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Education Department is a lobby of RSS: AICC President Kharge

KALABURAGI. (Agency)

AICC President and Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday said the Union education department has become a lobby of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Participating as the guest of honour at the launch of the book titled 'Dheemant Dhurina' (based on Mallikarjun Kharge) at SM Pandit Ranga Mandir in Kalaburagi, Kharge said RSS leaders in the education department are misguiding young students. Kharge said recently RSS chief Mohan Bhagavat has also changed his tone and is saying that untouchability should be eradicated. The people living in poverty and facing distress conditions are all Dalits, he said. "Let the BJP and RSS tell what they have done to eradicate untouchability in the past 12 years," Kharge said. Actor Prakash Raj, who inaugurated the book release programme, said to divert the attention of people, they have raked up the controversy of Vande Mataram, he said.

Minister Kumaraswamy continues attack on CM Shivakumar over Bidadi, NICE issues

HASSAN. (Agency)

Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel HD Kumaraswamy on Saturday continued his attack on Chief Minister DK Shivakumar in connection with the NICE and Bidadi Township Project. He said even though JDS supremo HD Devegowda had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with NICE when he was the CM, the successive governments allegedly paved the way for looting money in the name of the project. Addressing media persons at Haradanahalli, Kumaraswamy said the leader who formed Bengaluru Mysuru Infrastructure Corridor (BMIC) project and headed the institution should be held responsible for the current crisis in NICE project. Kumaraswamy said the hands of the state government were tied due to collusion with the NICE company. Senior officials misled the court, and ultimately the project was abandoned. Even after 20 years, most of the farmers who gave up their lands for the project are yet to be compensated, he said. The Union minister said the government is turning a blind eye towards the NICE authorities continuing to collect toll and hiking the fees exorbitantly. The NICE only developed 5km against the 111km agreed upon in the MOU. He also said he stands firm on his appeal to people not to pay the toll. Kumaraswamy said the state government has no clarity over Bidadi Township, which he said is also a ploy to loot money. He criticised the Cabinet decision to form a committee headed by a retired judge to prepare a report on the township project.

Unsafe transport, harassment: Students flag barriers to women's education to Rahul

Pune. (Agency)

At the Chhatron ki Goonj programme, women students told Congress MP Rahul Gandhi how harassment, unsafe travel and high fees hinder their education. Their accounts underlined how safety, affordability and support systems shape women's access to study and work.

Students speaking with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi at the 'Chhatron ki Goonj' programme in Pune said sexual harassment, fear for personal safety, unsafe public transport and financial hardship continue to limit women's access to education and economic independence. They said these problems affect girls and women at multiple levels, from daily travel and family decisions on higher education to the ability to afford specialised courses. The students said safe mobility, affordable education and freedom from harassment were essential for equal opportunity. Suchitra Pagi, an economics student from Vasai in Palghar, recounted incidents of harassment she faced as a 13-year-old while walking home from school and later while travelling on public transport. She said the

experiences left her frightened of men, but added that not all men are the same. She urged people to step in when they see a woman being harassed and appealed to women and men to



support victims instead of staying silent. Maitri, a psychology student in Pune, said safety concerns can become a barrier to education, especially for girls from rural areas. She said parents in villages often hesitate to send their daughters away for higher

education because of safety worries and may instead choose to educate their sons. She said this thinking is also linked to social norms that assume sons will support their parents financially, while daughters will marry and leave the family. Pradnya Gavande, a second-year BSc student of Cyber and Digital Science, spoke about the financial barriers to specialised courses such as cybersecurity. She said reputed colleges charge around Rs 3 lakh for such courses, making them unaffordable for students from weaker financial backgrounds. Gavande, who also works part-time, called for more cybersecurity courses in government colleges and scholarships for students. She also raised concern over the growing misuse of artificial intelligence to create obscene images of women and extort money from them, and stressed the need for stronger cybersecurity awareness and skills.

Reservation not charity: Chirag Paswan amid anti-quota protest at Jantar Mantar

Chirag Paswan said at Patna airport that reservations cannot be abolished on demand. He said it remains a constitutional tool for social justice and should be explained through dialogue.

Patna. (Agency)

Union Minister Chirag Paswan on Friday said reservations cannot be abolished at anyone's demand, asserting that it is a constitutional right meant to support communities that have faced social discrimination for generations. Speaking to reporters at Patna airport before leaving for Delhi, Paswan was asked about the student protests at Jantar Mantar demanding an end to the reservation system. "Reservation is not something that can be ended at anyone's demand, nor is it charity given to anyone," Paswan said. He emphasised that reservation is a constitutional provision and not a concession extended at the discretion of any government.



'RESERVATION AIMED AT SOCIAL INCLUSION'

Paswan said the reservation system was introduced to bring sections of society that had faced prolonged social discrimination into the mainstream. Referring specifically to Scheduled

Castes and Scheduled Tribes, he said the Constitution identified these communities and provided reservation as a means of supporting their advancement. He also argued that instances of social discrimination continue to occur in society, indicating that discussions on strengthening social justice remain relevant. Paswan referred to an incident in Uttarakhand involving Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge while making his point about continuing discrimination and the need for greater focus on social justice. Asked about Union Minister Ramdas Athawale's remarks on those protesting against reservation, Paswan said the protesters were expressing their concerns.

NSA Ajit Doval to hold India-China boundary talks with Wang Yi in Beijing

Doval and Wang are scheduled to hold the talks on Tuesday as part of the dialogue mechanism established in 2003 to address the 3,488-km India-China boundary dispute.

New Delhi. (Agency)

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval will travel to Beijing on Monday for the 25th round of India-China Special Representatives (SR) talks on the boundary issue with Chinese Foreign Minister and his counterpart Wang Yi, officials said. Doval and Wang are scheduled to hold the talks on Tuesday as part of the dialogue mechanism established in 2003 to address the 3,488-km India-China boundary dispute. Although the mechanism has not resolved the boundary question, officials on both sides view it as an important channel for managing tensions and keeping



communication open. The talks come ahead of Chinese President Xi Jinping's expected visit to India for the BRICS summit in New Delhi on September 12-13.

While there has been no official confirmation of Xi's visit, officials remain hopeful that he will attend, potentially providing an opportunity for a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the summit. Modi and Xi last met in August last year on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Tianjin. Ahead of the Doval-Wang talks, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday stressed that peace along the border is essential for improving bilateral ties with China. "I think we went through a particularly bad patch between the summer of 2020 and the autumn of 2024, and that was primarily an outcome.

Karnataka government must do more to end the stalemate

New Delhi. (Agency)

Political confrontation between the ruling and opposition parties often takes precedence over substantive public concern. The ongoing session of the state legislature – the first after the new government headed by DK Shivakumar assumed charge – is no different. The stand-off between the Congress and BJP over the induction of a legislator facing



serious allegations in a case of multi-crore financial irregularities in the Karnataka Maharishi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation Limited (KMVSTDCL) disrupted proceedings in both houses of the state legislature for the entire week. The BJP is demanding the resignation of Planning and Statistics Department Minister B Nagendra, citing corruption charges. The Congress is backing its minister. They are blaming each other for disruptions in the Legislative Assembly and the Council. No party seems to be doing enough to end the stalemate. So much so that the legislators from the opposition and the ruling party, including many ministers, have resorted to protests and counter-protests on the Vidhana Soudha premises. Around the same time, many Bills were passed in the Assembly amid the pandemonium, making a mockery of the legislative process.

'Matter Of National Economy Security': Rajnath Singh On Preventive Healthcare

Rajnath Singh said non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, cancer, kidney failure and mental health disorders were increasingly becoming major health concerns.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday described preventive healthcare as the "future model" of the healthcare system, citing changing disease patterns, rising treatment costs and India's ageing population as key reasons for shifting the focus towards early detection and prevention. Addressing the inauguration of a Mahajan Imaging and Labs facility here, Singh said non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, cancer, kidney failure and mental health disorders were increasingly becoming major health concerns. "These diseases do not develop in a day. They

develop gradually in the body over years. High sugar, high cholesterol, fatty liver and



borderline blood pressure are all warning signs. The future of healthcare lies in identifying these warning signs in time," he

said. Singh said preventive healthcare also made economic sense as treating advanced diseases could cost lakhs of rupees, while annual health check-ups, lifestyle counselling, early screening and basic medication could cost hundreds or a few thousand rupees. "As health expenditure increases, the government, insurance companies and employers will all want diseases to be stopped at an early stage," he said. He cited demographic changes as another reason for adopting the preventive model. India currently has a predominantly young population, but a large proportion of the population is expected to be elderly by 2050.

Girl jumps from third floor of Faridabad district court

Noida.(Agency)

A 14-year-old girl jumped from a third-floor bathroom window at Faridabad district court in Sector 12 on Saturday afternoon and suffered serious injuries. She was rushed to a nearby private hospital for treatment. The girl had gone missing from home a few days earlier, prompting her family to file a missing-person complaint. Police traced and brought her back on Friday. An officer said she had eloped with a youth and was traced to Punjab, though the girl told investigators she had gone to a relative’s house. She was medically examined and brought to the district court on Saturday to record her statement. During the proceedings, she told the woman constable accompanying her that she needed to vomit and was taken to the bathroom. The constable waited outside while the girl opened the bathroom window, which had no protective barrier, and jumped from the third floor, landing on a tin shed below. The loud impact drew the attention of lawyers and others present at the court complex, who rushed to bring her down before she was taken for treatment. Police said they are investigating whether the girl was sexually assaulted, though sources said she is not willing to lodge a complaint against the youth. A kidnapping case was registered following the family’s missing complaint, and additional sections will be added if sexual assault is confirmed. Police said the circumstances surrounding her disappearance are still being investigated.

Two workers lose balance, fall 14 floors to death at Greater Noida building site

Noida.(Agency)

Two workers died after falling from the 14th floor of an under-construction building at Golf Homes Society in Greater Noida West on Saturday. Police have detained the contractor for questioning and are investigating whether safety lapses at the construction site contributed to the accident. The deceased have been identified as Sarkar (19) and Jamal Sheikh (45). They were residents of Kalmati village under Sahibganj police station in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal. According to police, the two had been working at the construction site for the past seven months. Some of their family members were also employed at the same site. Police said the incident took place around 4pm when they were engaged in construction work on the 14th floor of the tower. They allegedly lost balance and fell. Fellow workers raised an alarm and called police. A team reached the spot and rushed them to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared them dead. Their bodies were subsequently sent for autopsy. There are conflicting accounts regarding the circumstances leading to the fall. Some workers claimed that the two were not wearing safety belts at the time of the incident. However, police said their preliminary inquiry indicated that the workers might have been wearing safety harnesses, which allegedly got loose, leading them to lose balance. Another possibility being examined is that the accident may have involved a construction lift being used to transport material to the upper floors. Sources said the two workers may have been on or near the lift when the incident occurred. Police and forensic teams have collected evidence from the site to establish the exact sequence of events. A senior officer said the contractor had been detained on suspicion of negligence, while the site supervisor was also questioned. Police said further action would be taken after examining the evidence and post-mortem findings.

Don’t panic, maintain hygiene: NCR on alert after H1N1 spike in Delhi

Noida.(Agency)

With Delhi recording over 1,700 H1N1 positive cases in the past weeks, health authorities across NCR, including Noida and Ghaziabad, have stepped up monitoring and urged residents to focus on preventive measures. Hospitals across the city said they are seeing more patients with high-grade fever and symptoms resembling swine flu. “We are seeing more patients with sudden onset fever, cough, sore throat, body ache, headache and marked fatigue. A proportion of patients, particularly those with underlying lung disease or other co-morbidities, are also presenting with breathlessness, oxygen desaturation or pneumonia,” said Dr Rahul Sharma, director of pulmonology and respiratory critical care at Fortis Noida. Doctors noted that Delhi has reported more than a six-fold increase in laboratory-confirmed H1N1 cases compared to the same period last year. “The actual number of infections is likely to be considerably higher because many patients with mild illness are neither tested nor reported and recover at home. There is currently no evidence that this surge is being driven by a new H1N1 strain or an antigenic shift. The increase is likely multifactorial, with increased transmission during the monsoon, indoor crowding, accumulation of susceptible individuals and waning immunity contributing to the rise,” said Sharma. Amid the rise in infection, Ghaziabad health department has issued an advisory on seasonal influenza, including H1N1 or swine flu, urging residents to remain cautious and follow preventive measures. The advisory said influenza is a contagious respiratory illness that spreads through coughing, sneezing or close contact with an infected person. “Residents have been advised to watch for symptoms such as sudden high fever or chills, dry cough, sore throat, runny or blocked nose, headache, severe body and joint pain, and extreme fatigue. Children may also experience vomiting or diarrhoea. Maintain hand hygiene, cover their mouth and nose while coughing or sneezing, avoid touching their face with unwashed hands and use masks in crowded or poorly ventilated spaces,” read the advisory.

2-hour rain floods city, shuts Medanta underpass again

Gurgaon.(Agency)

An overnight spell of rain lasting around two hours from 1am on Saturday cooled the morning but exposed the city’s waterlogging problem once again, inundating several residential roads, major stretches and underpasses. Water accumulated on internal roads in sectors 14 and 15, Old MG Road and several parts of the old city. Waterlogging was also witnessed around Police Lines, Dhanwapur Road, sectors 4, 7, 9 and 10, Arjun Nagar, Jyoti Park, New Colony, Kadipur, Basai Road, Sushant Lok, Sheetla Mata Road, Old Delhi Road and near Aggarwal Dharamshala Chowk, among other areas. Medanta underpass was shut and barricaded after rainwater accumulated on the carriageway — the third time this monsoon that National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has had to close it due to flooding. At Mahavir Chowk, the underpass was also flooded,



though traffic continued to move through the waterlogged stretch, with the accumulation slowing movement during the morning rush. NHAI officials said rainwater had overflowed from the main road into the Medanta underpass, forcing its closure as a precaution, and that pumping machines had been deployed to drain the

water and facilitate reopening. The authority is now looking at a longer-term fix instead of relying solely on pumping out water after each spell. “An authority engineer has been asked to conduct a detailed study of the site and examine what interventions can be made. The study will assess the drainage arrangement, identify measures to

prevent rainwater from overflowing from the main road into the underpass, and recommend remedial steps,” an NHAI official said. Rainfall intensity varied across the city. Kadipur and Harsaru recorded the highest rainfall at 83mm each, followed by Gurgaon tehsil at 75mm and Wazirabad at 69mm. Badshapur recorded 62mm, Sohna 55mm, Farrukhnagar 15mm, Manesar 4mm and Pataudi 3mm. The weather turned humid later in the day under a clear sky. The overnight showers brought the night-time temperature down by three degrees, with the city’s minimum recorded at 24.3°C, down from 27.7°C a day earlier. At NorthCap University, the minimum fell to 25°C from 28.3°C on Friday. The maximum temperature stood at 33.9°C, marginally lower than 34.4°C the previous day (34.7°C at NorthCap University). India Meteorological Department has forecast light to moderate rain over the next three days.

