab), Gurjit Singh Brar, said: "There is a huge scope for bamboo in Punjab. At present, around 10,000 metric tonnes of bamboo is brought into the state for industrial use, so there is already a market that we can tap by developing cultivation here. It is also a useful crop for waterlogged areas and riverbanks where other crops may not be suitable, and its plantation can help check soil erosion. A farmer who plants bamboo will start harvesting from around the third year, and a well-established plantation can potentially give Rs 7-8 lakh per acre, while harvesting can continue annually...

for decades without the need to replant every year. This year, we have taken funds for a government pilot project and will plant bamboo in scattered demonstration plots so



that farmers can see its performance themselves. Since this is the first organised effort, we will initially procure planting material from outside the state and subsequently establish our own nurseries.

From the next season, we plan to seek 50 per cent subsidy support from the Centre for farmers who want to take up bamboo cultivation." He also said the department plans to work on the crop from end to end — from providing planting material to ensuring that the produce reaches the market.

From crop to bamboo economy For Punjab, the agriculture department's interest in bamboo is not limited to replacing one crop with another. Brar said, "The larger objective is to create an entire bamboo-based economic chain — beginning with nurseries and plantations, and extending to harvesting, aggregation, processing, manufacturing and marketing. Bamboo can be used for pulp and paper, furniture, handicrafts, flooring, panels, construction material, fencing, packaging, baskets and other endless household products with huge demand.

CBI files case against BluSmart founders over Rs 672 crore government agency

The CBI has registered a case against Gensol, its EV leasing arm and BluSmart founders over alleged diversion of IREDA loans. The complaint says forged letters and fund transfers to related entities deepened a reported Rs 672 crore loss.

Delhi. (Agency)

The CBI has registered a case against Gensol Engineering, its subsidiary Gensol EV Lease, and BluSmart EV taxi service founders Anmol Singh Jaggi and Puneet Singh Jaggi over an alleged loss of more than Rs 672 crore to the Indian Renewable Development Agency (IREDA), officials said on Wednesday.

The agency acted on a complaint from IREDA, which alleged that it had extended loans to Gensol Engineering Ltd and Gensol EV Lease Ltd to procure electric vehicles for the BluSmart EV ride-hailing service. According to the FIR, the funds were allegedly misappropriated and diverted for purposes other than those for which they were sanctioned. Officials said the alleged loss was Rs 453.77 crore in the case of Gensol Engineering Ltd and Rs 218.97 crore in the case of Gensol EV Lease Ltd, excluding interest and other applicable charges. No



immediate reaction was available from the companies or the other accused persons. Based on the complaint, the CBI registered the case under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita provisions related to criminal conspiracy, cheating, forgery for the purpose of cheating, and using a forged document or electronic record as genuine. In its complaint, IREDA alleged, "It was learnt by IRI-IDA that the Borrower company had submitted forged

letters to the Credit Rating Agencies, purportedly issued by IREDA, concerning the status of the loans and the withdrawal of ratings. These letters were not issued by the officials of IREDA and were found to be forged." IREDA also told the CBI that 15 banks and financial institutions, including Power Finance Corporation Ltd, Canara Bank, IDFC Bank and ICICI Bank, had also granted loans to Gensol Engineering Ltd. The complaint further alleged that a forensic audit showed funds were transferred to related entities as loans, advances, or repayment of earlier loans or advances, which was not the intended use of the disbursements availed by the company. In sum, the case registered by the CBI centres on IREDA's allegations that loans meant for electric vehicles for BluSmart were diverted, forged letters were submitted to credit rating agencies, and the transactions caused losses of over Rs 672 crore.

Can't use all your construction rights? You can sell them under new Delhi master plan

Delhi. (Agency)

If you cannot use all the construction rights available on your plot, Delhi's new Master Plan will allow you to sell unused rights to another developer who can use them for a different plot. This is the idea behind Transferable Development Rights (TDR), a new provision in the Master Plan for Delhi (MPD)-2047, which was approved by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) last week.

The MPD is awaiting final approval and notification from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). TDR has been used extensively in Mumbai, particularly to accelerate slum rehabilitation and redevelopment. According to research by think tank Observer Research Foundation (ORF), more than 8 crore sq ft of slum TDR were used by developers to build towers and redevelop housing societies in suburban Mumbai over a period of two decades until 2021.

In Delhi, the DDA aims to use this market-based mechanism that is designed to incentivise private property owners and to encourage them to participate in heritage preservation and slum rehabilitation efforts. How is TDR expected to work in Delhi?

Under the public-private partnership (PPP) model for slum rehabilitation, developers build homes for slum residents on a part of slum land, and the remaining portion can be developed commercially and sold. The idea is that the developer will recover the cost of building homes for slum residents through the profits from this commercial, or "free sale", component. Since many slums are located on high-value land in parts of central Delhi, the model is expected to work.

Curious case of two Fortuners, one identity: How Delhi cops cracked a stolen-car trail

Delhi. (Agency)

Two white Toyota Fortuners, moving through different parts of Delhi, were caught on camera on the same day in April. There was just one problem: both appeared to be the same vehicle, carrying identical registration and chassis numbers. A probe by the Delhi Police's Anti-Auto Theft Squad (AATS) later found that both SUVs had in fact been stolen — one from Delhi's Gandhi Nagar in 2019 and the other from Preet Vihar in 2021. One had been sent to Jammu and Kashmir after its identity was allegedly altered to match that of the other. The mix-up went so far that the SUV sent to Jammu and Kashmir was later recovered by the Vasant Kunj Police when they busted a syndicate that allegedly supplied stolen vehicles to other states. It was handed over to the



owner of the 2019-stolen vehicle because its registration and chassis numbers matched his vehicle's records. The actual 2019-stolen SUV, however, was still in Delhi — being driven in Vivek Vihar by 23-year-old Aryan Mavi, who was arrested on August 9 for allegedly using a stolen vehicle despite knowing it had been stolen.

A strange match

According to police, the matter came to light after photos of the two SUVs were captured by Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras on the same day in April. This alert prompted the AATS of the West district police to investigate. A team led by Sub-Inspector Gajender and Head Constable Devender, under the supervision of Inspector Mukesh Meena and DCP Hareshwar Swami, began the probe and checked the forward and backward routes of both vehicles. ANPR cameras can also flag vehicles reported stolen in police records, helping investigators trace their movements.

100 murder cases shifted from UP court after judge's 22 death sentences in 4 months

Around 100 murder cases pending before Judge Ravi Kumar Diwakar in UP's Muzaffarnagar have been transferred to the district judge's court. The move follows Diwakar handing down 22 death sentences in 10 cases in four months in his Muzaffarnagar court.