Patrol cops stop fighting trio, attacked with stones

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Three men allegedly abused and pelted stones at policemen during their night patrol duty in Faridabad on Friday, injuring a special police officer in the head. According to police, around 12.30 am, SPO Rajkumar was on night patrol along with another policeman when they spotted three youths fighting among themselves near a juice corner in the main market of Town No. 1. When the police intervened and asked them to return home, the trio abused and pelted them with stones lying on the roadside. SPO Rajkumar sustained an injury to his head in the incident. Police spokesperson Yashpal Yadav said, “A case was registered at Kotwali police station on the complaint of Rajkumar, and the accused have been arrested.” The



accused — Lokesh, Nikhil and Pawan, all residents of Ramnagar, Faridabad — were produced before the court and sent

to judicial custody. Police investigation revealed that the three men were under the influence of a

Journalist named in accident FIR, alleges harassment over Ram Mandir theft reporting

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

A journalist who has been reporting on a Ram Mandir donation scam alleged on Saturday that police registered a road rage case against him as an act of retaliation, sent officers to his home late at night in his absence and towed his car without notice. Abhishek Upadhyay, who runs the YouTube channel Top Secret, said on Aug 18 a motorcyclist brushed against his car near Shipra Mall as he was returning home after picking up his daughter from school. Both parties went to the Shipra Suncity police chowki, where Upadhyay said an officer asked him to file a cross complaint. He declined, saying it had been a minor brush, and left. On Aug 20, around 10.30 pm, seven to eight police personnel allegedly arrived at his residence when Upadhyay was not home. “A bunch of

cops reached my home and, in my absence, barged into the house. When my wife asked them to step out, they didn’t,” he told TOI. The chowki in charge called him to say an FIR had been registered against him for alleged road rage. When he asked for the FIR details, he said, police declined. The following day, he said, police came to his housing society and towed his car without informing him. He said he had CCTV footage of the incident and raised concerns about possible tampering with or planting of evidence in the vehicle. When Upadhyay requested a copy of the FIR, he said he received a document on WhatsApp at around 2.45 am that contained no sections of law or details of the alleged incident. He said that when he pressed for the complete FIR, police sent him paperwork relating to a 2025 case connected to his reporting on the

killing of a NEET student in Gorakhpur. “I fear that as I enter UP, they will arrest me and put me behind bars,” Upadhyay said, adding that he had not returned home since the FIR was filed. He called on police to release CCTV footage from near the incident spot. The complainant, Nikki Gautam, stated that Upadhyay’s Baleno car struck his Splendor motorcycle from behind near Shipra Mall. Gautam alleged that Upadhyay stepped out, abused him, threatened to kill him and, after learning his name, made caste-related remarks. Police said officers went to Upadhyay’s residence to summon him for investigation, not to harass him. A senior officer said Upadhyay could obtain the FIR copy by appearing at the police station or through the judiciary. Cops from Indirapuram police station did not respond separately.

Cops to record statement of minor who took SUV out for spin, crashed into sedan

Noida.(Agency)

Police will record the statement of a 14-year-old boy at his home in Sector 122 after he allegedly drove his family’s SUV and rear-ended a sedan carrying a family with a 13-month-old child on Vikas Marg earlier this week. A senior officer in civil clothes will conduct the questioning in the presence of the boy’s parents, who will also be separately questioned and asked to furnish proof of the minor’s age and details of the circumstances that led him to drive the vehicle. The report will be submitted before a local court within 60 days, where a bench will determine the quantum of punishment and compensation based on the extent of damage. Police said both vehicles have been seized and a case has been registered under BNS sections 281 (rash driving) and 324(4) (mischief). According to a senior official, the seized vehicles will be examined by experts from the Motor Transport section, who will file a damage report. Notices will also be sent to the car’s owner and the minor’s parents to verify the details of the accident. “Our investigating officer will verify the details of both vehicles from the RTO. Simultaneously, the officer will record statements from those involved in the accident, particularly those who may have sustained injuries, and eyewitnesses,” a senior officer said. The Honda City owner, Kumar Shivam, said the collision caused significant damage to the rear of his car and that the boy attempted to flee before passersby intervened. In a video recorded after the crash, the boy’s mother was heard saying their driver had not turned up and that she had sent the minor to pick up his younger brother.

Man kills wife, teenage daughter after row over medication in Ghaziabad

GURGAON.(Agency)

A 47-year-old man allegedly slit the throats of his wife and 16-year-old daughter at their fourth-floor flat in Lokpriya Vihar of Khoda on Friday night after the wife repeatedly urged him to take his depression medication. He also attacked their younger daughter (14), who escaped with injuries after neighbours overpowered him and snatched the knife. The accused, Mohammad Raja Ansari, originally from Madihar in Bihar’s Araria district, has since been arrested. Ansari works as an accountant at a meat shop in Ghazipur Mandi. The victims were identified as Baby Tabassum Ansari (43), Sana (16) and Zoya (14). The family had been living at the flat for three years. Ansari and Baby married in 2002. According to police, the family had dinner and went to bed around 10pm. Before sleeping, Baby reminded Ansari to take his medicines. He refused, and an argument broke out when she insisted again. Around 11.30pm, Ansari got up, went to the kitchen and picked up a large knife. He



allegedly attacked Baby in her sleep, inflicting a fatal throat injury. Hearing her mother’s screams, Sana entered the room and tried to hide under a staircase, but Ansari spotted her. As she ran towards her mother, he struck her

abdomen with the knife, then allegedly dragged her by the hair, tilted her head back and slit her throat. She collapsed at the spot. Zoya arrived next and was also attacked, the knife striking her hip. She managed to run to the main door and

open it. Two neighbours standing outside rushed in on hearing.

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IIT-Delhi develops breakthrough method to recycle denim into high-quality garments

New Delhi: In a significant breakthrough, researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi (IIT-Delhi) have developed a method to recycle denim waste into knitted garments without compromising on quality. Led by Prof Abhijit Majumdar and Prof BS Butola of the Department of Textile and Fibre Engineering, the team successfully converted waste denim into yarn with minimal damage to fibre properties by optimising process conditions. The recycled yarn is then blended into knitted fabric using seamless whole-garment technology, resulting in garments containing 25 per cent to 75 per cent recycled yarn. The team found that up to 50 per cent recycled yarn content could be used in knitted clothing without affecting the feel of the fabric. "To reduce the roughness of recycled yarns, a softening treat-

ment is applied, ensuring the final product feels just like one made from virgin materials," said Prof Majumdar. He added that while the study focused on denim waste, the method could be extended to other types of textile waste. The research, published in the Journal of Cleaner Production, also included a life cycle assessment a softening treatment is applied, ensuring the final product feels just like one made from virgin materials," said Prof Majumdar. He added that while (LCA) to quantify environmental benefits in the Indian context. PhD scholar Satya Karmakar collected energy and material data from the Panipat textile recycling cluster. The LCA showed that recycling could mitigate 30-40 per cent of environmental impacts such as greenhouse gas emissions, acid rain and fossil fuel depletion. For ozone layer

depletion, the reduction is as high as 60 per cent. Using recycled fibres also reduces the demand for virgin cotton, thereby saving water, pesticides He added that while the study focused on denim waste, the method could be extended to other types of textile waste. The research, published in the Journal of Cleaner Production, also included a life cycle assessment a softening treatment is applied, ensuring the final product feels just like one made from virgin materials," said Prof Majumdar. He added and fertilisers used in cotton cultivation

— a process that alone contributes 24 per cent to global warming among all production stages. "The team is now exploring the feasibility of recycling textile waste multiple times," said Prof Butola. India generates about 3.9 million tonnes of post-consumer textile waste annually, of which only 4 per cent is recycled. Most of this waste ends up in landfills due to variability in fibre blends and colours. Mechanical recycling also weakens fibre quality, making it challenging to produce high-quality garments from recycled textiles.

Delhi govt announces Rs 6K monthly aid for persons with disabilities

New Delhi: The Delhi Government has announced a special financial assistance scheme for persons with disabilities requiring high support, under which eligible beneficiaries would receive Rs 6,000 per month. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the initiative aims to ensure dignity and security for persons with disabilities and their families. Approved earlier by the Delhi Cabinet, the scheme would be formally inaugurated tomorrow by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the occasion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday. The financial support would be directly transferred to Aadhaar-linked bank accounts of beneficiaries and can be used to cover the cost of caregivers, therapies, counselling, assistive devices and other essential services. According to the Chief Minister, individuals with at least 40 per cent disability who are certified as having "High Support Needs" — with a score between 60 and 100 by the District-level Assessment Board — would be eligible for the scheme. Applicants must also be residents of Delhi for at least five years, have a family income below Rs 1 lakh annually, and complete Aadhaar-linked verification. Registrations and applications would be processed online through the government's e-District portal. Calling the move a "historic decision" for one of the most vulnerable sections of society, Gupta said, "This initiative of our government is dedicated to persons with disabilities. We aim to ensure they receive the necessary support and resources to meet their essential needs."

DFS to deploy 24 quick response vehicles in city

New Delhi: The Delhi Fire Service (DFS) will deploy 24 newly procured quick response vehicles

are mounted on XL6 vehicles and designed to swiftly navigate through narrow lanes and heavy



deployed at high-risk locations, including Janakpuri, Najafgarh, Vasant Kunj, Rohini, Jahangirpuri, Lajpat Nagar, Paharganj, Geeta Colony, Dwarka and Alipur. Tenders for an additional 26 vehicles have already been floated under Phase II, while proposals for 50 more QRVs are in place for Phase I. Officials said the innovation was aimed at preventing small fires from turning into major blazes by enabling quicker arrival and immediate suppression. Each vehicle carries a 100-litre water tank and operates at just 21 litres per

minute, using water mist for cooling, foam for oxygen cut-off and jet systems to handle different types of fires efficiently. Initially, these QRVs will be operated by existing DFS personnel, while plans are underway to outsource manpower in subsequent phases.

"This strategic deployment will significantly improve our ability to respond rapidly to emergencies in high-density and hard-to-reach areas, protecting both lives and property," officials added.

NAME CHANGE

I. Tajinder Kaur W/o Jaspreet Singh Bajwa R/o 52/43 Ramjas Road Karol Bagh Delhi -110005 Have Changed My Name To Tajinder Kaur Bajwa For All Purpose.

NAME CHANGE

I. Sansare Anurad Narayan father of No.4580889H Rank-Hav Name Sansare Ravindra Amrut residing at Vill. Deolali Pravara, Tehsil - Rahuri, District.Ahilyanagar, Maharashtra - 413716 have changed my name from Sansare Anurad Narayan to Anurad Narayan Sansare vide affidavit dated 15/07/2025 executed before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I. NO-17007475L Rank-NK Name-JITENDRA GANGWAR S/O LATE NIRANJAN LAL GANGWAR R/O WARD NO-11, MOHALLA GYASPUR, NEAR BANGALI BABA MANDIR, BILASPUR, PILLIBHIT, UTTAR PRADESH-262201 have changed my minor son's name from DAKSH GANGWAR to YASH GANGWAR for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 05/09/2023 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I. NO-17007475L Rank-NK Name-JITENDRA GANGWAR S/O LATE NIRANJAN LAL GANGWAR R/O WARD NO-11, MOHALLA GYASPUR, NEAR BANGALI BABA MANDIR, BILASPUR, PILLIBHIT, UTTAR PRADESH-262201 have changed my minor son's name from DAKSH GANGWAR to YASH GANGWAR for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 05/09/2023 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I. ANITA BANSAL W/O PAWAN BANSAL residing at B-504, MAYUR-DHWAJ APARTMENT, I.P. EXTN. EAST DELHI-110092 have Change my name to ANITA RANI BANSAL for all future purpose.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I. Jyoti pat W/O Sunil Kumar R/O WZ-125, Village Begumpur, North West Delhi - 110086.declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as Jyoti in my minor Daughter Yashika aged 14 years in her school cords and birth certificate no MCDOLR09368299. The actual my name is Jyoti Pal.

NAME CHANGE

I. PUNNAM DEVI Wife of No-14913053K Rank-HAV Name-NARENDER SINGH R/O C-7, LAXMI GARDEN, NAJAFGARH, NEW DELHI-110043 have changed my name from PUNNAM DEVI to POONAM DEVI for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 30/09/2023 before Executive Magistrate, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I. NEETAS DEVI Wife of No-3204848W Rank-HAV Name-DHARMENDRA SINGH R/O VILL-BHUNDAS, P.O-MURSAN, DIST-HATHRAS, U.P. 204213 have changed my name from NEETAS DEVI to NITESH DEVI for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 30/09/2023 before Notary Public, Delhi.

7-day-old baby sold for Rs 1.5 lakh, 2 arrested

Gurugram: The police arrested a eunuch and her partner for attempting to sell a seven-day-old baby boy for Rs 1.5 lakh in Sector 57. The accused who sold the child had lodged a complaint of kidnapping to mislead the police, but they were arrested and the child was rescued. According to the police, a eunuch residing in a slum near Saraswati Kunj had lodged a complaint claiming that she had adopted a newborn baby boy from her neighbour Phulo Devi on August 18. She alleged that on August 24, she handed the baby over to her neighbour, Kajal, before leaving him. Upon her

return, Kajal claimed the infant had been kidnapped by an unknown person and that her mobile phone had also been stolen. The police swung into action and arrested two accused from Wazirbad's Dhani within just nine hours. The police recovered the newborn baby and the stolen mobile from the possession of the accused. The accused were identified as Layak Sheikh (28), a native of west Bengal and eunuch Kajal, a native of Bihar. During interrogation, it was revealed that the alleged kidnapping was, in fact, a pre-planned conspiracy. Investigators found that Sheikh, who

has been living in the area for five years, was desperate for a child. He had struck a deal with Kajal, offering between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 1.5 lakh in exchange for a baby. Kajal then took advantage of the situation by handing over the newborn that had been adopted by her fellow

eunuch. Sheikh reportedly wrapped the infant in a blanket and took him away. "A swift operation by the police foiled the conspiracy. Both accused were arrested, the child was safely recovered, and handed back to the complainant," a Gurugram Police spokesperson said

Over 15-kg ganja seized at Delhi airport, 7 nabbed

New Delhi: Customs officials at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport here have busted a narcotics smuggling network with the arrest of seven persons and the seizure of approximately 15.73 kg of hydroponic weed (ganja). AirTravel The operation was carried out on the intervening night of August 17 and 18. Two passengers arriving from Bangkok were intercepted after they crossed the green channel. During X-ray screening, officials detected suspicious anomalies in the baggage of both passengers. A subsequent physical examination led to the recovery of hydroponic weed from their consignments.

BMW crash in Delhi: Court denies bail to Gaganpreet Kaur, directs preservation of CCTV footage

New Delhi: A Patiala House Court on Wednesday denied bail to Gaganpreet Kaur, who was arrested in connection with the fatal BMW crash that took place in Delhi on September 14. The court has also issued a notice on an application filed by Kaur's counsel seeking the preservation of CCTV footage from the accident site. The matter is scheduled for hearing on Thursday. Kaur, 38, a resident of Gurugram, was sent to two-day judicial custody following her arrest on Monday. The accident resulted in the death of Navjot Singh, a Deputy Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs. Singh was riding a motorcycle with his wife when it was allegedly hit by Kaur's BMW near Delhi's Dhaula Kuan area. While Singh died on the spot, his wife sustained serious injuries. According to Delhi Police, medical reports confirmed that Kaur was not under the influence of alcohol at the time of the crash. Her blood test came back negative for alcohol.

Delhi civic body holds Hindi competitions

New Delhi: The department held various competitions, including essay writing, noting and drafting, handwriting and Hindi language proficiency, during the event. MCD officials and employees participated enthusiastically and got an opportunity to showcase their writing, language and expression skills. Participants securing the top positions will receive cash prizes of Rs 4,000, Rs 3,000 and Rs 2,000 for the first, second and third positions, respectively. The department will also award five consolation prizes of Rs 1,000 each. The department said the initiative aims to promote the simple and effective use of Hindi in the MCD's day-to-day functioning and encourage employees to work in the official language. It also emphasised that using Hindi can help make government services and information more accessible to citizens.

NAME CHANGE

I. hitherto known as ASHISH KUMAR RATHOR S/O PURAN LAL R/O Q-48, RAJEEV NAGAR BEGUM PUR, NORTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110086, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RAZA AHMED.

NAME CHANGE

I. SANJAY KUMAR CHOUDHARY S/O LATE SH. LAXMAN CHAUDHARY Permanent R/o Parsauri Khroodhar, Sitamahi, Bihar-843325 and Presently Residing at Plot No. B-20, Second Floor, Dass Garden, Baprola Vihar, Najafgarh, New Delhi-110043. declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as SANJAY CHOUDHARY in my minor daughter namely SHIWANGI CHOUDHARY aged 17 years in her 10th class Marksheet. The actual name of mine is SANJAY KUMAR CHOUDHARY, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE

I. VINOD KUMAR S/O UDAY SINGH residing at FLAT NO-G-3/8, NEAR DDA WATER TANK, SECTOR-4, ROHINI, DELHI-110085 have changed my name to VINOD KUMAR KUSHWAHA for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE

I. SANTOSH KUMAR S/O VISHVA NATH PRASAD residing at PLOT NO-58859, FLAT NO-B-2, STREET NO-5, HAVENS GARDEN MATIALA, DELHI-110059 have changed my name to SANTOSH KUMAR GUPTA for all future purposes

NAME CHANGE

I. Anil Balakrishna Panicker s/o Angakattil Narayan Balakrishna Panicker R/o A-6/334-A, Janta Flats, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110063, have changed my name to Anil Bala Panicker permanently.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, NIDHI AGGARWAL YADAV D/O VIRENDER KUMAR AGGARWAL, AL and Ex. Wife of AMIT YADAV, R/o H.No E-12, Hauz Khas, South West Delhi-110016, declare that I got divorce from my Ex. Husband AMIT YADAV vide Court Decree HMA No. 603/2019 dated 30 - 04-2019, further I have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as NIDHI AGGARWAL. I also have changed the name of my minor Son namely AAYAN YADAV, aged 16 years and my minor daughter namely ARSHIYA YADAV, aged 13 years and they shall hereafter be known as AAYAN AGGARWAL and ARSHIYA AGGARWAL respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE

I Taran Preet Singh Kochhar S/o Manpreet Singh Kochhar R/o 100/80 SFS Flats Green View Apartment Mayapuri Road Hari Nagar West Delhi-110064 Have Change My Given Name Taranpreet Singh and Surname Kochhar for all purpose.

NAME CHANGE

I. S VANITHA W/o No. 14838283N Rank-HAV/MT Name-RAMESH P R/o VILL-SEDRAMPUTTU, PO-SEDRAMPUTTU, TEH-POLLUR, DIST-THIRUVANNAMALAI, TAMIL NADU-632315, have changed my name from S VANITHA to VANITHA R for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 15/07/2025 before Notary Public, Kupwara.

NAME CHANGE

I. SH. AUTAR SINGH Father of JC-413677X Rank-SUB MAJ Name-BHAGAT SINGH presently residing at VILL-BILTIYA, SIKOLI TALUK, PO-DHAUNTALIA, DIST-PANJURI GARHWAL, UTTARAKHAND-246155 have changed my name from SH AUTAR SINGH to AVTAR SINGH for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 12/03/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I. NO-17007475L Rank-NK Name-JITENDRA GANGWAR S/O LATE NIRANJAN LAL GANGWAR R/O WARD NO-11, MOHALLA GYASPUR, NEAR BANGALI BABA MANDIR, BILASPUR, PILLIBHIT, UTTAR PRADESH-262201 have changed my minor son's name from DAKSH GANGWAR to YASH GANGWAR for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 05/09/2023 before Notary Public, Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, BALJEET SINGH S/O GURCHARAN SINGH R/o 12/32, Geeta Colony, East Delhi-110031 declare that name of mine, my wife and my minor daughter has been wrongly written as BALJEET SINGH CHUGH, GURPREET KAUR CHUGH, JASLEEN KAUR CHUGH in my minor daughter JASLEEN KAUR aged 16 years in her 10th class Educational Documents. The actual name of mine, my wife and my minor daughter are BALJEET SINGH, GURPREET KAUR and JASLEEN KAUR respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE

I, Kulsom W/o Rozuddin R/o B-17, Gali No.3A, Near Mohalla Dilshad Masjid, Old Mustafabad, Delhi-110094, have changed my name to Kulsom for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I Swaran Kaur Sawhney W/o Prith Pal Singh R/o 10C/80 SFS Flats Green View Apartment Mayapuri Road Hari Nagar West Delhi-110064 Have Changed My Name To Swaran Kaur for all purpose.

NAME CHANGE

I Tajinder Kaur W/o Jaspreet Singh Bajwa R/o 52/43 Ramjas Road Karol Bagh Delhi -110005 Have Changed My Name To Tajinder Kaur Bajwa For All Purpose.

NAME CHANGE

I Sarve Preet Kaur Kochhar W/o Manpreet Singh Kochhar R/o 100/80 SFS Flats Green View Apartment Mayapuri Road Hari Nagar West Delhi-110064 Have Change My Given Name Sarvepreet kaur and Surname Kochhar for all purpose.

Police arrest teenage realtor for gunning down gardener over closed gate in south Delhi

New Delhi: Santal, who also worked as a caretaker of the property, was shot in the chest. Police have arrested 19-year-old Piyush Yadav, a local real estate agent, for gunning down the older man. They said the incident took place around 2 am near the Shamshan Ghat in Dera village. "A police team rushed to the spot after receiving information that women were crying loudly in the neighbourhood. Upon reaching, it was found that a man had been shot and was lying motionless near the cremation ground," an officer said. An empty cartridge was recovered from the spot, he said. "During the investigation, it was revealed that the accused had a verbal altercation with the victim over the closing of a gate of the property. The altercation escalated, and in a fit of rage, Piyush allegedly shot Santal and fled the spot," the officer said. When questioned, Piyush confessed to the crime and led the police to the gun he had hidden in his house. Police said Santal took care of several properties in the vicinity, while Piyush Yadav ran his real estate business from Chhatrapur Phase 2. Santal's body was taken to Safdarjung Hospital for a post-mortem.

Delhi University rolls out 'zero tolerance' policy for campus defacement

New Delhi: With the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) elections for fast approaching, the university administration has announced a stringent "zero tolerance" policy against defacement, under the banner of its "Green Election, Clean Election" initiative. The announcement was made following a meeting on Tuesday, attended by the Chief Election Officer, members of the Proctorial Board, Maurice Nagar SHO, DUSU office bearers and student representatives. An official statement from the DU Election Committee said, "The committee also apprised the representative that there would be zero tolerance for defacement during the current DUSU elections." All candidates have been directed to use only handmade posters and to strictly adhere to specified campaign expenditure limits. The university's crackdown follows complaints from past years, when graffiti, unauthorised banners and posters covered walls, flyovers, and metro pillars across both North and South campuses. This year, authorities say, enforcement would be much more vigilant.

Panipat man charred to death, another injured as car catches fire after accident in Delhi

New Delhi: A 40-year-old man was charred to death while another was injured after their car caught fire following an accident in outer north Delhi's Hulambi Khurd area in the early hours of Sunday, an official said. The incident occurred around 2 am near Jhanda Chowk on Urban Extension Road II, under the jurisdiction of Narela Industrial Area police station, the official added. According to the police, a PCR call was received and a team rushed to the spot where they found a white Ertiga in a burnt condition. The driver was found dead, while another was rescued from the adjacent seat. He was injured. The driver was identified as Vipender and the injured as Jagbir, both residents of Haryana's Panipat, police added. Jagbir was immediately shifted to the SRHC Hospital in Narela, while the dead body was moved to the BJRM Hospital, a police officer said. Initial investigation suggests that the Haryana-registered SUV might have lost control and crashed before catching fire, though the exact cause is still under investigation, the officer said. A case has been registered, and further investigation is under way to ascertain the cause of the fire and the circumstances surrounding the accident, the officer added.

3 held for performing car stunts on road

New Delhi: The police have arrested three individuals for performing dangerous car stunts on a public road, after a video of the incident went viral on social media. Three vehicles used during the stunts have also been seized. According to the police, the video, which circulated widely online, captured the suspects engaging in risky behaviour near the Shobha City traffic signal in Sector 108, under the jurisdiction of Rajendra Park police station. In the footage, three young men were seen standing atop a moving car. Behind them, several others were spotted in 8 to 10 vehicles, with sunroofs open and some individuals emerging from windows while filming the stunt and performing hazardous manoeuvres. The arrested accused has been identified as Himanshu (22), a resident of Khaika village near Sohna, Sagar (24) and Kaushal (24), residents of Peeragarhi in Delhi. "The accused not only endangered their own lives but also put the safety of others at risk by performing these stunts on public roads," said a police spokesperson. "We have recovered three vehicles used in the act — two Mahindra Thars and one Toyota Fortuner. A further investigation is underway, and more arrests are expected soon."

NEWS BOX

Syria requests to join anti-chemical weapons partnership

DAMASCUS.(Agency)

Syria on Friday said it had requested to join the International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons on the anniversary of a 2013 chemical attack on a suburb of the capital Damascus.In a joint statement with France commemorating the attack during former leader Bashar al-Assad's rule on rebel-held areas, Syria announced its bid to join the partnership of dozens of countries, launched by Paris in January 2018. France welcomed the step as "a clear demonstration of Syria's commitment to strengthening accountability and justice and combating impunity" following its more than decade-long civil war. Damascus and Paris also said they "commemorate the victims, extend their deepest sympathies and solidarity to their families, and reaffirm their joint commitment to supporting efforts to uncover the truth, ensure justice, and hold those responsible for these crimes accountable".In August 2013, the Syrian army under Assad was accused of using chemical weapons to target areas then under rebel control.According to US intelligence and rights groups, more than 1,400 en, women and children died as a result.

Day After Release From Jail, Man Stabs 2 At Canada Gurudwara With Screwdriver

world.(Agency)

Two men were stabbed inside a gurdwara in Canada on Friday morning after they tried to stop a man attempting to access the prayer area. The accused, a 27-year-old, has been arrested for stabbing two people with a screwdriver and disrupting morning prayers at the Nanaksar Gurdwara Gursikh Temple in Edmonton.On Friday morning, at 4:49, the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) received reports of a male walking in traffic on Highway 15 near Horschill Road. Less than half an hour later, at 5:05, police began receiving reports of a stabbing at the gurdwara in the area.According to preliminary reports, a male entered the gurdwara and attempted



to access the prayer area when he was confronted by staff. "The confrontation then escalated and two male patrons of the gurdwara were stabbed. Witnesses intervened and detained the man until Northeast Branch patrol officers arrived at 5:10 am and immediately took him into custody," the police said. The two victims -- a 75-year-old male and a 51-year-old male -- were taken to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. The accused has a history of attacks, Acting Inspector Eric Stewart said during a press briefing.At this time we can tell you that the 27-year-old man is known to police and has a significant history of violent offences dating back to 2015. We have learned that he was released from a federal institution yesterday, August 20, where he had been serving a sentence for aggravated assault and assaulting a peace officer, and he failed to report to his designated Edmonton halfway house," Stewart said.Investigators are probing whether the incident was motivated by hate.

More than 16,000 doses of Ervebo vaccine arrive in Ebola-hit DRC

KINSHASA.(Agency)

More than 16,000 doses of the Ervebo vaccine arrived in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) late Friday, an AFP journalist saw, as the country faces the deadliest Ebola outbreak in its history.The DRC's 17th Ebola outbreak, which has killed thousands of people, was declared on May 15 but is thought to have been spreading for several weeks prior.It has hit regions in the north and east where the presence of the state is weak, health infrastructure is largely lacking and myriad armed groups have roamed for decades. The World Health Organization (WHO) announced on Thursday that the DRC would receive a total of 70,000 doses of the Ervebo vaccine, produced in Germany.The vaccine, developed by the pharmaceutical company Merck, is approved against the Zaire strain of the virus, but not against the Bundibugyo strain currently circulating in the country. WHO experts still do not know whether Ervebo protects humans against the

Bundibugyo strain, but early data, notably from animal trials, suggest it could offer some protection.The Ervebo vaccine "has already been used several times, and in particular on a very large scale during the 2018–2020 outbreak", Samuel Roger Kamba, the DRC's minister of health, told the press.He was speaking on the tarmac of Kinshasa airport, where a batch of 16,250 doses was delivered by plane on Friday. Of the 70,000 doses made available to the DRC, 20,000 are intended for a clinical trial, and 50,000 for "frontline and health workers" in the DRC, the WHO explained on Thursday. The Ebola outbreak in the DRC has already caused 2,516 deaths among 5,290 confirmed cases, according to the latest data published by the Congolese authorities.It "is growing exponentially", warned Julien Hameis, the UN's senior Ebola coordinator, on Friday.This month, WHO vaccine experts recommended a full-scale human trial of Ervebo, the only existing approved Ebola vaccine, to see if it offered cross-protection against the Bundibugyo strain.