Delhi. (Agency)

Around 100 murder cases pending before Additional District and Sessions Judge Ravi Kumar Diwakar in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar have been transferred to the court of the District and Sessions Judge through an administrative order, officials said on Wednesday. The move came after Diwakar's court handed down 22 death sentences to 22 convicts in 10 cases

over the past four months. The cases, involving offences punishable with death or life imprisonment, were transferred from the fast-track court headed by Diwakar to the court of District and Sessions Judge Virendra Kumar Singh, government counsel Kuldeep Kumar told. District Bar Association president Pramod Tyagi said there were apprehensions among lawyers and litigants over the possibility of the court awarding capital punishment. Through an administrative order issued on Tuesday, the district judge decided to recall the cases to his own court, he said. The cases that were earlier handled by Diwakar included the murders of a lawyer, a home guard and a farmer, as well as a highway robbery-murder. Diwakar's court awarded three death sentences in the murder of lawyer Sameer Saifi on April 6, followed by four in another

murder case on April 28. Two convicts were sentenced to death on June 20, one on July 2, two on July 6 and four on July 17. Five more death sentences were handed down in August, PTI reported. The pace of the rulings has



drawn attention because trial courts across Uttar Pradesh awarded 28 death sentences in 20 cases during the whole of 2025, according to the Death Penalty in India: Annual Statistics Report 2025 by the Square Circle Clinic at NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad.

No power or water for malls, hospitals without proper solid waste management: SC

Delhi. (Agency)

The Supreme Court has issued nationwide directions for the strict implementation of the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2026, expressing concern over the high volume of solid waste generated and the lack of civic sense around its management and disposal. A bench of Justices SVN Bhatti and NV Anjaria said the infrastructure for solid waste management needs to be completely audited and upgraded to meet the standards prescribed under the SWM Rules, 2026. The bench said it was regrettable that the general feeling across society was: "I am entitled to generate but not to cooperate and control the impact of solid waste management at the threshold." It noted that the volume and complexity of waste, including

biodegradable, non-biodegradable, hazardous, electronic and construction waste, had outgrown what any single class of workers could be expected to



handle. The bench was hearing appeals arising from orders of the National Green Tribunal concerning environmental compliance by municipal corporations under the SWM rules. The Bhopal Municipal Corporation had challenged

proceedings relating to its obligations in handling municipal solid waste. Looking at the enormity of the problem, the Supreme Court later expanded the scope of the matter nationwide. The court flagged the lack of compliance with the SWM Rules among individuals and institutions, including schools and colleges, students, educated and illiterate people, employed and unemployed people, professionals and businessmen. The Supreme Court also praised the Centre for establishing statutory committees for implementation and enforcement of the SWM Rules, which came into force on April 1. However, it said that merely establishing committees and enforcement agencies would not address the larger and perennial hazards arising from non-compliance.

Mehul Choksi's lawyer arrested in London, says report. Family denies

Vijay Aggarwal, lawyer for Mehul Choksi, was reportedly arrested in London over alleged immigration violations, with reports also claiming cash was found during an inspection. However, Aggarwal's family and associates have strongly denied any link to cash recovery or financial wrongdoing.

Delhi. (Agency)

Indian criminal lawyer Vijay Aggarwal, who has represented fugitive businessman Mehul Choksi, was reportedly arrested by British immigration authorities in London over immigration violations. However, people close to Aggarwal and his family have strongly disputed reports linking the matter to any cash recovery or financial wrongdoing. According to a report by WIC News, British immigration authorities have held an Indian criminal advocate for the past three days. The matter reportedly relates to a property in Mayfair, one of London's most expensive areas. The report alleged that Aggarwal was working in the United Kingdom without

the required work permit and may have violated other immigration regulations. The matter came to the authorities' attention after a complaint was made by the landlord of the Mayfair property in May. British immigration officials then reportedly began examining the lawyer's activities in the country. Three to four junior lawyers were also reportedly present at the property when the inspection took place. The report further claimed that authorities found a significant amount of cash during the inspection. However, the amount, ownership and source of the money remain unknown. No official document from the UK Home Office, Border Force, Metropolitan Police or a British court has been made public so far to confirm Aggarwal's identity or arrest.

The allegations have raised questions over whether Aggarwal had permission to undertake professional work in the UK, how long he had been operating from London and what prompted the landlord's reported complaint. Aggarwal is widely known for representing Mehul Choksi, who is

wanted by Indian authorities in connection with the multibillion-dollar Punjab National Bank fraud case. Court records show Aggarwal appearing as Choksi's counsel before the Bombay High Court. He also represented Choksi after Belgian authorities arrested the businessman in April 2025. Choksi and his nephew Nirav Modi face allegations of involvement in a fraud of approximately US\$1.8 billion. Both have denied the accusations. Separate allegations circulating in sections of the media have claimed that Aggarwal may have assisted in managing Choksi's undisclosed or "black money". However, people close to the lawyer have rejected such claims.

Legal cockroaches unite: CJP joins protest seeking BCI chief's exit over NALSAR row

Delhi. (Agency)

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) has backed a protest seeking the resignation of Bar Council of India (BCI) Chairman Manan Kumar Mishra, amid continuing criticism over the BCI's now-withdrawn order barring enrolment of 2026 graduating batch of NALSAR University of Law as advocates. The protest has been called by the All India Young Advocates Association and is scheduled for Thursday at 10 am. The BCI had directed all State Bar Councils not to enrol students from NALSAR's 2026 graduating batch after a section of students opposed Chief Justice of India Surya Kant attending the university's convocation. The CJI's remarks on unemployed young Indians, including his reference to them as "cockroaches", had earlier triggered a massive student mobilisation under the banner of the CJP. CJP spokesperson Saurav Das said on X that "legal cockroaches" would protest against Mishra, who is also a



BJP Rajya Sabha MP, and demand his resignation. "It seems the Legal Cockroaches have united and will be protesting against the Chairman of the Bar Council of India tomorrow at 10 AM and demanding his resignation. The protest has been called by the All India Young Advocates Association. I support any form of peaceful protest that seeks accountability and sets high standards for conduct in office," Das said. The protest comes days after the BCI issued, modified and eventually withdrew the directive to state units. The move triggered widespread criticism from sections of the legal fraternity and was withdrawn within hours. In its initial communication, the BCI said it was examining allegations concerning a campaign against the CJI's participation in the convocation and had sought details of those involved.