US imposes 50% tariffs on USD 20 billion worth of Canadian products; Carney vows to retaliate

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

Hefty US tariffs on some Canadian products took effect on Saturday after days of negotiations that went down to the wire failed to produce an agreement. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney vowed that his country will match the US tariffs "dollar for dollar to protect our workers and businesses", after officials said late Friday that Washington and Ottawa had not managed to strike a deal. The lack of a final agreement means that new 50-percent duties, set to impact some USD 20 billion of Canadian exports to the United States, took effect on Saturday. US Trade RepresentativeJamieson Greer told reporters on Friday that "tonight, Canada declined to finalize the trade deal under the terms agreed earlier this week." That came despiteWashington's offers for tariff reductions in sectors like steel and aluminum, he added.The surprise

announcent came after Trump said that the United States "should be able to have a deal with Canada," citing his "good relationship" with Carney. After hours of trade talks on Friday, however, Canada's top negotiator Dominic LeBlanc told reporters that officials still "have more work to do." LeBlanc and Greer also met for around three hours on Thursday.Greer said that the Trump administration put on the table "significant tariff reductions on steel, aluminum, autos and lumber" in exchange for concessions from Canada.He said that Canada was also maintaining its "prolonged retaliation" against the United States.But Carney said in a statement that "last-minute changes in the US proposed terms were unfair, uneconomic, and called nto question the reliability of any deal."Discriminatory treatment'Canada's regional leaders said previously that the United States was particularly irritated by

one retaliatory measure: the removal of US alcohol and wine from liquor stores.The White House had alleged "discriminatory treatment" by Canada



against US alcohol, automobile and dairy products in introducing the duties.They were originally set to take effect on Wednesday, before Trump issued a last-minute delay of three days -- citing major progress in talks.Canadian negotiators

have been camped out in Washington this week to firm up a deal that aimed to address various flash points.Canada has been seeking relief from Trump's tariffs on autos, steel and aluminum, which have battered the country's economy, forced job losses and strained what was once an iron-clad trade relationship.Carney has repeatedly told Canadians that relations with the United States have been forever changed, regardless of what happens with an individual trade deal.He says the country must diversify and reduce its reliance on the United States, which currently accounts for roughly 70 percent of Canadian exports.Beyond the ongoing negotiations, the United States and Canada still have to agree on revisions to the North American free trade agreement, USMCA, which Trump declined to renew last month.

16 killed, 130 injured as Russian drones slam into busy shopping centre in eastern Ukraine

KYIV.(Agency)

Russian drones slammed into a busy shopping centre in eastern Ukraine Friday, killing 16 people in an attack condemned as "cynical and despicable" by President Volodymyr Zelensky.The attack on Kryvyi Rig, Zelensky's hometown, comes as Russia has intensified its bombardments of Ukrainian cities in recent months. Four more people, including three minors, were killed in another strike in the southern Mykolaiv region, Interior Minister Ivan Vygivsky said on Telegram.Videos on social media of the Kryvyi Rig incident showed rescuers rushing to

help the wounded on the street outside, as smoke poured out of the



building.A second drone smashed into the roof of the building around half an hour after the first -- a repeat strike that Zelensky said in a post on X was "targeting the emergency

responders".Ukrainian emergency services initially said the attack had killed 15 people, wounding 130 others, 23 of them children.Oleksandr Ganzha, the head of the Dnipropetrovsk regional military administration, later posted on Telegram that "the death toll from the enemy attack has risen to 16".In his X post, Zelensky condemned "an absolutely cynical and despicable strike...carried out by the Russians against an ordinary shopping centre".Kryvyi Rig, an industrial city roughly 60 kilometres (37 miles) from the front line, has come under repeated Russian attacks throughout the war.

Iran president says time to end war while in position of strength

➡Talks between the longtime foes remain on hold, and the war started by the US and Israel in February has been locked in a stalemate.

SACRAMENTO.(Agency)

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Friday it was time to end the months-long Middle East war with the United States because Tehran appeared to be in a stronger position than Washington.Talks between the longtime foes remain on hold, and the war started by the US and Israel in February has been locked in a stalemate.Tehran is keeping the key Strait of Hormuz partially shut and Washington is persisting with a naval counter-blockade of Iran."It is better that we bring the war to an end now as we are in a position of power and dignity," Pezeshkian said in a meeting with doctors."The whole world acknowledges our victory and

emphasises that America has attacked our schools, hospitals and infrastructure in violation of all regulations and is hated around the



world."Pezeshkian also defended a memorandum of understanding agreed with the US in June aimed at ending the war, insisting it did not signal a defeat for Tehran. "They cannot find even a single clause in this agreement that indicates capitulation. All the commitments concern the other side," he said.His remarks came weeks after Iran's supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei said he had approved the deal to end the war

despite having "different views".Hardline lawmakers in Iran's parliament have criticised the government over the deal, accusing it of giving concessions to the US, mostly over the re-opening of Hormuz.According to reports in US media, the American navy has been organising and protecting secret convoys of tankers through the southern sector of the strait, enabling between five and 10 million barrels a day of oil to be exported.Tehran's claims to be in the stronger position followed a US announcement that it would ramp up sanctions to heap pressure on the Islamic republic.The American plan drew condemnation from Iran's foreign ministry, which accused the US of "economic terrorism", adding the "instigators of these sanctions are deserving of trial and punishment".US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on Thursday vowed Washington would "collapse" the Iranian regime with its threatened sanctions campaign.

Tesla recalls nearly 3 million vehicles in China over door handle safety risks

HONG KONG.(Agency)

Tesla and other Chinese carmakers are making a major recall of more than 4 million vehicles over safety concerns mostly related to their door handles, according to Chinese authorities on Friday. The U.S. carmaker is recalling about 2.98 million China-made and imported EVs including Model 3, Model Y, Model X and Model S over door handle safety risks, according to China's State Administration for Market Regulation.The recall, the largest this year according to Chinese media, comes a few months after Chinese authorities said in February that starting next year, it would be banning hidden car door handles that are commonly seen on Tesla electric vehicles and many



Chinese EV models.China has stepped up scrutiny recently on hidden, or flush, car door handles following EV accidents in the country and elsewhere, in which cars' hidden electronic doors failed and trapped people inside.In a notice on the Chinese regulator's website, it cited safety risk. In extreme situations, such as a severe collision that causes an electrical system failure, the car handles could hinder car users from quickly opening the doors to escape, or prevent rescuers outside the car from gaining access, the notice said.Tesla will perform software updates on the vehicles to mitigate risks, the notice added. Tesla did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Friday.Xiaomi, the Beijing-based Chinese technology giant, is recalling more than 390,000 vehicles. Hangzhou-based Leapmotor is recalling over 370,000 cars. Other Chinese carmakers, including Geely and XPENG are also recalling some vehicles.The reasons given in each case were similar, mostly relating to issues with their car door handles.A report published by the People's Daily, the official newspaper of China's ruling Communist Party, said the large-scale recall "serves as a unified safety upgrade" for existing vehicle models ahead of the 2027 implementation of the ban on hidden car door handles.

Pakistan rejects allegations of mistreatment, medical neglect of imprisoned ex-Premier Imran Khan

ISLAMABAD.(Agency)

Pakistan's government on Friday rejected allegations by the family and party of imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan that he was being subjected to "cruelty, mental torture, punitive solitary confinement and medical neglect" as baseless, saying the accusations weren't supported by prison and medical records.Khan isn't being held under a government order, but as a "convicted prisoner" serving sentences imposed by courts following judicial proceedings, the Ministry of Information said in a written response to The Associated Press. The government's response came hours after Khan's family and opposition party accused authorities of violating a Supreme Court order by taking him to a government hospital for a medical examination instead of a private hospital designated by the court.Khan's sister, Uzma Khan, told a news conference that she was at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, a government-run hospital in Islamabad, when her brother

was brought there overnight.

Khan's sister said that during a meeting with her, Khan complained that he had been kept in solitary confinement, which she said amounted to mental torture for him. Suhail



Afridi, a senior leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, or , also accused the government of violating the order by taking Khan to the public hospital.Khan's personal physician, Dr. Faisal Sultan, said that he had

been escorted to Shifa International Hospital, where he waited for Khan until early Friday. Sultan said he was eventually told that Khan had been returned to Adiala prison in the garrison city of Rawalpindi.Information Minister Attaulah Tarar said earlier Friday that Khan had been returned to prison after doctors examined him and found him medically fit.The ministry also rejected allegations that Khan was being held in solitary confinement or denied meaningful contact with his family. It said that Khan had received more than 900 visits from family members, lawyers, doctors, political representatives and other approved visitors since his imprisonment in 2023. It said that he also has been allowed weekly meetings with his wife, and telephone, landline and WhatsApp contact with relatives in Pakistan and abroad.According to the ministry, Khan's most recent recorded telephone conversation with one of his sons was on March 21.

Rs 31,800 crore tech plans take shape in Andhra

VIJAYAWADA.(Agency)

In a major push toward high-tech industrialisation and digital infrastructure, the State government has approved two major investment projects totalling over Rs 31,800 crore across Visakhapatnam and YSR Kadapa districts.

Together, the State has sanctioned a 512 MW green artificial intelligence (AI) data centre facility and a large-scale electronics manufacturing unit, which are projected to generate 8,000 jobs. Under G.O. Ms. No.59 issued by the IT, E&C Department, the State approved a proposal by M/s. AM AI Factory (Vizag) Private Limited to establish a 512 MW Green Integrated AI Data Centre Facility at Amanam village in Bheemunipatnam mandal, Visakhapatnam district.

Carrying a cumulative investment of Rs 31,387 crore and an employment potential of 1,000 jobs, the project has been categorised as a Mega Project under the Andhra Pradesh Data Centre Policy (4.0) 2024–29, with a completion timeline of two years and four months.To support the massive facility, the government approved tailored non-fiscal and fiscal incentives.

Non-fiscal support includes power infrastructure facilitation by APTRANSCO at the proponent’s cost, guaranteed treated water supply, road connectivity via APIIC, and the realignment of an existing stream (vagu) and road passing through project survey numbers.The fiscal package for the AI data centre features a stamp duty exemption capped at Rs 16 crore, a 10% capital subsidy on plant and machinery capped at Rs 300 crore over 10 years, and 100% net SGST reimbursement.

Newborn dies, 3 suffer burns after hospital cradle warmer catches fire

Chhindwara.(Agency)

A fire broke out in a warmer at the Special Newborn Care Unit (SNCU) of Chhindwara District Hospital in Madhya Pradesh in the intervening on Saturday night, injuring three newborn babies. One of the injured babies later died at Jabalpur Medical College, where all three were referred for better treatment.

According to Civil Surgeon Kanchan Dubey, sparking occurred in the warmer used to keep newborn babies, causing the machine to catch fire.

Three babies kept in the warmer suffered burn injuries. The hospital provided them immediate treatment before referring all three to Jabalpur for further care due to their serious condition.

There were 33 babies in the SNCU when the incident occurred. Hospital staff quickly removed the other babies from the unit and shifted them to another ward, helping prevent further casualties.

Dubey said the incident appeared to be an accidental case and that she did not see any negligence. She said the administration would investigate the incident.

Delhi-to-Kerala MDMA racket using women as carriers busted, 4 arrested

KOCHI.(Agency)

The Excise Department has busted a drug racket that allegedly smuggled MDMA from Delhi to Kerala using women as carriers, and arrested four people in two operations, officials said on Sunday. A total of 279.3 grams of MDMA was seized from the accused, along with three grams of hashish oil, six mobile phones and Rs 69,500 in cash.

Officials said the racket was targeting young people for its operations. Joint Excise Commissioner S Vinod Kumar said the accused used a Mahindra Thar SUV to bring the contraband into Kerala and then sold it in smaller quantities.

Kumar said the Excise Ernakulam Range first arrested two people, including an 18-year-old woman, from a luxury hotel in Kaloor a few days ago and recovered 49.3 grams of MDMA from them. “Upon arresting and interrogating the two individuals, information was received regarding a person named Varun Dev, a wholesale dealer who traffics MDMA into Kerala. On getting information that they were coming to Ernakulam district on Saturday and that a deal was likely to take place, a search was conducted,” he told reporters.

Excise officials then intercepted a vehicle at Vyttila after it got caught in a traffic block on Saturday. Kumar said 230 grams of MDMA and three grams of hashish oil were recovered from a secret compartment built under the steering wheel. The two occupants of the vehicle, identified as Varun Dev, 35, and Vipin S Kumar, 30, both from Pathanamthitta district, were arrested.

Kadapa teacher makes learning creative and meaningful

Jawahar entered the teaching profession on 26 October 1998 under the Janmabhoomi Act at Thuvvapalli.

KADAPA.(Agency)

For Jawahar Munneer Shaik, 56, an SGT at MPPS, Lingareddy Nagar, Proddutur town, sees teaching as more than a profession. For her, it is a lifelong mission built on compassion, creativity and the belief that every child has the potential to excel. Her journey in education reached another milestone when she was honoured with the prestigious State Best Teacher award 2025. Born into a family of educators, Jawahar was inspired by her parents, Rahamthunnisa Begum and Masthanvalli, both teachers. Masthanvalli received the State Best Teacher award in 1992, while Rahamthunnisa was honoured with a District-level Best Teacher award. Their dedication laid the foundation for Jawahar’s own career.Jawahar entered the teaching profession on 26 October 1998 under the Janmabhoomi Act at Thuvvapalli. Since then, she has devoted herself to educating, encouraging and empowering generations of children. Her teaching philosophy emphasises

making students active participants in the learning process. She has a particular passion for using low-cost and no-cost teaching-learning materials (TLM) and encourages children to prepare and use them. “I always try



to see how moral values can be incorporated into school education, how children can use teaching-learning materials related to the topic and how low-cost and no-cost TLM can help overcome learning gaps and achieve learning outcomes,” she says.

Jawahar’s leadership skills were evident

during the Nadu-Nedu programme, launched to improve infrastructure in government schools.Between 2019 and 2021, she worked tirelessly to complete development works at her school within tight deadlines and budgets.

She lost her husband during this period and continued working through the COVID pandemic. Her commitment earned her the 2021 Nadu-Nedu Best Headmaster award, making her the only headmaster from Kadapa district to receive the honour that year.Her achievements continued to build on her family’s legacy in education. She received the District Best Teacher award in 2016, followed by Best Teacher honours from the Rotary Club and Inner Wheel Club, Delhi, in 2024. On 8 March 2025, she was honoured by Samskruthi Swachhanda Samstha and Vikasitha Foundation, and later that year received the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad award. The crowning achievement came in 2025 when she received the State Best Teacher award from Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu and Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh.

Mangaluru move pushes Palakkad railway division to explore new ‘tracks’

PALAKKAD.(Agency)

Tension gripped Andhra Pradesh’s Marikavalasa-Thimmapuram Master Plan Road in Visakhapatnam on Thursday after a group of around 20 young people clashed, prompting police intervention and the detention of 17 persons. According to the police, the fight was triggered after a dispute between two students near Chandrampalem School.

What began as an argument later escalated after the youths formed two groups and allegedly confronted each other with sticks. Four people were reportedly attacked during the clash.

Police said some of them were suspected to have consumed alcohol before the incident. The situation became tense again later on Thursday night when some of those involved

allegedly attempted to confront each other at Shivashakti Nagar on Thimmapuram Road. "A case has been registered against six youths



in connection with the incident. Three of them are majors, and three are minors. We are investigating the role of each person involved," CI Balakrishna said.

On receiving information about the renewed

confrontation, police reached the spot. The young people reportedly fled after seeing the police.

Officers later traced and detained 17 of the 20 accused identified in connection with the incident.Police have registered six cases and are examining CCTV footage, statements and other available evidence to establish the sequence of events and determine the individual roles of those involved. "Strict action will be taken against anyone involved in violence or attempts to disturb public order.

We appeal to youngsters not to take the law into their own hands or settle personal disputes through violence," CI Balakrishna said.Police are also verifying whether alcohol or drug consumption contributed to the escalation of the dispute and whether any additional persons were involved.

Senior health officers deployed in four Odisha districts for post-flood management

BHUBANESWAR.(Agency)

With floodwater receding, the state government on Saturday deputed senior health officials to strengthen post-calamity healthcare services in four affected districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Keonjhar and Jajpur.

Special secretary Dr Bijay Mishra has been assigned to Balasore, while public health director Dr Rabindra Mishra has been sent to Bhadrak. Similarly, family welfare director Dr Rajendra Panigrahi and health services director Dr MM Panda have been deputed to Keonjhar and Jajpur respectively.

Chief secretary Anu Garg said the Health department is taking required preventive measures to ensure that no epidemic or outbreak of disease occurs in the flood-affected areas following the

prolonged flooding. Sanitation and disinfection of villages that remained submerged for a



prolonged period will be accorded the highest priority. Once the floodwaters recede, extensive cleaning and disinfection of submerged villages, roads and public places will be undertaken, she said.

Garg said special emphasis will be laid

on preventing outbreak of waterborne and communicable diseases, ensuring the safety of drinking water, maintaining adequate stocks and availability of essential medicines, providing appropriate healthcare services and responding promptly to any emerging health-related issues. She said steps will be taken to ensure the cleaning and disinfection of drinking water sources and immediate removal of decaying and spoiled food items, animal carcasses and other decomposable materials left behind in the affected areas.“The state government is working with full commitment to ensure continuous field-level surveillance, early identification of potential health risks and their prompt management,” Garg said.

In Surat weaving hub, factories to stay shut 2 days a week

Surat.(Agency)

THE IRAN-US-Israel conflict that has affected the supply of crude oil has also impacted the textile weaving industry in Surat. Prices of polyester yarn have skyrocketed, and buyers are not offering higher prices for woven textile grey cloth. The Unn Industrial Estate in Surat has decided to keep its factories shut for two days a week in the coming days, stakeholders said on Saturday.

The Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SGCCI) had earlier made a representation to Union Textile Minister Giriraj Singh and requested exemption in the basic customs duty on DTY (draw textured yarn), POY (partially oriented yarn) and FDY (fully drawn yarn), polyester yarn be reduced to 0 per cent for three months. The demand was accepted by the government, keeping in mind the international conflict situation; and the basic customs duty on PTA and MEG was exempted to 0 per cent for three months from April 2 to July 15, 2026, hoping that the situation may stabilise by then. The demand was accepted by the government, keeping in mind the international conflict situation; and the basic customs duty on PTA and MEG was exempted to 0 per cent for three months from April 2 to July 15, 2026, hoping that the situation may stabilise by then.

From 6 classrooms under terracotta roof to 2-storey school with studio, VR lab: A Gujarat teacher’s journey

The school now has a 7D VR lab, student-run news studio, QR-based lessons, science centre and other innovations.

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

Nitinkumar Mahendrakumar Pathak was, since 2007, teaching at Kadoli Government Primary School in Jalalpure of Navsari district, barely five km from his house. In 2015, as a 28-year-old, he sought a transfer to a tribal school in Rangpur village of Vandsa taluka, 72 km away in the same district of South Gujarat.

The school was like any typical village school, located on a hillock – a single-storey building with a terracotta tiled roof, the walls adorned with portraits of freedom fighters. In the 10 years that Pathak spent there, the school has transformed into a double-storeyed building with a play area, a garden, the centrepiece being a studio where students record “news bulletins.”

Pathak, now 39, is the only primary school teacher shortlisted from Gujarat for the national award by the Ministry of Education

ahead of Teachers’ Day on September 5.

“I worked in an urban area for seven years but wanted to work in a tribal area. Rangpur Government Primary School was a remote school where hardly anyone visited. Today, the Rangpur Government Primary School has emerged as a centre of educational innovation, attracting 2,900 teachers, officers, professors, and educationists from across the state during the past five years. Visitors have not only appreciated the school’s innovative practices but have also adopted and replicated many of its initiatives in their own institutions,” Pathak told The Indian Express.

In a village with a population of 1982, the school has 274 children enrolled in schools. Of these, 180 are from Rangpur village, the rest from villages around it. Over the years, the school has grown from

six rooms to eleven rooms with support from donations totaling Rs 1,48,76,724 received through “public participation”. Apart from the fact that the school’s



capacity grew from 171 to 274, in the current academic session it enrolled 14 students from private schools which is the highest in the decade that has seen a total of 71 students migrate to the Rangpur

government school.

Vandsa, which is a tribal taluka has less than a dozen private schools of which two closed down, says Pathak, a social science teacher and in-charge headmaster of the Rangpur school.Pathak’s ten-year-old son too studied in the same school from Class I till IV before enrolling in the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Vandsa this year in Class V. His wife, Dipika , also a government primary school teacher in Vandsa is elated by declaration of the award. “It is all possible because of the hard work and combined efforts of Nitinkumar, school staff, students and the villagers,” she says.To curb dropout rate, the school produced a film on the importance of education which was shared by then Education Minister Kuber Dindor on his official platform. Dindor gave the school the title.

Recasting India’s Arctic policy

India's Arctic Policy released in 2022 was framed for a world that no longer exists. Once a domain of climate research and environmental stewardship, the Arctic has become a zone of competition over energy resources, shipping routes, critical minerals and military positioning. Accelerating ice melt is making the Northern Sea Route (NSR) along Russia’s Arctic coast a viable maritime corridor between Europe and Asia. New technologies, from autonomous underwater vehicles to satellite-enabled seabed mapping, are transforming Arctic security as strategic fault lines deepen.

The Ukraine war has severely disrupted cooperation within the Arctic Council. With Finland and Sweden now in NATO, Russia is the Arctic Council's only non-NATO member, while renewed US interest in Greenland's critical minerals and energy resources has heightened geopolitical tensions. For India, an observer in the Arctic Council, the implications extend well beyond climate science to commerce, connectivity and security. The Arctic is changing rapidly and India's stated Arctic policy must catch up with the region's transformation. The Arctic states have recently recast their policies. Russia has placed the Arctic at the centre of its strategy, developing the NSR and coastal energy projects. The US Arctic Strategy of 2024 treats the region as a theatre of strategic competition. Canada unveiled an Arctic Defence Plan in March 2026, while Norway's High North Strategy of 2025 balances climate cooperation with growing security concerns.

Collective security efforts are also intensifying. The 2026 Ankara NATO summit underscored the High North's growing prominence as a critical theatre for European defence. Canada and 11 European states committed in July 2026 to strengthen Arctic maritime security, surveillance and deterrence. The EU is updating its Arctic policy this year, broadening its traditional focus on climate, biodiversity and Indigenous rights to include defence, economic security, shipping and critical minerals. The strategic reassessment extends beyond the Arctic. China, Russia's principal Arctic partner, has invested heavily in Russian Arctic LNG projects, ports and offshore facilities aspart of its ‘Ice Silk Road’. Its 2025 agreement with Russia to jointly develop the NSR signals long-term strategic intent. On 12 August 2026, Chinese shipping company Sea Legend launched a weekly Ningbo-Felixstowe(UK) container service via the NSR. In June 2026, Japan directed a cross-ministerial revision of its Arctic policy, citing the region's growing geopolitical importance. South Korea has expanded investment in Arctic shipping and logistics. India too must actively respond to the changing Arctic.

India's 2022 Arctic Policy emphasises scientific research, sustainable development and international cooperation. Although eighty percent of the Arctic Ocean lies within national jurisdictions, changes there have consequences far beyond its waters. The Arctic is warming over three times faster than the global average. Ice loss, particularly in the Barents-Kara Sea, is increasingly linked to variability in the Indian summer monsoon and rising sea levels threatening India's coastal cities and islands. India's multi-alignment provides the framework for deeper Arctic engagement, underpinned by partnerships with all Arctic states. India’s Arctic connection goes back further than often appreciated. In his 1903 book The Arctic Home in the Vedas, Bal Gangadhar Tilak suggested an India-Arctic civilisational link. India was an original signatory to the 1920 Svalbard Treaty. Indian merchant seamen served on Arctic Convoys carrying Lend-Lease supplies to the USSR in World War II; seven who died in 1942 are buried at Murmansk, inside the Arctic Circle. India has long standing ties with the Arctic ports of Arkhangelsk and Severodvinsk, which I visited as Ambassador to Russia; Indian naval programmes have a history of cooperation with the Sevmarsh and Zvezdochka shipyards there. More than 1,500 Indian students currently study medicine at the university in Arkhangelsk.

An intelligent way to ensure AI sovereignty

As India tries to emerge as the AI use capital, it needs to properly measure the tech’s impact and strategically manage dependency on others. Independent evaluation would be essential for both

India’s AI opportunity is not to win the race to the most advanced model. It is to show the world how AI can be made useful to real people, solving real problems. That is what India’s own strategy says, and what framed the 2026 India AI Impact Summit. India has the ingredients: linguistic and cultural diversity, digital public infrastructure at scale, a young technical workforce, and startups working on problems that matter.

Two things stand in the way. The first is that we are measuring impact the wrong way. In the current policy discourse, impact has come to mean adoption and diffusion—how many sectors, how many users, how many languages. These are useful numbers, but they say nothing about whether the systems being adopted actually deliver, and nothing about the new vulnerabilities they create. A system that performs adequately where institutional oversight is strong can cause serious harm where that oversight is thin. The same conditions that let India leapfrog also leave it exposed. Impact has two halves; we are counting one.

The second is dependency. India’s ecosystem of context- and domain-specific models is genuinely vibrant, but almost all of it sits on top of a handful of American labs. Dependency in itself is not the problem; it exists in many sectors. It becomes a problem when you cannot negotiate its terms. AI credits have meanwhile become a form of development assistance, as seen in agreements being signed between leading AI companies and global philanthropies. Neither problem has a single fix. Both will need competition policy, public compute, better redress mechanisms and much else. But one piece is common to both, and it is the piece India has invested in least: independent evaluation. To define impact fully, India must be able to see how the systems it adopts actually perform across its languages and settings, and to detect the harms adoption produces. To manage dependency, it must be able to set conditions on what it accepts, and to act when those conditions are not met. Both turn on the same capacity. This makes evaluation strategic rather than merely technical. It is the layer at which India can assert sovereign authority even where the underlying models are not sovereign. Sovereignty in AI need not mean building the models. It can mean choosing between them on terms India has set. Procurement is where this becomes real. The Indian state is unusual in the scale of its role as an AI adopter: among the largest purchasers, a builder of public compute and datasets, and a funder of indigenous foundation models. A procurement regime that requires



half claimed to measure abstract qualities like “reasoning” or “harmlessness” without defining them. The problems compound across languages: test datasets do not exist for many low-resource languages, and translating English ones fails to capture how people speak or prompt. Even good benchmarks are not enough, because the most consequential effects of AI are not visible at the model level. They emerge as people use systems over time. A frontline health worker who routinely defers to an AI recommendation may lose judgement she once exercised. A welfare officer who overrides an algorithmic flag may face pressure to do so less often. Beyond these interaction harms sit systemic ones—effects on labour markets, on human agency, on cognitive ability.

This is where the gap is starkest. Serious work is now under way in India on model performance, including multilingual benchmarking. On interaction and systemic harms, there is almost nothing—a global survey of generative AI evaluations found fewer than 6 percent accounted for human-AI interaction. These harms need observational, longitudinal, often qualitative methods,

and domain knowledge more than technical knowledge. They are slower, costlier and harder to reduce to clean numbers, which is why they are barely funded. Public trust is also a factor. Across much of the West, enthusiasm for AI has given way to suspicion. India is in a different position: public sentiment here remains optimistic about technology. That optimism is an asset, but it is not permanent. It will hold only if these systems prove safe as well as useful, and if failures are caught by someone other than the companies that built them. Evaluation is how that gets demonstrated. India should also choose its niche. Frontier capability testing is already being done in the UK and the US, which have the compute and secure infrastructure for it; there, India needs partnerships for joint testing and timely sharing of results. Its comparative advantage lies in the application layer, multilingual evaluation and post-deployment monitoring—work every country in the Global South will need, which makes it exportable. Three steps would get us started. Fund application-layer sandboxes, as Singapore does, where third-party evaluators test commercial AI applications and the state turns findings into public guidance, but built around domain communities of practice, with doctors, teachers, farmers and legal aid workers designing the rubrics. Focus the AI Centres of Excellence in health, agriculture and education as certification and assurance bodies rather than pushing them only towards commercial products; assurance is the clearer public-interest mandate.

Third, and most neglected: grow an ecosystem of independent third-party evaluators. None of this works without people to do the work, and India today has very little capacity—some at technical institutions, some in civil society, nothing near what the task requires. The field has to be actively cultivated: training, shared methods and tooling, and institutional homes where an evaluation career is possible. It should be a named budget line for governments and development finance agencies funding AI adoption, not an afterthought. Civil society organisations belong at the centre of that ecosystem, not at its edges. They see systems in use, in context, over time—a vantage no laboratory has, and exactly what interaction and systemic harms require. Their absence from formal evaluation says more about how we have defined technical expertise than about what the work demands. Finally, evaluation is labour. Building datasets and running safety tests exposes people to disturbing content, as content moderation does. Fair pay, psychological support and transparent contracting belong in any publicly funded evaluation programme.