NEWS BOX

Manav Suthar reminded India what classical spin looks like



CHENNAI. (Agency)

For all the uncertainty around India's red-ball cricket lately, Manav Suthar's performance in Galle offered a timely reminder of what India can get from a classical left-arm spinner. The 24-year-old was central to India's 165-run win over Sri Lanka, finishing with match figures of 10/131.

Suthar became only the seventh Indian spinner to take 10 wickets in an away Test, joining Ravichandran Ashwin, Bishan Singh Bedi, Erapalli Prasanna, Bhagwat Chandrasekhar, Anil Kumble and Harbhajan Singh. The numbers tell one part of the story. Suthar's method tells the other. He bowled with control, used the wind to create drift, changed his pace without altering his action and kept returning to the same areas.

There was no rush to force the game. Suthar kept the pressure on, waited for batters to make mistakes and continued to bring different modes of dismissal into play. In Galle, that old-fashioned approach worked beautifully.

ACCLASSICAL SPINNER

India explored left-arm spin through Axar Patel, but he has not established himself as a Test mainstay. Suthar represents a different proposition. His round-arm action and emphasis on overspin allow him to extract dip and bounce while retaining the ability to turn the ball. Rather than relying on the arm ball, Suthar's stock delivery itself creates uncertainty. This is spin built on traditional foundations, where basics are refined rather than shortcuts chased. That was evident from the first ball at Galle. Dinesh Chandimal nicked it behind after Suth's second-innings spell illustrated his full range. Pathum Sooriyabandara was trapped lbw. Sonal Dinusha was caught at leg slip. Prabath Jayasuriya was caught behind. Lahiru Kumara edged through to Rishabh Pant. Keshara Nuwantha was bowled. ar drifted, turned and bounced it sharply.

Sinquefield Cup: Praggnanandhaa loses to Wesley So in Armageddon and ends second

ST. LOUIS. (Agency)

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa lost the finals in the Armageddon game against eventual champion American Wesley So to finish second in the Sinquefield Cup here. After drawing with Anish Giri of the Netherlands in the final Classical game, Praggnanandhaa forced a tiebreaker against Wesley So who was leading the tournament for most of the rounds. Wesley So was able to play out a draw with black pieces to win the tournament, which is a part of the Grand Chess Tour. The rules clearly stipulated that



the tied players would play two rapid games. If the tie is still unresolved, one final Armageddon with five minutes for white and four for black will be played, wherein black wins the match if he draws. As it happened both the rapid games ended in draws, leaving the score tied at 1-1. In the final Armageddon, Praggnanandhaa had the more difficult chance of winning with white which the Indian could not do and the game ended in a draw. However, the silver lining for Praggnanandhaa was that he stood first at the end of the last event and has now qualified for the grand finale later this year. For the records, Praggnanandhaa scored 35.5 in the total tour which was a full point clear of Wesley So. Finishing third was Fabiano Caruana of United States while Vincent Keymer ended fourth. In the Grand finale, the top four finishers in the tour will participate. Praggnanandhaa tried to get past Wesley So in the Classical game but Anish Giri was quite resourceful in finding some very resourceful moves when it mattered the most.

Hockey World Cup: Can Indian women create history and top Pool D?

India's women face England with a first-ever Pool D finish within reach. The match could decide whether India can win the group or exit from the competition altogether.

New Delhi. (Agency)

"Whether anyone expects us or not, we have high expectations for ourselves. Even before the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, no one imagined we would finish fourth. This time, in the World Cup, we want to go one step further and finish on the podium so that Indian women's hockey has a rich legacy, just like men's hockey." These words from Savita Punia, as quoted by PTL, will strike a chord with most Indian hockey fans who have seen the women's team evolve over the years. They have often been left in the shadow of the men's team, who have the legacy of having eight Olympic gold



medals to their name. For the women's team, a fourth-place finish at the Tokyo Olympics felt like a huge achievement.

HOCKEY WORLD CUP 2026: FULL COVERAGE

But since then, they have been searching for that one moment that sparks a revolution for them on the big stage. Coaches came and

went, and so did some of the senior players. Sjoerd Marijne came back, and this time he had a deeper pool of talent to use. One that has quality and depth. It was evident when the women's team went toe-to-toe with Olympic silver medallists China and when they brushed aside the challenge from South Africa. For the women's team now,

history beckons. Their best performance in the World Cup was a fourth-place finish in the 1974 edition, when they reached the semi-finals. The Indian team has already started to change the course of their own history with the 6-1 win against South Africa. It was their biggest margin of win in the World Cup. Now, they have another crack at destiny with a chance to win their pool. This is something they have never done before, and if they get a win against England on Thursday, August 20,

WHAT INDIA NEEDS TO DO TO FINISH TOP

For India to finish top of the group, they will need to beat England. A draw will be enough for them to make it to the next round, but if China does beat South Africa, then they will finish second. One thing India will need to avoid is suffer a loss against England. If they end up losing and China gets a draw or a win against South Africa, then India will end up failing to make it to the second round of the competition altogether and will have to compete for the 9th-16th rankings.

Five wickets each, half a ball each: Robinson, Tongue split match ball after Pak rout

Ollie Robinson and Josh Tongue

split the match ball after sharing five-wicket hauls against Pakistan at Headingley. The gesture capped England's rout of Pakistan for 171 and highlighted Robinson's strong comeback.

Leeds. (Agency)

Ollie Robinson and Josh Tongue found an unusual solution to a very old cricketing tradition at Headingley. After both England pacers took five-wicket hauls against Pakistan, they decided to split the match ball in half so each could keep a piece. The unusual souvenir came after England's bowlers dismissed Pakistan for 171 on the opening day of the first Test. Robinson finished with 5/51 and Tongue

took 5/46, becoming the first pair of England bowlers to claim five-wicket hauls in the same Test innings since Steve Harmison and Monty Panesar against Pakistan at Old Trafford in 2006. Robbo



said we can split the ball in half," Tongue told Test Match Special. "The groundstaff have kindly done that." "It's the first time I've seen that happen. I'm sure I'll be putting that up somewhere." Robinson later showed his half of the ball to reporters and explained that the idea came as the two

bowlers walked off the field after Pakistan were bowled out.

"Josh said it and I said we actually should do that, it would be quite cool," Robinson said. "You don't really have too many halves of a cricket ball, so it would be something that we never forget." England team manager Wayne Bentley then took the ball to the groundstaff, who cut it in half and returned it within five minutes.