Heed Supreme Court's call for continuity in NTA reforms

The top court directed the Centre to file an affidavit within three weeks detailing steps taken to implement the Radhakrishnan Committee’s recommendations along with indicative timelines

The Supreme Court has rightly emphasised institutionalising reforms within the National Testing Agency, the agency entrusted to conduct pre-medical and other entrance exams of massive consequence to the nation. It directed the Union government to ensure that the newly-constituted taskforce on exam reforms headed by Nandan Nilekani improves upon the K Radhakrishnan committee’s June 2024 recommendations, rather than replacing them “lock, stock and barrel”. The apex court has stressed the need to build on institutional memory and ensure continuity in the process of making exams fool-proof. Paper leaks at the May 2026 NEET-Undergraduate exams—the gateway for students seeking admission to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and nursing BSc courses—affected at least 23 lakh students aspiring for careers in the medical profession, and led to countrywide protests that tragically saw a dozen students dying by suicide purportedly due to severe anxiety caused by the leaks and re-examination. A CBI probe was ordered and

arrests were made. Yet the students at Jantar Mantar



demanding accountability for repeated lapses faced a brutal police crackdown before Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan stepped down. Following this, the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means)

Amendment Act, 2026 was enacted and the taskforce led by Nilekani constituted, which the Centre called “landmark measures” against future paper leaks. However, all of this is still being viewed as inadequate considering the frequency with which exam irregularities keep occurring across India. The Radhakrishnan Committee had recommended shifting India’s entrance exams away from paper-based delivery—which are vulnerable to leaks during printing and transport—to a secure digital mode, using artificial intelligence analytics, biometrics and Aadhaar to prevent impersonation; and change in testing formats, wherein large exams are split into multi-session tests of the candidates’ specific skills or knowledge. The Supreme Court directed the Centre to file an affidavit within three weeks detailing steps taken to implement the Radhakrishnan Committee’s recommendations along with indicative timelines. The apex court cited the Union Public Service Commission exams as large tests held “without a hitch”.

An intelligent way to ensure AI sovereignty

As India tries to emerge as the AI use capital, it needs to properly measure the tech’s impact and strategically manage

At any petrol pump across India, a quiet shift is occurring beneath the surface of daily life. When a motorist fills their tank, they are no longer merely relying on crude oil sourced from the distant oil wells of the Gulf. Instead, nearly a fifth of that fuel is now derived from domestic sources, specifically, the sugarcane fields of Maharashtra and the maize barns of Uttar Pradesh.

This transition to E20 fuel, petrol blended with 20 per cent ethanol, is not merely a slogan or a recent, knee-jerk administrative reaction. It is the culmination of over a decade of deliberate, sustained policy effort. Yet, despite the meticulous planning involved, recent months have seen a surge of misinformation. Rumours regarding reduced mileage, catastrophic engine damage, and even bizarre claims about raw sugarcane juice being used as fuel have clouded public understanding.

To separate the signal from the noise, it is essential to examine E20 through the lens of data, scientific study, and the real-world experiences of manufacturers, rather than succumbing to baseless assertions.

The narrative that ethanol blending is a "hasty" decision made in haste is demonstrably false. The programme originated as a pilot project as early as 2001. A five per cent blend (E5) was rolled out in various states in 2006, followed by a formal notification in the official gazette in January 2013. The National Biofuel Policy of May 2018 subsequently broadened the scope of feedstocks to include maize and surplus grain, rather than relying solely on sugarcane. By 2013-14, blending levels were barely at 1.5 per cent, constrained by feedstock availability. The strategic pivot occurred in June 2021, when NITI Aayog released a roadmap based on extensive consultations with vehicle manufacturers, oil companies, and agricultural experts. The goal was ambitious: to roll out E20 nationwide between 2023 and 2025. The progress has

been steady and quantifiable: 8.1 per cent in 2020-21, rising incrementally each year to hit the 20 per cent target in the November-June cycle of 2025-26. This trajectory reflects a carefully orchestrated process of capacity building, investment, and regulatory readiness, not a sudden or unplanned policy shift.

The Three Pillars: Security, Economy, and Environment

At the core of this policy is the urgent need for energy security. India currently imports approximately 88.5 per cent of its crude oil, leaving the national economy vulnerable to global price volatility and geopolitical instability. The resilience of the country’s fuel supply chain was tested during the February 2026 conflict, where supply chains in the Gulf were threatened; yet, domestic supply remained stable, proving the value of this energy diversification strategy. According to data shared in the Lok Sabha by the Minister of State for Petroleum, Suresh Gopi, on 23 July 2026, the programme has yielded massive dividends: roughly ?1.97 lakh crore saved in foreign exchange since 2014-15, the substitution of 316 lakh metric tonnes of crude oil, and a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 952 lakh metric tonnes. Furthermore, the policy has transformed the economic landscape for Indian farmers. The capital that was once flowing to foreign oil producers is now redirected into the pockets of the agricultural sector. Farmers have received direct payments exceeding ?1.66 lakh crore, playing a crucial role in clearing pending sugarcane dues and improving the profitability of maize cultivation. By evolving into "energy-providers," farmers are now diversifying their income streams, creating a more robust rural economy. Debunking the Performance and Damage Myths

Perhaps the most persistent claim is that E20 sharply reduces fuel efficiency. This myth gained traction because ethanol has a calorific value roughly 30 per cent lower than petrol, leading some to erroneously conclude that mileage must drop by the same margin. The reality is far less dramatic. As clarified by Rahul Bharti, a senior official at Maruti Suzuki, the actual calorific value



difference between E20 and E10 is only about three to three-and-a-half per cent. In practical terms, for a vehicle achieving twenty kilometres per litre, the impact is a negligible 0.6 kilometres per litre, a margin easily overshadowed by factors like tyre pressure or maintenance. Similarly, fears of engine damage have

been proven to be entirely unsubstantiated. With over twenty crore two-wheelers and three crore cars running on this blend, if there were legitimate issues with corrosion or component degradation, they would have manifested as a spike in warranty claims. Instead, data from industry giants like Maruti Suzuki, which serviced 2.84 crore vehicles in FY 2025-26 alone, and Hero MotoCorp shows no evidence of engine failure linked to E20.

Technical analysis supports this: ethanol has a high Research Octane Number (approximately 108.5), which contributes to smoother combustion and better anti-knock properties in high-compression engines. Additionally, its higher heat of vapourisation cools the intake manifold, leading to better pickup and a smoother ride.

Clearing the Fog

The misinformation campaign has also targeted the insurance and political spheres. Claims that insurance companies would reject claims for E20-related damage were debunked as a misrepresentation of out-of-context screenshots; the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) has confirmed that warranties and insurance policies remain fully valid.

Furthermore, allegations that the government is "forcing" ethanol imports due to international political pressure have been categorically denied. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan have both clarified that ethanol is explicitly excluded from international trade concessions. The programme is a domestic initiative, born of India's unique needs, and entirely unrelated to external trade

After decades of wait, drought-hit regions in Andhra to get water project

VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)

Marking the end of a three-decade wait for the drought-prone regions of Prakasam, Markapuram, Nellore and Kadapa districts, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has announced that Phase-I of the Poola Subbaiah Veligonda Project will be officially commissioned on August 31, 2026. At a programme held at his Camp Office on Saturday, the Chief Minister handed over the third-tranche rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) compensation cheque for Rs 250 crore to 2,027 displaced families.

This brings the total R&R compensation disbursed by the NDA government to Rs 768 crore across 6,206 affected families in just 48 days. The breakdown includes Rs 318 crore released to 2,557 families in Phase 1, Rs 200 crore to 1,622 families in Phase 2, and Rs 250 crore to 2,027 families in Phase 3, leaving only Rs 132 crore in remaining dues that the State has committed to clearing swiftly.

Phase-I of the project will immediately draw floodwaters from the foreshore of the Srisailem Reservoir near Kollam Vagu through twin 18.8-km tunnels drilled across the Nallamala Hills into the Nallamala Sagar reservoir.

This initial phase will supply drinking water to nearly 4 lakh people and irrigate 1.19 lakh acres. Over the last two years alone, the State government has pumped Rs 2,250 crore into accelerating civil and tunnel works to ensure the project deadline is met. Addressing the displaced families, Naidu reflected on his personal link to the project, noting that he laid its original foundation stone in 1996.

Four of a family, include two children killed as commercial vehicle explodes in Gujarat's Kutch

AHMEDABAD. (Agency)

Four people, including two brothers and two children, were killed after a small commercial vehicle, locally known as a tempo, exploded in Gujarat's Kutch district on Saturday, police said.

The incident took place in the Bhaganwada area near Kotda Jadodar in Nakhatrana when the vehicle was passing through the area. The deceased were identified as Mamad Ilyas Kumbhar, around 30, his brother Noor Mamad Ilyas Kumbhar, around 26, and two children, both aged around three years, police said. The explosion was reportedly powerful enough to tear away the rear portion of the vehicle, while its sound was heard in surrounding areas. The blast caused panic among residents and people in the vicinity. Nakhatrana police reached the spot after receiving information about the incident and launched an investigation. Police teams secured the area and collected evidence to determine the cause of the explosion.

The exact cause of the blast is not yet known. Investigators are examining the material that was being carried inside the vehicle and whether it could have triggered the explosion. A Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) team has also been involved in the investigation and is examining the vehicle and material recovered from the site to establish the nature and source of the explosion.

Week after labour unrest, Surat textile industry agrees to workers' key demands to 'ensure peace & productivity'

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

AHEAD OF another weekend, Surat's textile industries gave in to some of the demands raised by labourers one of which was extra pay for working on Sundays or off days. Last Sunday (August 16), labourers in the Vedant Eco Park in Amroli industrial estate forced shutting down of embroidery units, prompting workers to exit the factories, leading to a clash with the police.

In all three FIRs were registered at the Amroli police station following the violence and the labour unrest and eight persons were arrested. On Friday, representatives of the state labour department and around 400 textile industrialists met for the second time in the week, with the intervention of city police officers, to discuss the demands by the labourers – weekly off on Sundays or extra wages, eight-hour daily shifts instead of 12, salary to be paid in the first week of the month and Diwali bonus.

In the meeting led by Assistant Commissioner of Police Parth Chovatiya, police officers tried to convince the industries to concede to their demands so that production is not hampered and there were no law and order issues. Those textile embroidery units that participated were from Ambrotech industrial estate, Sai Ambro, Vedant Eco park 1 and 2, Anajani estates and others. A labour department official, who did not wish to be named, told this newspaper, "After the meeting, we realised that finding no platform to air their grievances, they resorted to social media to convey the message to the unit owners.

CJP convenor Abhijit Dipke booked over alleged school intrusion in Maharashtra's Latur

FIR alleges Dipke and others disrupted proceedings and shared footage of the school online

Mumbai. (Agency)

Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) convenor Abhijit Dipke has been booked along with CJP's Ajay Shinde and four to five unidentified persons for allegedly entering a Zilla Parishad school in Latur district without permission, questioning teachers in front of students, filming the proceedings and circulating the footage on social media. The case was registered at AUSA police station on Saturday following a complaint by a 53-year-old Zilla Parishad education department employee.

According to the police record, the incident took place around 1.10 pm on August 20 at a Zilla Parishad school in Urdh AUSA, around

two km from AUSA in Latur district.

The complaint states that Dipke, Shinde and the unidentified persons entered the school premises and sat among the students. They allegedly questioned those present about teaching and government-related work, disrupting the functioning of the school. The complainant claimed that the group recorded the proceedings and circulated the footage on social media. The complaint states that the footage portrayed the school in a manner suggesting that students from another school had been made to sit there, thereby defaming the institution.

The complainant further alleged that the accused confronted a teacher and, when questioned about their conduct, threatened him with suspension. The complaint records an alleged remark that the teacher would be suspended and had no shame.

"The accused persons, acting in connivance

with each other, went and sat among the schoolchildren and asked various questions, thereby creating an obstruction in the teaching work and government work. They also entered the school without



authorization, recorded the incident and made it viral in the media. Although the children were students of the same school, they alleged that students of another school had been made to sit there, thereby defaming the school. They also looked at the teacher

there and said, "Yeh log haram ka khat hain" (These people take illegal money) and threatened him, saying, 'I will get you suspended,'" the First Information Report (FIR) states. The FIR alleges that the accused obstructed teaching and government work at the school. Police have invoked Section 132 of the BNS, which deals with assault or use of criminal force against a public servant to deter him from performing his duty, as well as Sections 329(3) (criminal trespass), 351(2) (criminal intimidation), 356(2) (defamation) and 3(5) (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention).

Dipke had launched the 'School Thik Karo' campaign on Independence Day in his native Hingoli after spearheading protests over the NEET paper leak, which led to the resignation of then Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. The campaign aims to improve facilities in government schools.

Mumbai corporators keep getting disqualified, and the rivals they beat stand to gain

Eight months after Mumbai finally elected a civic house, five wards are already without a corporator, the latest set to be Sena UBT leader and former mayor Vishakha Raut's. The Indian Express went on the ground to see who residents now turn to.

Mumbai. (Agency)

Through July, a single clogged drain ran through the lives of the chawls around Govandi's Raman Mama Nagar. Every downpour sent it over, and the muck it pushed back into homes turned the narrow gully into a gutter. When the residents took their complaint to the BMC's M/East ward office, they were sent looking for someone who no longer existed on paper. "When we went, the BMC official said that the corporator could use their development funds to clean the drain and resolve our problem," said Reshma Singh, who lives in one of the chawls with her family of five. The corporator in question, ward 137's Shamir Ramzan Patel, had been disqualified weeks earlier over an allegedly invalid caste certificate. With the seat empty and no development fund to tap, the residents eventually pooled money from their own

pockets and had the drain cleared on July 31. That small act, citizens paying to do a corporator's job, is the clearest picture of



what has quietly happened to a stretch of Mumbai this monsoon.

Barely eight months after the city finally elected a civic house, following a gap of nearly four years under an administrator, five BMC wards are already without a

corporator. A sixth is about to join them. In almost every case the reason is the same. A caste certificate submitted at nomination has been ruled invalid, and the elected representative removed. One of the five is different, a death rather than a disqualification. But the pattern across Govandi, Bhandup and Kurla holds at the cruelest moment, peak monsoon, when residents lean on their corporator the most.

Challenged by rival

In case after case, the person who challenged the winner's caste certificate is the rival that the winner had beaten at the polls. Flagging an invalid certificate is well within their rights, and under the civic body's rules there is a direct consequence to it, when a corporator is disqualified, the candidate who finished second in that ward is declared the new incumbent. The challenger stands to move into the seat.

Explained: Haryana's stamp duty exemption for daughters' children

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Haryana has clarified a long-standing ambiguity over its 100 per cent stamp duty exemption on lifetime transfers of immovable property within families. The clarification now makes it clear that daughters' children are entitled to the same stamp duty benefit as sons' children. The issue arose from a 2014 notification whose English and Hindi versions used different terms for "grandchildren". The discrepancy led to confusion at the local level and, in some cases, denied daughters' children the exemption. The government has now formally corrected the wording through a gazette corrigendum. Here is what the clarification means, why the issue surfaced and how it relates to women's property rights.

What exactly happened?

On June 16, 2014, the Haryana government

remitted 100 per cent stamp duty under Section 9 of the Indian Stamp Act, 1899, on property transfer deeds executed during the owner's lifetime in favour of specified blood



relations, including parents, children, grandchildren, siblings and spouses.

However, while the English version of the notification broadly used the term "grandchildren", the Hindi version mentioned only 'pautra-pautri', which

generally refers to a son's children. This created confusion at the level of local sub-registrar offices and, often, resulted in daughters' children being denied the stamp duty exemption.