TWO FIVE-FORS, ONE BALL

The split ball followed an excellent day for England's pace attack. Robinson struck with the first delivery of the Test to remove Azan Awaiz and soon added Shan Masood, while Tongue later worked through

Pakistan's middle and lower order. Pakistan lost their final eight wickets for 74 runs and were bowled out inside 49 overs. Robinson and Tongue became only the second England pair in 20 years to take five wickets apiece in the same Test innings.

India escape pool stages at Hockey World Cup, but old habits still remain

New Delhi. (Agency)

It's an expression has been used for centuries to describe deeply rooted habits, behaviors, and personal tendencies that are difficult to change. When it comes to the Indian men's hockey team, it seems like one that fits them for better or worse. India were able to secure a 5-3 win against Pakistan on Wednesday, August 19, to make sure that they progressed to the second round of the men's Hockey World Cup 2026. It was a performance that would surely divide opinion across the board. There was dominance from the Indian side as they put Pakistan to the sword early on to score three goals early on. There was efficiency and game awareness to see off the contest that in the end, became a little too chaotic for the liking of Harmanpreet Singh and Co. The result was an expected one as Pakistan have failed to beat India for more than 10 years now, but it was then manner in which

India performed that probably will raise a lot of questions with tougher opponents waiting for them in the next phase.

INDIA'S ATTACK STILL LACKING FIREPOWER



The first bit to look at was how India got off the blocks quickly. The high press from the forwards was a treat to watch as they constantly cut off any channel for Pakistan to play aerial balls from the back. This led to constant turnovers and India creating as many as four penalty corners in the first

quarter. By the time the hooter went off for the first time, India were 2-0 up. Once again it was Harmanpreet who opened the scoring to continue his good run of form. Abhishek showed yet again why he is ready to be the new leader of the attack, with a sensational bit of play in the D to score two goals.

But apart from these two, it seems like India didn't have a plan B or C for their attack. It almost felt like all the hopes were pinned on these two to bail them out. Mandeep Singh is playing his fourth World Cup and has been India's Mr. Dependable when it comes to playing a poacher's role. He has made 291 appearances and scored 125 goals. Yet during the ongoing tournament, he hasn't looked like he is in his best avatar. He has often meandered around in the game, being a target man isn't always going to help him. With hockey becoming more fluidic upfront, Mandeep seems to be left behind.

BWF World Championships Schedule: India's stars set for tricky games in Round of 16

Bengaluru. (Agency)

India face their toughest test yet, as several top players take to the court at the Badminton World Championships on August 20, Thursday. The hosts endured a heartbreaking outing on August 19, when two of India's best players, Lakshya Sen and Unnati Hooda, were knocked out of the tournament.

Both Lakshya and Unnati were stretched to gruelling three-game matches at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi, and ended up going down against USA's Garret Tan and Canada's Michelle Li respectively. While Lakshya and Unnati were knocked out, India had favourable results from Ayush Shetty and PV Sindhu, who marched their way into the third round of the competition. They face their toughest test yet



in the tournament, as they take on two of the top players on the badminton circuit. India have to punch much above their weight today. Every single Indian player, barring the men's doubles team of Satwik-Chirag, are playing higher-ranked opponents.

The day will start with the women's doubles event featuring Treesa/Gopichand, who will be facing Japan's World No. 7 Rin/Kie. In contrast, Treesa and Gayatri are ranked 39th in the world. Having said that, the Indian duo were sensational in their last game and produced some powerful attacking play, which will give them a lot of confidence going into the Round of 16 (pre-quarterfinals). Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto, India's only mixed doubles line-up today, face China's World No. 6 Guo/Chen in the only Court 2 event today. All other India matches are on Court 1. India have a block of matches in the second half of the event, in Court 1, where Ayush Shetty, PV Sindhu and Satwik-Chirag play back-to-back matches.

Lionel Messi scores first goal since father's death, celebrates with touching tribute

Lionel Messi returned to the scoresheet with a goal and an assist for Inter Miami against Philadelphia Union. The Argentine captain's first goal since his father's death came with a subdued celebration as Miami drew 2-2.

Chester,. (Agency)

Lionel Messi, the Argentina and Inter Miami captain, scored his first goal since the death of his father, Jorge Messi, as Inter Miami drew 2-2 with Philadelphia Union in MLS on Wednesday. The 39-year-old also provided an assist in an emotional return to the scoresheet.

Jorge Messi, Lionel's father and longtime representative, died aged 68 on August 8 in Rosario, Argentina. Messi had travelled home for the funeral and returned to action shortly afterwards, but failed to score in his first two appearances. The forward was involved from the start at Subaru Park and helped create Miami's opener in the 21st minute. His cross found Luis Suarez, whose header fell into the path of Daniel Pinter for a close-range finish.

Five minutes later, Messi produced the moment Miami had been waiting for. He cut inside onto his preferred left foot from around 12 yards and curled the ball into the far corner to put Inter Miami 2-1 ahead. The celebration was restrained. Messi briefly embraced his teammates before pointing towards the sky, a quiet gesture coming less than two weeks after his father's death.

MESSI BACK AMONG THE GOALS The goal was Messi's 13th in 17 MLS appearances this season and moved him to



second in the Golden Boot race, one behind FC Dallas striker Petar Musa. He also has nine assists in the league. Philadelphia fought back after the break, with Indiana Vassilev scoring on a volley before 18-year-old defender Neil Pierre headed in his third

goal in five matches to level the contest.

The Union thought they had gone ahead again through Milan Iloski, but the goal was ruled out after a review found Pierre offside in the build-up. For Miami, the draw ended a three-match losing streak across competitions. The defending MLS Cup champions had suffered defeats against Mexican side Leon in the Leagues Cup before a 4-1 loss to Nashville, a game in which Messi missed a penalty and hit the post twice. The result, however, extended Miami's winless run to four matches and left them seven points behind Eastern Conference leaders Nashville.

The match ended on a chaotic note, with Yannick Bright and 16-year-old Cavan Sullivan both sent off in stoppage time following an off-the-ball scuffle.

Moderna shares skyrocket 177% after cancer vaccine breakthrough

MUMBAI. (Agency)

Moderna, the US biotechnology company best known for its Covid-19 vaccine, saw its shares soar 177% in a single day after a personalised cancer vaccine it is developing with Merck succeeded in a large late-stage trial. The experimental treatment helped prevent melanoma, a serious form of skin cancer, from returning or spreading in patients whose tumours had been removed through surgery, the companies said on Wednesday. The result is a potentially important breakthrough for Moderna's mRNA technology, which shot to global prominence during the Covid pandemic. Scientists have long hoped the technology could be used beyond infectious diseases, including to create treatments tailored to an individual patient's cancer. Moderna shares closed at \$174.38, up 176.97%, marking the company's biggest-ever one-day gain. The vaccine, known as intismeran autogene, is personalised for each patient. Scientists analyse mutations found in a person's tumour and create an mRNA vaccine designed to train the immune system to recognise and attack cancer cells carrying those specific mutations. The treatment was tested alongside Merck's immunotherapy drug Keytruda in a Phase 3 trial involving more than 1,000 melanoma patients at high risk of recurrence. Unlike chemotherapy, which can also damage healthy cells, personalised cancer vaccines aim to direct the immune system towards mutations found specifically in a patient's tumour.

India tightens sugar curbs, imposes stock limits on bulk consumers

New Delhi. (Agency)

India, seeking to tame record sugar prices, has ordered that no bulk consumer using more than 10 metric tons of the sweetener a month shall hold inventories for more than 15 days, a government order showed on Wednesday. India, looking to tame record sugar prices, has ordered that no dealer using more than 10 metric tons of the sweetener per month shall hold inventories for more than 15 days, a government order showed on Wednesday. The order will come into force on September 1 and remain in force until November 30, th notification said. On Tuesday, Reuters reported that India was considering measures to bolster sugar supplies and rein in record prices, including limited duty-free imports and tighter stockholding limits for bulk traders, potentially allowing overseas shipments for the first time in nearly a decade. India's sugar demand typically rises from August to November as the country celebrates major festivals such as Ganesh Chaturthi, Dussehra and Diwali, leading to bulk consumers such as biscuit and confectionery makers building inventories ahead of the festival season. Last month, India, the world's biggest sugar consumer, ordered dealers to hold stocks for no more than 30 days, in a bid to bolster supplies. Yet, Indian sugar prices have jumped 10% over the past month to a record high and are expected to remain high for at least the next three months as supplies tighten and festival demand gathers pace.

Can Rs 3 crore fund a lifetime? Here's the math behind a viral Reddit post

New Delhi. (Agency)

A viral Reddit post has sparked a question that will sound familiar to anyone who has ever wondered how much money they need to retire: Can Rs 3 crore last a lifetime? The post laid out a seemingly simple plan. Split Rs 3 crore equally between the Nifty 50 and a fixed deposit, withdraw Rs 1 lakh every month and let the rest of the money continue earning returns. It sounds like enough. After all, Rs 3 crore is a large sum and Rs 1 lakh a month adds up to Rs 12 lakh a year. But whether the money can actually last a lifetime depends on what happens as the years pass. And there is another reason the question does not have a straightforward answer. What counts as a comfortable retirement for one person may look completely different for another. An earlier India Today Digital report on retirement plans found targets ranging from around Rs 4-5 crore to Rs 12 crore and even far higher, depending on where people live, how much they spend and the kind of life they want after they stop working. One financial professional estimated that his family's current monthly spending of around Rs 2.5 lakh could rise to Rs 4.5 lakh over 12 years and was planning for a Rs 12 crore corpus. Another said Rs 4-5 crore would be enough for his retirement. That is why the Rs 3 crore question is really about more than one number. RS 1 LAKH A MONTH MEANS A 4% WITHDRAWAL. Taking out Rs 1 lakh every month means withdrawing Rs 12 lakh in a year. From a Rs 3 crore corpus, that is an initial withdrawal rate of 4%. If the money continues to earn healthy returns and the monthly withdrawal stays fixed at Rs 1 lakh, the corpus could last a long time. Depending on how the investments perform, it could even continue growing.

Adani Enterprises makes a strong comeback, emerges as Nifty 50's top gainer

Adani Enterprises has re-emerged as one of the Nifty50's strongest performers as large investors and lenders raise exposure to the group. The rebound follows years of scrutiny and sell-offs, though refinancing, regulation and foreign ownership remain under watch.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Three years after the Hindenburg Research report triggered a dramatic sell-off in Adani Group stocks, Adani Enterprises is back among the Nifty50's strongest performers. The flagship company of Gautam Adani's conglomerate has gained around 30% so far in 2026, putting it on track to finish the

year as the index's top gainer, Bloomberg reported. The last time Adani Enterprises was in that position was at the end of 2022. Weeks later, in January 2023, the Hindenburg report triggered a sharp sell-off across Adani Group stocks. The report raised questions about the group's debt, accounting practices and the use of offshore entities. Adani Group denied the allegations, but more than \$150 billion was wiped off the combined market value of its listed companies at one point. Since then, the group has spent three years dealing with the fallout, rebuilding its investor base and raising fresh capital for its businesses.

INVESTORS RETURN Some large investors are now increasing their exposure to Adani Group companies. Capital Group, Goldman Sachs Group and SBI Funds Management are among those that have raised their holdings, according to

Bloomberg. Morgan Stanley also initiated coverage of Adani Enterprises with an overweight rating in June. Much of the interest is centred on the



group's infrastructure businesses. Adani Enterprises has been building businesses across airports, data centres and other sectors where projects typically run for decades. Around 80% of the company's FY26 EBITDA came from mature, long-term and contracted businesses, according to Adani Enterprises. The group has also been able to tap

institutional funding for expansion. AdaniConneX recently secured \$800 million in debt financing.

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

Adani Enterprises today looks different from the company investors were assessing in early 2023. Its business mix has moved further towards infrastructure projects with longer operating lives and more predictable revenue. That has given investors a clearer view of where future earnings could come from. India's push to build roads, airports, ports, power capacity and digital infrastructure has also created a favourable backdrop for the group's businesses. The return of so institutional investors does not mean the concerns that emerged after the Hindenburg report have disappeared. But it suggests that some investors are again willing to take a longer-term view of the group.

Beware: IT Department launches nationwide probe into suspicious foreign remittances

New Delhi. (Agency)

The National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) has called off the e-auction for sale of residential units on Africa Avenue near New Delhi's Chanakyapuri, reported Business Today. In a notification, the state-owned construction company said the e-auction invited under its July 17, 2026 notice was being cancelled with immediate effect due to "administrative reasons". The e-auction was cancelled, as per the notification, by exercising the right reserved by the company in the notification. The notification did not provide further details about what led to the decision or if the e-auction is to be halted indefinitely. The e-auction was meant to offer residential units

on a freehold basis at Avenue Towers, located on Africa Avenue in the Chanakyapuri area of New Delhi, which houses several



embassies and diplomatic missions. NBCC assured the participants of a proper and fair reimbursement in its statement as it said the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) paid by applicants, along with the Auction Processing Fee paid through the RailTel

Corporation of India portal, will be refunded in full. The original application document The refunds will be credited to the bank accounts provided by applicants within three working days of the August 19 notice, the company said. The move is notable on part of NBCC because the original auction document had clearly stated that the Auction Processing Fee would be non-refundable. However, the company said it had decided to return the fee "ex gratia and in good faith, without admission of any liability." In order to ensure transparency, the company also clarified that refunding the processing fee in this case should not be treated as a precedent for any future tender, auction or other process conducted by NBCC.