Why did it not become an issue earlier?

The issue remained largely unnoticed because property transfers in Haryana have traditionally followed a patriarchal pattern. Agricultural land, residential plots and other immovable property are generally transferred by parents to their sons, while transfers in favour of daughters have historically been less common. In some cases, property owners also transferred property directly to their grandsons or granddaughters. However, since transfers to daughters themselves were relatively fewer, transfers to their children were even less common. As a result, the ambiguity in the notification did not emerge as a major administrative issue.

NFR Achieves Major Milestone in Green Energy with 42.1 MWp Solar Capacity

The Sikh Times

Maligaon, 23rd August: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) is making significant progress towards its commitment to green energy and sustainable railway operations through the expansion of solar power infrastructure across its divisions and units. As a major green-energy milestone, 23.7 MWp of solar power capacity was commissioned during January to July 2026, the highest among all Zonal Railways of Indian Railways. With this achievement, the total installed solar capacity across NFR has reached 42.1 MWp as of July 2026, since the inception of its solarisation initiative in 2011. Among the divisions, Lumding Division, including the Guwahati portion, has achieved the highest cumulative solar power installation of 17.7 MWp, followed by Rangiya Division with 9.6 MWp. Alipurduar, Katihar and Tinsukia Divisions have also made significant contributions towards enhancing NFR's overall solar power capacity, further strengthening its commitment to clean and sustainable energy. The solar installations have delivered significant operational and financial benefits for

NFR. During the financial year 2025–26,



solar power generation reached approximately 114 lakh units, resulting in savings of around Rs. 8.6 crores. This marks an

increase of approximately 90% in solar



energy generation and 95.45% in financial savings compared to 2024–25, when around 60 lakh units of solar energy were

generated, resulting in savings of approximately Rs. 4.4 crores. The substantial growth in solar generation and cost savings reflects NFR's sustained efforts towards reducing its carbon footprint, promoting clean energy and optimizing energy expenditure. Further strengthening its commitment to green energy, NFR has 9 MWp of additional solar power capacity currently under various stages of implementation across its divisions. Major installations are planned in Lumding, Rangiya, Katihar and Alipurduar Divisions, which are expected to significantly augment NFR's overall renewable energy capacity in the near future. These initiatives reaffirm Northeast Frontier Railway's commitment to sustainable and environment-friendly railway operations and its proactive contribution towards Indian Railways' vision of becoming a net-zero carbon emitter. The continued expansion of solar power not only helps in reducing carbon emissions and conserving the environment but also provides long-term economic benefits through savings in energy costs, while promoting greater energy efficiency and self-reliance.

Monsoon Session formally not ended 10 days after adjournment amid delimitation bill buzz

Ten days after Parliament was adjourned indefinitely, the Monsoon Session has not been prorogued. The delay has intensified questions over a possible push by the Centre for a delimitation-linked women's reservation amendment.

Delhi. (Agency)

Ten days after both Houses of Parliament were adjourned sine die, the Monsoon session has still not been formally ended, fuelling speculation that the government may be keeping its options open to pass a key bill without calling a new session. The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha were adjourned sine die on August 13. Usually, a session is prorogued, or formally ended, within three to four days. However, no notification proroguing the Monsoon session had been issued till Sunday morning. The Budget session had ended on April 18 and was prorogued on April 20. Under constitutional provisions, the president summons and prorogues Parliament on the recommendation of the government. There has been strong speculation that the

government could bring a bill to amend the women's reservation law so that it can be implemented before the 2029 parliamentary polls. An earlier attempt during the Budget session had failed as the government could not gather the numbers. Opposition parties, especially those from the south, were concerned that population-based delimitation would reduce their strength in the Lok Sabha. To address these concerns, the government has worked on a formula to increase the number of Lok Sabha seats across states and Union territories by a uniform 50 per cent. There were also strong indications that the government could try to get the Constitution amendment bill passed after Independence Day. The Congress on Sunday questioned why the session had not been prorogued even 10 days after it was

adjourned sine die. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh asked whether Union Home Minister Amit Shah was still looking for his "super-tainted" two-thirds majority to pass the delimitation-linked Constitutional amendment bill in a special session. Ramesh said the gap between the Lok Sabha being adjourned sine die and its prorogation is usually two to four days, though there have been several instances

when both happened on the same day. "Ten days have gone by since this Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die but still there is no information on its prorogation," he said. He added that while the gap for the Monsoon session in 2015 was 28 days and in 2021 it was 20 days, there were no "diabolical" moves afoot then. Speculation over the government's next move on the delimitation-linked Women's Reservation Bill has continued after Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay raised the issue at the Southern Zonal Council meeting in Mahabalipuram on August 21, which was chaired by Shah. "I urge the Union government to provide a clear legislative assurance that no state will suffer a reduction in its percentage of representation in Parliament on account of its success in population stabilisation," Vijay said.



Three Delhi police personnel injured in chilli powder attack, 17-year-old arrested

Delhi. (Agency)

Police have apprehended one of two accused, a 17-year-old, for allegedly attacking three personnel with bricks and sticks and throwing chilli powder into their eyes while they were patrolling the Bhalswa Dairy in Delhi's Mukundpur on Saturday. The other accused, however, fled the scene. The incident took place around 3.30 pm after staff of Bhalswa Dairy police station returned to the area following the seizure of a motorcycle allegedly being driven without valid documents under Section 66 of the Delhi Police (DP) Act, they said. Head Constables Dinesh and Rajesh had found the motorcycle during patrolling and brought it to the police station for deposition. "Later, the motorcycle owner and some of his family members allegedly confronted the policemen and turned violent. The accused allegedly threw chilli powder into the eyes of the police personnel and attacked them with bricks and sticks," a police officer said. "Head Constable Tinu, who reached the spot to assist his colleagues, was also attacked," officer said. All three personnel sustained injuries. Of them, Dinesh suffered a head injury. They were provided medical treatment and are stated to be stable. A video purportedly showing the assault on the police personnel also went viral on social media following the incident. An FIR has been registered at Bhalswa Dairy police station. Police said the main accused, Sunil alias Pankaj, who remains absconding, is a known bad character in the area. According to officials, five criminal cases have been registered against him, including two under the NDPS Act and others involving serious offences.

Delhi University clarifies on CUET admissions, says 'Class 12 route only for vacant seats'

Delhi. (Agency)

Delhi University on Saturday clarified that admissions through the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) remain the primary mode of undergraduate intake, with students allotted colleges and courses strictly on the basis of merit and preference. DU Registrar Vikas Gupta said CUET-based admissions prioritise student choice from nearly 1,500 college-course combinations. "When admission happens via CUET, we prioritise the student's choice.



They select their preferred college and course from nearly 1,500 combinations. Allocation is done strictly on the basis of marks and ranking," he said. He added that students receive seats according to their merit position, with some opting for colleges closer to the main campus and others choosing institutions across the capital. Gupta clarified that admissions based on Class 12 marks are a separate exercise, limited to programmes and colleges where seats remain vacant after CUET rounds. "These are not a replacement for CUET admissions," he said, adding that the process was only to fill remaining vacancies. Gupta said the university had nearly filled its sanctioned undergraduate capacity, with around 70,512 admissions against approximately 71,439 seats.

Delhi HC seeks NALSA's stand on PIL seeking free aid for needy to tender electronic evidence

The bench observed that prima facie, the inability of the needy to present electronic evidence in the absence of means to seek assistance of an expert impinged upon their right to access to justice.

Delhi. (Agency)

Delhi High Court has sought the stand of the Centre and NALSA on a PIL seeking free forensic expert assistance for the needy to enable them to present electronic evidence in court under the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam. A bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia issued notices to the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and the Centre on the PIL filed by two lawyers, Zeeshan Ekhlague and Aman Bhide. The bench observed that prima facie, the inability of the needy to present electronic evidence in the absence of



means to seek assistance of an expert impinged upon their right to access to justice. "We accordingly require the NALSA to consider the matter and apprise the court of a possible scheme which may be applicable," the court said on August 19. The petitioners said that under the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA), tendering electronic evidence in a case by any person required a certificate

signed by an expert and those belonging to marginalised, vulnerable and poor backgrounds may lack the financial means to obtain this assistance. The petition said that in response to an RTI application, NALSA specifically stated that "there is no provision of expert assistance" to persons entitled to free legal aid for preparing certificates as per Section 63 of the BSA, 2023.

Delhi Behind the scenes A tale of consent and confrontation in a Metro ride

Delhi. (Agency)

A routine Metro ride turned into a dramatic confrontation at AIIMS station this week. A woman reportedly accused CISF personnel of photographing her, triggering an argument with fellow passengers. What began as a complaint soon escalated into a scuffle, with passengers confronting the security official. The incident has since prompted an inquiry, and the CISF personnel were suspended pending investigation. **Yet another extension** The electoral roll revision in Delhi now reads less like a schedule and more like a series of polite extensions. The draft roll, initially scheduled to be out on August 5, has had over three revisions. apologetically, for a little more time. **90-minute standoff saves family from fake officials** A real-life crime thriller unfolded in Rohini when a group posing as CBI officials arrived at a businessman's



home this week, to allegedly conduct a raid. But they met a tough gatekeeper. The businessman's wife refused to open the door, demanding proper identification and a search warrant. For nearly 90 minutes, she held her ground as the alleged officials tried to convince her. Neighbours eventually gathered and questioned them. Unable to produce any documents, they fled. **Biometric machines meet a water crisis** Government offices found an unusual problem with their biometric attendance system: water. Engineers reportedly discovered water inside several attendance machines, despite no nearby plumbing or apparent source. The discovery raised suspicions that some devices may have been deliberately damaged to disrupt attendance recording.

Land pooling for infra push gets boost in master plan

Delhi. (Agency)

The Delhi Master Plan 2047 has strengthened the city's land pooling framework to facilitate planned development across nearly 200 sq km of Delhi's Urban Extension areas, with the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) planning around 600 km of new roads to support the expansion. The strengthened framework seeks to shift development in these areas towards an infrastructure-first approach, with roads of 30 metres and above to be notified and developed by the DDA. The new urban areas are also planned with schools, healthcare facilities, parks, green spaces, commercial centres and other public amenities alongside housing. Originally notified in 2018, the land pooling policy allows private landowners to voluntarily participate in the planned development of Delhi's Urban Extension areas, with the DDA acting as a facilitator. Under the new master plan, the framework provides multiple development models aimed at accelerating implementation. Apart from voluntary assembly of land by individual landowners and development through consortiums, the plan introduces Town Planning Schemes as an alternative mechanism for integrated and contiguous development. The minimum area for such a scheme has been fixed at 20 hectares. The plan also introduces inclusive zoning, allowing a mix of activities within residential plots depending on the Right of Way of roads. The provision is aimed at creating neighbourhoods where housing, economic activities and essential services are located closer together. Another major feature is the proposed high-density mixed-use development along Urban Extension Road-II (UER-II). The land pooling area covers 105 revenue villages across six planning zones—K-I, L, N, P-II, part of P-I and J—which are divided into 138 sectors. According to the DDA, more than 7,615 applications had been received and over 7,885 hectares of land registered or pooled till July 2026.

India's Rocket Launches Costliest Among Major Space Powers: Cambridge Study

While the global average launch cost in 2025 stood at \$3,868 per kilogram, the US averaged \$3,225 per kilogram, Japan \$5,287, China \$5,809, Russia \$6,682 and Europe \$9,897. India topped the list at \$13,302 per kilogram.

Delhi. (Agency)

As India marks its third National Space Day, celebrating the success of Chandrayaan-3 and the country's expanding ambitions in orbit and beyond, a new detailed academic study from two of Europe's most respected institutions has thrown up an uncomfortable question for the Indian space establishment. A 2026 University of Cambridge study finds India's per-kilogram launch costs are four times higher than America's and, in fact, the costliest in the world. A peer-reviewed paper published in the respected Elsevier journal Economics Letters by economists Alessio Terzi of the University of Cambridge and Francesco Nicoli of Politecnico di Torino, Turin,

Italy's oldest technical university, suggests the answer may be far more complicated than the popular narrative would suggest. Using what the authors describe as a novel database covering more than 6,740 rocket launches between 1960 and 2025, the researchers conclude that India's average cost of launching one kilogram of payload to Low Earth Orbit in 2025 was about \$13,302 per kilogram, the highest among major spacefaring nations studied. By comparison, the United States recorded the lowest cost at \$3,225 per kilogram. This means India's per kilogram launches cost almost four times higher than America's. The finding is striking because it directly contradicts one of the most widely

repeated claims associated with India's space programme. For decades, ISRO has been cited globally as a model of frugal engineering. From launching missions at a fraction of Western costs to popular comparisons between space missions and everyday expenses, the image of India achieving more for less

has become deeply embedded in the public imagination. Such comparisons have often shaped public perception. In 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "A one-km auto rickshaw ride in Ahmedabad takes Rs 10, and India reached Mars at Rs 7 per km by Mangalyaan, which is really amazing," while speaking about India's talent pool and its potential to become one of the top most countries in the world. At times, such comparisons have arguably done the programme's public image few favours. On August 21, Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with CEOs and founders of 20 Indian space startups, where he called for creating an ecosystem and an environment.



NEWS BOX

Olise helps Bayern past Dortmund in German Supercup



DORTMUND. (Agency)

IMichael Olise scored a goal and created another as Bayern Munich won 2-1 at old foes Borussia Dortmund in the season-opening German Supercup on Saturday. After a starring role with France at the World Cup, Olise was Bayern's most dangerous attacker, regularly tearing down the right flank.He found makeshift midfielder Nathaniel Brown for Bayern's 28th-minute opener and then scored one of his own just before the break.A late goal for former Wolves striker Fabio Silva brought Dortmund closer and the hosts could have levelled deep into stoppage time but Maximilian Beier scuffed a golden chance when through on oal.“It's a magnificent victory to kick off the season,” Bayern striker Harry Kane told Sky. "Winning the trophy away at our league rival's home stadium is, of course, a great start to the season."Bayern were rusty and barely resembled the barnstorming side which lost just once domestically last season but had enough quality to see off a rebuilding Dortmund team playing in the season opener for the first time since 2021.The victory meant Bayern won the trophy for the 12th time and a second time in a row since it was renamed for club legend Franz Beckenbauer in 2025.Bayern coach Vincent Kompany said the win showed his side had the hunger to repeat last year's heroics.Some people maybe think we'll have a drop because we won everything last year. But that won't be the case, we won't rest and will try to win everything," Kompany told reporters.With new German coach Jurgen Klopp watching on, Bayern boss Kompany pulled a selection shock by naming left-back Brown behind Kane in attacking midfield.Summer arrival Brown seemed to struggle in the unfamiliar role early but was on the spot to put Bayern in front. An on-rushing Olise was felled on the edge of the box but the ball fell to Brown, who calmly slotted home.