Sensex jumps over 550 points at open, Nifty above 24,200 as IT stocks lead

MUMBAI. (Agency)

Domestic stock markets opened higher on Thursday, with the Sensex jumping over 550 points and the Nifty reclaiming the 24,200 level as gains in IT and financial stocks lifted sentiment. The BSE Sensex rose 554.88



points, or 0.72%, to 77,464.56 at around 9:36 am. The Nifty 50 gained 127.30 points, or 0.53%, to 24,205.60, after touching an early high of 24,225.45. IT stocks were among the early gainers. Infosys rose over 2%, while

TCS gained more than 1%. HCLTech and Tech Mahindra were also trading higher. Financial stocks added to the gains, with HDFC Bank up 0.77%, Bajaj Finance rising 1.3%, Kotak Mahindra Bank gaining 1.32% and Shriram Finance advancing over 2%. Eternal was the top gainer among the Sensex stocks, jumping 2.36%, while Wipro also gained nearly 1.5%. On the other hand, metal stocks came under pressure, with Hindalco falling 1.6%. ONGC slipped over 1.5%, while Coal India and Max Healthcare were also among the early losers. Reliance Industries was marginally lower, while Sun Pharma, NTPC and Power Grid also traded in the red. Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments Limited, said the market appeared set for a short-term reversal after a steady decline over the past 12 trading sessions. The market is in oversold territory and a mild rally triggered by short-covering is likely," he said, adding that the decline in US bond yields could create a positive environment for equity markets globally. Vijayakumar said a significant trend was that while large-cap stocks were languishing, mid- and small-cap stocks were doing well, supported by revenue and earnings growth.

Gold nears Rs 1.60 lakh, silver crosses Rs 2.4 lakh: What should investors do now?

TOKYO. (Agency)

Gold and silver prices moved higher on Thursday as easing US Treasury yields and a recovery in global equity markets improved investor sentiment. However, the unresolved US-Iran situation and firm crude oil prices continue to keep risks elevated. At the time of writing, MCX gold was trading at Rs 158,284 per 10 gm, up 0.18%, while MCX silver was at Rs 240,060 per kg, higher by 1.33%. **GOLD REMAINS CLOSE TO RECORD LEVELS** Gold continues to attract buying interest after its recent sharp rally. Lower US Treasury yields generally support gold because the metal becomes more attractive compared with interest-bearing assets. Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, said gold has extended its breakout after crossing the MCX Gold opened at Rs 158,008 and is trading near Rs 158,499, up by +0.32%, extending its

breakout to fresh highs after clearing the Rs 158,000 zone in the previous session," he said. According to Ponmudi, a sustained move above Rs 158,600 could take gold towards the next resistance levels of Rs 160,000-160,500. If the rally continues, the price could move towards Rs 162,000. However, investors should also watch the downside. Immediate support for gold is seen at Rs 156,500-156,000, followed by Rs 154,000-153,300. The Relative Strength Index (RSI) is at 71.33, indicating that gold is in overbought territory. This does not necessarily mean that prices will fall, but it suggests that a short pause or a mild correction would be healthy after the recent rally, Ponmudi said. e Rs 158,000 level. **SILVER ALSO HOLDS ABOVE Rs 2.4 LAKH** Silver has also gained momentum and is now trading above the important Rs 240,000 per kg mark. Ponmudi said MCX

silver opened at Rs 238,500 and was trading near Rs 240,108, up 1.40%, after steadily climbing over the past two weeks. The next important resistance is



around Rs 241,000. A sustained break above this level could push silver towards Rs 245,000-246,000 and eventually Rs 250,000. On the downside, Rs 235,000-234,000 is the immediate support zone, while the next support is around Rs 230,000-229,000. RSI at 60.52, rising,

reflects steady bullish momentum. Bias stays constructive above Rs 240,000, with a hold needed to extend gains toward Rs 245,000; a slip below Rs 240,000 risks a pullback toward Rs 235,000," Ponmudi said. **US-IRAN TENSIONS REMAIN A KEY RISK** While softer US Treasury yields and stronger global equities have improved overall risk sentiment, geopolitical uncertainty has not gone away. The US-Iran situation remains unresolved, keeping investors cautious. Crude oil remains the biggest domestic risk factor because a sustained rise in oil prices can increase India's import bill and add pressure on inflation. For gold, geopolitical tensions can provide additional support as investors often turn to the precious metal during periods of uncertainty. However, a sharp rise in oil prices could create broader pressure across financial markets.

Dhurandhar Fame

Ayesha Khan

Engaged? Actress Flaunts Diamond Ring In Dreamy Pics With Mystery Man



Ayesha Khan has us all playing detective! The Dhurandhar fame actress, who caught everyone’s attention with her appearance in the hit song Shararat of the Ranveer Singh-starrer, has now dropped a series of dreamy pictures featuring a mystery man. The post also features a rather eye-catching diamond ring. Naturally, fans are wondering: is Ayesha secretly engaged? Before you get too excited, there might be a little twist to the story. Keeping her mystery man’s face hidden, Ayesha left fans guessing with the dreamy pictures. While the diamond ring certainly sparked engagement rumours, her caption suggests there could be more to the post than meets the eye. It appears to be part of a jewellery brand photoshoot, though Ayesha has not officially confirmed anything. Adding to the intrigue, the Bigg Boss 17 fame simply captioned the post, “A dream.” Ayesha Khan gained immense popularity after featuring in Dhurandhar’s chartbuster song Shararat, also featuring Krystle D’Souza. In an interview with Pinkvilla at the time, Ayesha had opened up about the physically and emotionally taxing shoot. “It was two days of shoot. It was so hectic, I was on my period during the shoot, and you know you’re not looking your best because you’re bloated and you’re not at your best. Kaash, I was at my best. It was so much of work for two days... We were running short on time. We were so tired, our bones were aching after dancing so much. I was feeling so overwhelmed, and it was also because I was on my period, so maybe my emotions were hitting me too much. So, I just couldn’t control and I just cried. It was Khushi ke aansu (tears of joy).” Set against the backdrop of a grand Karachi wedding in Dhurandhar, Shararat sees Ayesha Khan and Krystle D’Souza take centre stage as wedding dancers, bringing plenty of energy and glamour to the screen. Composed by Shashwat Sachdev and crooned by Madhubanti Bagchi and Jasmine Sandlas, the track has been choreographed by Vijay Ganguly.



Kiara Advani

Says Yash’s Toxic Taught Her To Be ‘Comfortable With The Unfamiliar’, Calls It A ‘New Adventure’

Yash, Kiara Advani, Huma Qureshi, Nayanthara and Tara Sutaria’s Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups is among the most anticipated films of 2026. Directed by Geetu Mohandas, the film has already generated considerable buzz with its recently released trailer. Packed with high-octane action, striking visuals, and an intense, dark world, the trailer has sparked discussion online, particularly around Yash’s mysterious character and the film’s larger-than-life setting. Ahead of the big release, Kiara shared a special post and revealed what made her say yes to Toxic. A while ago, Kiara Advani took to Instagram and shared a behind-the-scenes picture from the set as her character, Nadia. The picture shows her dressed in a T-shirt and tights, seemingly during a rehearsal. She can be seen carefully balancing on the edge of a large, bowl-shaped structure. Along with it, she penned a heartfelt note about how the particular scene in the film ‘taught her to be comfortable with the unfamiliar.’ Her note read, “Films have a beautiful way of making us step into worlds we’ve never known, sometimes quite literally. Every new character, every new set, every crazy challenge teaches you something you didn’t know you were capable of. This one taught me to be comfortable with the unfamiliar, to stay

curious, to keep learning and to find joy in the adventure of it all.” She further wrote, “Because growth, for me, has always been about saying yes to the things that scare you a little... and loving the journey that follows. Here’s to new skills, new adventures, and the kind of passion that keeps you willing to dive in again and again!” Have a look: Soon after she shared the post, her fans were seen showering her with love. One fan wrote, “@kiaraaliaadvani Ki I am soooo proud of youuuu. I am sure the world will LOVE NADIA.” Another fan wrote, “Such an inspiration you are!” One of the comments also read, “You are unstoppable and we are soo proud of you always my kii.” Meanwhile, the much-awaited film Toxic is set to hit theatres on August 26.



Kangana Ranaut Backs Isha Koppikar For Calling Herself ‘Andhbhakt’, Says ‘I Love My Country’



Kangana Ranaut has come out in defense of Isha Koppika after the latter recently dropped a video statement and called herself an ‘andhbhakt’. Kangana re-shared Isha’s video on her Instagram stories and recalled an incident from her childhood when she protested against a teacher who used to hit children with stick. “Wow well explained for me as- in high school protested against a teacher who used to hit children in head with stick during assembly, protested against 26/11 violence. Protested against Nirbhaya brutality. Never blamed parents for any limitation that may have come my way. Instead uplifted whole family to the same standard of life that I earned for myself,” Kangana wrote. “Identifies being a bhakt of almost anyone who I meet, I love my country I love my people. I simply love my life,” the actress added. **What Did Isha Koppikar Say In Her Video?** On Tuesday, Isha took to her Instagram handle and dropped a video in which she expressed her love for India and questioned trolls. She urged everyone to be ‘proud’ of their country and stated that she will continue to love India ‘proudly, passionately, and unapologetically.’ “Yes, I am an andhbhakt. If it is bhakti (devotion) to love your country and want to see it progress, then yes, I am proud to be a bhakti andhbhakt. But my blind devotion is not towards any political party; it’s towards my country. Nation first. I can question the government and disagree with its policies. And still love my country wholeheartedly,” Isha said. “This country is my home, where I have earned and continue to earn a livelihood and where I continue to get opportunities. So, I am not ashamed to be proud of my country. Wherever you may live, learn to love that place, respect that place, and contribute to it. Be proud of the home you choose. Because patriotism is not just saying, I love my country. It is doing something that improves your country,” the actress continued.

Isha Koppikar Calls Herself ‘Proud Andhbhakt’, Says ‘Bharat Is Changing’



Isha Koppikar has called herself a ‘proud andhbhakt’. On Tuesday, the actress took to her Instagram handle and dropped a video in which she expressed her love for India and questioned trolls. She urged everyone to be ‘proud’ of their country and stated that she will continue to love India ‘proudly, passionately, and unapologetically.’ “Yes, I am an andhbhakt. If it is bhakti (devotion) to love your country and want to see it progress, then yes, I am proud to be a bhakti andhbhakt. But my blind devotion is not towards any political party; it’s towards my country. Nation first. I can question the government and disagree with its policies. And still love my country wholeheartedly,” Isha said. “This country is my home, where I have earned and continue to earn a livelihood and where I continue to get opportunities. So, I am not ashamed to be proud of my country. Wherever you may live, learn to love that place, respect that place, and contribute to it. Be proud of the home you choose. Because patriotism is not just saying, I love my country. It is doing something that improves your country,” the actress continued. “Instead of asking what the country has given us all the time, why not start thinking about what we can contribute to the country? Because Bharat is changing. It’s time to change our thoughts to help in making a new Bharat. So, call me a bhakt, call me an andhbhakt, call me a nationalist. I am Indian, I love my India, I believe in my India. Not blindly, but proudly, passionately, and unapologetically,” she added. This comes days after Isha Koppikar was trolled for her remarks on Bollywood’s silence on students protest. “Many fans asked me why I haven’t spoken about the NEET issue. I felt it was important to tell them this. No matter how deeply I may feel about something, it isn’t necessary to speak on every issue. Sometimes, silence is also a responsibility. As public figures, we know that every word we say can be interpreted, misinterpreted, and judged in countless ways. People often ask why celebrities don’t speak up. But when our words have unintended consequences, we are the ones who bear those repercussions alone. Very few people stand by us then,” she had said.

We agree that parenting a child is a huge task - surviving nine months of pregnancy, then the pain of labor, and later chasing your child through the crawling, feeding, toilet training stages - it's a lengthy experience indeed. But all this pain and agony disappears and a coat of excitement grips you when you first hear your baby calling you 'Mamma-Dada' or when your baby takes his very first step.



Men feel worse when part10 things all brand

Though parenting a newborn requires a large amount of effort and energy, the positive aspect of the reward you receive by watching your baby grow and develop is priceless. Today, we help each and every new parent by presenting a few tips ranging from child potty training to baby care, so that parenting becomes an (ever so slightly) easier task for you. Dr. Shilpa - Nutritionist, Diet Consultant and Founder of Nutrilife Health Management, shares some amazing facts and tips to make parenting more interesting and easy...

Potty can even take hours
Don't get into high hopes when you take your child to eliminate the waste. Some kids may surprise you by doing this mechanism in minutes. Don't expect your child to do the same; your child can even take hours to eliminate his waste. Let him take his own time, and keep cool - says Dr. Shilpa.

Elastic waists are your baby's friends
Make your child's dressing and undressing process simple and effortless. Many kids are uncomfortable with buttons and zippers, because it can be a time consuming affair and can make your baby frustrated when he wants to visit the bathroom. Hence, invest in elastic waist pants or shorts, until your child is comfortable with the buttons and



swaps.

Don't go overboard with technology
You may be geeky when it comes to new technologies, but it can scare your child quite a bit. When you take your child to the bathroom, and there is an automated flusher installed, the loud noise may petrify your child. The fear can grip so deeply that he may never use the bathroom alone - adds Dr. Shilpa.

More time with your child and less work
If you want to get the required attention from your child then you too must dedicate time for your child. Focus on the things that make your baby happy. When you are with your baby, avoid multitasking as this can spoil your relationship with your baby.

You might have to change a whole lot of bed sheets...
Some kids take much longer to master the technique of staying dry overnight. In case your child wakes up wet, then don't yell at him, it is completely normal. The reason for him to wake up wet could be

that he is in deep sleep. Just keep an extra set of bed sheet to let him sleep peacefully.

You will make new friends
You might have an endless list of good pals, but those friends may just end up being a peripheral group now. You don't choose your friends now, your child chooses friends for you. Nowadays, you will end up hanging with moms and dads of those children that your child met at the playground or playmates from school.

Your living room will be messy
Slowly when your baby grows up, you will jump with joy to see your baby rolling, crawling and then finally walking. But that peace of moment

can turn into a nightmare when your baby becomes mobile.

You will see your living room turn into a huge mess, when your child will suddenly turn into a mischievous monster. Suddenly you will see your closet empty and all the clothes on the floor, and whatever is within his reach will find its way to the floor and odd corners of the room.

Keep calm, and don't forget to keep in hazardous objects beyond your baby's reach.

Your child may throw more tantrums than a teenage girl...

Every parent shares stories of their kid's monster tantrums with friends. Dr. Shilpa says, 'Indeed it is a toddler's

job to throw tantrums, but as a parent it is your job to set boundaries for your child with firm loving and caring disciplines."

Your maternity leave will be tougher than the toughest work days

You may plan your maternity leave by doing all last minute tasks at work and then feel like your vacation has just started on the last day before maternity leave begins. But you're in for a surprise. Your maternity leave is an incredible time to bond with your baby but it can be a little gruesome as well.

You might just end up without showering up till 4 pm, completely entrenched in your baby's daily

cycles of breastfeeding, changing nappies, diapers etc. But before you resume work you won't feel like going anywhere without your baby, because of the incompleteness without him.

When you are with your baby, everything turns out to be sweet

There can be incredible sweet moments with your baby, even if you've just yelled at him. These moments are very special for each and every parent, who wishes to keep those memories alive forever. After a serious fight with your baby, your baby can make your day just by coming close to you, kissing your nose and gently whispering to you, 'I Love You'.

Pets bust stress and make You humane

'To err is human, to forgive is canine', most pet-lovers would heartily vouch for this maxim. Pets, be it dogs, cats, birds, rabbits or fish (and others) have something special to offer to us humans, rather unconditionally, say pet experts. That animals feel our pain, our joy, and our stress should come as no surprise for anyone who has a pet.

Radhika Nair, pet expert and co-founder of Animal Angels Foundation, affirms that the emotional benefits from animals are difficult to measure. "This means that pets help humans without expecting anything in return," she says. Citing a recent case of a woman who had lost her spouse in her mid-forties, Radhika reveals that a pet at home prevented her from slipping



into acute depression. By walking the dog, feeding and bathing her pet, she felt a sense of reassurance. "Animals allow humans to focus, even for a short period of time, on something other than themselves. This distraction tends to help the pet owners in relaxation," cued

Not just adults, children can benefit immensely from a pet too. Dr Jyotika Chibber, who conducts healing sessions for patients, often with the help of a pet says, "Pets give children a companion that needs and seeks attention at times, but gives back loads of love. Children also feel a sense of security with a dog or pet at home. When parents are out at work, children tend to play and spend time with pets. This keeps them engaged and active. A child also learns to fall into a routine because the pet can teach them that effortlessly." Studies have shown that pet therapy can help children who suffer from attention deficit disorder (ADD) enabling them to focus on a pet, which in turn helps them learn to concentrate. Radhika says that therapy pets (animals trained to extend therapeutic touch) can turn out to be an antidote to depression and help patients at healthcare centres. Pets also provide social



interaction. In a healthcare facility, people come out of their rooms to socialise with the animals and end up knowing each other better.

Renowned veterinarian, Dr Schoen, and an author of a book on animal healing was quoted in a report which said that love for pets can literally save lives and their love for humans can be a transforming experience. According to DR Schoen, 'in order to bond with animals, we need to step outside ourselves and learn to communicate on their terms.'

Agreeing with Dr Schoen's words, Suryaveer Bhullar, a pet lover says,

"Everyone has the need to 'touch'. Many humans are uncomfortable hugging or touching people who are close to them. With a pet, this habit is easy to break making it easier to express emotions. The nonverbal connection is invaluable in the healing process."

Pancham Hariharan, a college student and a keen pet lover finds her pet dog extremely instinctive. She says, "Every time a stranger is moving towards me in a crowded area, my dog barks out a sort of a warning. This is enough to make the person move away. I feel safe with my pet around." Dr Jyotika agrees. "Pets can definitely foresee troubles being

sensitive to energies and accordingly warn us of the dangers. There have been cases reported where pets have sacrificed their lives to save their owners. However, when it comes to pet care, it is better to take veterinary precautions."

Actress Kashmera Shah who has a pet Pomeranian at home says, "Pets are a source of expectation, hope and communication. Looking forward to a social call or getting home after time away gives that spark of anticipation to me. I come alive with my pet." Since many Mumbaiites find it difficult to leave early from their workplaces and tend to spend little time at home, the desire to keep a pet remains unanswered. Dr Jyotika and Radhika tip a way out, "Adopt a stray dog or cat, feed a roti or bread to him daily. You do not need to move him to your house but pay attention to his health and you will be amazed at the way he loves you by wagging his tail and waiting for you when you return late at night from work. Unconditional love from a pet is a therapy on its own. All one needs to do is indulge in it."