Kujur, Gurindervir humbled at home before Asian Games. And that is a good thing

Bhubaneswar. (Agency)

Animesh Kujur and Gurindervir Singh, the trailblazers of Indian 100m sprinting, were humbled at home at the Continental Tour Silver meet in Bhubaneswar on Saturday, August 22.The result was significant. It was the first time since April 2025, in more than a year, that neither Animesh nor Gurindervir won a race in India. The result, in front of a packed Kalinga Stadium crowd, mostly composed of young students, also meant that their poor results stretched into a second competition.Animesh and Guri were India's trailblazers at the recently concluded Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. Battling chilly conditions and, in Guri's case, a slight hamstring injury, both runners failed to reach the final of their individual events.Gurindervir put up a horror show in the men's 100m sprint,



finishing in 10.39 seconds and failing to progress from the heats.In comparison, Animesh did well in his 200m sprint, qualifying for the semi-final. But an unfortunate Lane 1 in the semis meant that he could not use his height and stride to his advantage, clocking 20.65 seconds and failing to progress to the final. Animesh's coach, Martin Owens, rued the fact that it was his mistake that prevented Animesh from reaching the final. "I should have read the rules better. It was my failure," Owens lamented before Saturday. **A CHANCE TO RESET AT HOME** What Owens meant was that they should either have run faster in the heats to get out of being placed in Lane 1, or run fast enough in the block before the competition to earn a bye to the semi-finals, which would have given Animesh a better lane at the CWG.

Shoriful Islam scripts history with seven-wicket haul vs Australia in Mackay Test

AUS vs BAN: Shoriful Islam produced Bangladesh's best away Test bowling figures with 7/48 on Day 2 in Mackay. His record spell helped bowl Australia out for 210 and gave Bangladesh a 146-run first-innings lead.

Mackay. (Agency)

Shoriful Islam produced a sensational spell on Day 2 of the second Test between Australia and Bangladesh in Mackay on Sunday, August 23, claiming 7/48 as the hosts were bowled out for 210. The left-arm pacer's career-best haul gave Bangladesh a 146-run first-innings lead after they had been dismissed for just 64.Australia resumed the day on 165/8 and added 45 runs in 12.3 overs before being bowled out before lunch. Shoriful completed his seven-

wicket haul by trapping Cameron Green lbw for 67 with a sharp inswinging yorker, while Taijul Islam removed Josh Hazlewood for six to bring Australia's innings to an end.Nathan Lyon remained unbeaten on 32 and, alongside Hazlewood, frustrated Bangladesh with a 24-run partnership for the 10th wicket. Lyon's resistance ensured Australia crossed 200, but Bangladesh had still secured a sizeable advantage after their remarkable bowling effort.Shoriful's figures were the standout performance of the innings and marked the first seven-wicket haul by a Bangladesh bowler against Australia. His 7/48 also became the best innings figures by a Bangladesh bowler in an away Test, surpassing Taijul Islam's 7/138 against Zimbabwe earlier this year.

SHORIFUL MAKES HISTORY IN MACKAY The 24-year-old's spell was particularly significant given the context of the series. Hasan Mahmud had taken 6/55 in the first Test in Darwin, which had been the best figures by a Bangladesh bowler against

Australia in Tests. His nine wickets in that match played a major role in Bangladesh securing their first-ever Test win in



Australia.Shoriful has now gone one better in Mackay, producing the best figures by a visiting bowler against Australia since Curtly Ambrose took 7/25 in 1993.His wickets included key members of Australia's batting order and prevented the hosts from turning a precarious position into a commanding total.

Australia had slipped to 41/3 before Steve Smith and Green put together a 77-run partnership. Smith made 42 off 74 balls, hitting six fours, while Green's 67 came from 105 deliveries and included 10 boundaries.Shoriful then broke through to put Australia under sustained pressure, eventually finishing with seven wickets. **STARC STRIKES, BUT BANGLADESH STILL LEAD** Bangladesh's advantage was quickly reduced when they began their second innings. Mitchell Starc struck twice in the third over, having Shadman Islam caught by Marnus Labuschagne for one before bowling Mominul Haque for a duck with the very next delivery.Pat Cummins then removed Tanzid Hasan for nine, caught by Starc at deep fine leg after a miscued pull. Bangladesh reached 39/3 at lunch, still 107 runs ahead, with captain Najmul Hossain Shanto unbeaten on 23 and Mushfiquur Rahim on four.

Saransh Jain makes Test debut in Colombo at 33, Kuldeep Yadav misses out

IND vs SL: Saransh Jain finally received his maiden India Test cap at 33 after years of domestic consistency. His debut in Colombo came as Kuldeep Yadav missed out with an infection, adding another twist to India's spin selection.

Colombo. (Agency)

Saransh Jain was handed his much-awaited maiden India Test cap as he made his debut in the second Test against Sri Lanka in Colombo on Sunday, with Kuldeep Yadav left out of the playing XI. The Madhya Pradesh all-rounder received his cap from temmate and veteran all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja during the team huddle before the start of the Colombo Test.India won the toss and captain Shubman Gill elected to bat first at the Sinhalese Sports Club. Gill confirmed Jain's debut at the toss, but his explanation for Kuldeep's absence came as a surprise, with the India captain revealing that the left-arm wrist-spinner



had been dropped because of an "infection". **IND vs SL, 2nd Test Day 1: UPDATES** India entered the second Test with a 1-0 lead after their commanding 165-run victory in Galle. Kuldeep had played the opening Test but managed only one wicket

from 25 overs, while Ravindra Jadeja and debutant Manav Suthar made a greater impact with the ball. Jain had strengthened his case with years of consistent performances in domestic cricket and a productive stint in Sri Lankan conditions. During India A's recent tour, he took six wickets across two matches and scored an unbeaten 70, further underlining his suitability to the conditions.His selection gives India another right-arm finger-spin option while also adding batting depth to the lower order. With India continuing to favour a five-bowler combination, Jain's ability to contribute in both departments provides the team with a different balance.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi out for 8 on Duleep Trophy debut as vice-captain



Mackay. (Agency)

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's much-anticipated first day as East Zone vice-captain ended in disappointment as the teenage batter was dismissed for just eight runs in the Duleep Trophy 2026 quarter-final against North East Zone. After all the attention surrounding his red-ball audition, his stay at the crease lasted only six deliveries.Opening alongside Abhimanyu Easwaran after East Zone were asked to bat first at the BCCI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, Sooryavanshi initially looked ready to make an impact. Right-arm medium pacer Bishworjit Konthoujam was the bowler, and the left-hander immediately showed the attacking intent that has become a trademark of his rapid rise.Two boundaries came off successive deliveries. The first was tucked through mid-wicket after Konthoujam angled the ball into him, before Sooryavanshi punched the next delivery through cover for another four. But just when it appeared the 15-year-old was settling into his innings, Konthoujam found the answer. He corrected his line and length for the final delivery of the over, bowling a good-length ball just outside of Sooryavanshi tried to play the ball on the up through point, but the shot carried straight to the fielder at gully. Just like that, the big red-ball audition was over, with the youngster walking back for eight and East Zone losing one of their most closely watched batters. **A DISAPPOINTING START FOR SOORYAVANSHI** There was plenty riding on Sooryavanshi's Duleep Trophy campaign. The Bihar youngster had been handed the added responsibility of East Zone vice-captaincy, serving as deputy to India wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan in a squad that also includes veteran fast bowler Mohammed Shami.f and cramping Sooryavanshi for room.

Men's Hockey World Cup: How India can still reach the semifinals

New Delhi. (Agency)

Absolutely. I'd place the subhead **after the opening two paragraphs**, once the qualification scenario has been established. That gives the story a natural break before getting into the complicated calculations.India's hopes of reaching the semifinals of the 2026 Men's Hockey World Cup are still alive, but their route to the last four is a complicated one. Following Argentina's 3-1 win over England, India have been handed a lifeline despite losing both of their matches in Pool E. The Netherlands have already secured their semifinal place with six points, leaving India, Argentina and England fighting for the remaining spot. **INDIA NEED A BIG WIN** The equation is straightforward on the surface. India must beat Argentina in their final Pool E match, while the Netherlands must beat England in the other game. An



England win or draw against the Dutch would end India's semifinal hopes. The margin of victory, however, could prove decisive.India have scoed three goals and conceded seven so far. A 3-1 win over Argentina, for example, would take India to six goals scored and eight conceded. If the Netherlands then beat

England 2-0, England would finish with five goals scored and seven conceded, allowing India to move ahead But if India win 3-1 and the Netherlands beat England 3-1, both India and England would finish with six goals scored and eight conceded. The qualification battle would then move to the next tiebreaker: field goals.That is where the equation becomes even more difficult for India. They currently have just one field goal in Pool E, scored by Dilpreet Singh against England. England, meanwhile, have three field goals, all of them coming against India.India therefore need to win by as big a margin as possible against Argentina, while also hoping the Netherlands can beat England convincingly enough to keep the goal calculations in their favour.There is an added challenge waiting for India in Argentina. The two teams have already met twice in the FIH Pro League this year, with Argentina winning both encounters.

8,000 fans at a badminton carnival. How Delhi smashed the doubts at BWF Worlds

As many as 8,000 fans packed Delhi's IGI Stadium on the semifinals day, turning the BWF World Championships into a badminton carnival. They came for stars, found new heroes and smashed doubts about Delhi's appetite for badminton.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Two young girls took a quick sprint towards the vantage point at the Indira Gandhi Stadium in Delhi. An Se Young, the World No. 1 women's singles shuttler and one of the biggest names on the circuit, was about to pass through the replica of the India Gate, the entry point to the tunnel through which players enter and exit the court.She defeated

World No. 2 Wang Zhi Yi in an hour and a minute, her first match at the BWF World Championships that extended beyond an hour.“We have come today. We will come tomorrow as well,” said Devasyaa Kadam and Adira Sinha, best friends who go to the same school in Gurugram. “An Se Young Rules,” read one of the two banners they had handcrafted for their Saturday trip to the national capital. “Yes, we are huge fans of An Se Young. There was extra motivation to cheer for her because Wang had beaten PV Sindhu yesterday,” Devasyaa said.The Olympic champion has been the undisputed queen of badminton over the last few years, and it showed in the way fans in Delhi adored her. She had already won the India Open three times, including earlier this year, and is yet to lose a completed match in India.

But Saturday was different. For perhaps the first time, An played in front of a hall packed to the rafters. It felt like a



carnival, a crowd unlike anything badminton had seen in the country. And An was moved. After winning the last point of her semi-final, she turned towards the stands. She waved, bowed and acknowledged the chants of her name. Eventually, she ran towards

one section of the crowd, removed her famous “Rambo” bandana and flung it into the stands.A couple of hours earlier, the main gallery had been brimming with people, energy and chants of “Bharat Mata Ki Jai”.It was not for PV Sindhu, the biggest name in Indian badminton at the moment. It was not for Lakshya “bhai superstar” Sen, who generally draws healthy crowds in Delhi.It was for Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly.The women's doubles pair had won over the national capital during the week. When usual suspects Sindhu, Lakshya and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy-Chirag Shetty failed to make it to the weekend, Gayatri and Treesa became the Indian pair keeping the home crowd invested in the first World Championships hosted by India in 17 years. Ayush Shetty, who stunned World No. 1 Shi Yuqi on the opening day, and Unnati Hooda had provided flashes of brilliance. But only Gayatri and Treesa made it to the podium.

Is infrastructure-led growth reshaping Mumbai’s next wave of residential demand?

Kolkata. (Agency)

Mumbai is witnessing heightened activity in the residential real estate market, according to data from industry players and property registrations in June might have reached a 14-year peak in the month of June. Developers think that infrastructure development is turning into one of the strongest drivers of residential demand in Mumbai and the wider MMR. The impact is not limited to improving travel times; better connectivity is changing the relative attractiveness of micro-markets by bringing previously peripheral locations closer to employment hubs, commercial districts and established neighbourhoods, thinks Shankesh Sanghvi, managing director of Sanghvi Realty. **Better connectivity drives up demand** “We are already seeing this reflected in Mumbai’s housing activity. The city had 80,221 property registrations in the first half of 2026 which was up 6% year-over-year and the best first-half performance since 2013. This was due to better facilities and connectivity, which kept end-user demand high,” he said. Sanghvi says the next phase of residential growth will likely be led by corridors rather than concentrated in already established areas. New places to live are popping up all over the MMR thanks to road connections, metro growth, and big regional infrastructure projects. “Recent market activity in places that have benefited from projects like the Metro network, Atal Setu, and other upgrades to connectivity shows how infrastructure can bring value to micro-markets that haven’t been explored much before,” he remarked. **Not a standalone trigger though** However, he is quick to point out that though significant, infrastructure is not a standalone trigger for housing demand. “Connectivity needs to be accompanied by employment opportunities, social infrastructure, retail, education and healthcare for a micro-market to develop sustainably.

Don't buy crypto in India: Radhika Gupta's blunt advice to investors

New Delhi. (Agency)

Asked whether investors should consider cryptocurrency as a way of creating wealth, Radhika Gupta, MD & CEO of Edelweiss Mutual Fund, had a three-word answer: **“Don't buy crypto.”** Speaking at the India Today Woman Summit 2026, Gupta said her concern was not necessarily with crypto as an asset class globally. Her objection was specifically to investing in crypto in India, where she argued that investors could face problems if things went wrong. “I have no problem with crypto. I have a problem with crypto in India,” she said. **DON'T INVEST IN WHAT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND** Gupta's first warning was a familiar one: investors should not put their money into products they do not understand. She recalled an incident involving an uncle who wanted to buy crypto. When she asked him why, he could not explain why he wanted to invest in it. That, according to Gupta, is itself a red flag Her advice is particularly relevant when an investment becomes popular because everyone else appears to be making money from it. Popularity does not necessarily mean an investor understands the underlying asset, the risks involved or what could happen when markets turn. “Don't buy things you don't understand,” she said.

Cracks, questions and a changing guard at Tata

New Delhi. (Agency)

Tata is a household name in a way few companies are. From the salt on the dining table to the car in the driveway, from the tea in the morning to the software running behind some of the world's biggest businesses, the Tata name has become part of everyday life. It has built steel plants and power stations, iconic hotels and an airline. It owns Jaguar Land Rover, makes jewellery and watches, and is now spending billions of rupees



to build semiconductors. But some difficult questions are now gathering behind that familiar name. Air India, brought back into the Tata fold with much fanfare, is still bleeding money and faces a turnaround that could take years. TCS, long the group's most dependable money-spinner, is confronting an artificial intelligence revolution that could change the economics of IT services. Jaguar Land Rover is under pressure after a sharp fall in quarterly profits. And Tata is committing more than Rs 1 lakh crore to semiconductor projects that will take years to prove themselves. Then, as all this unfolds, comes a change at the top.

US-Canada tariff war: Ottawa refuses to bow to Trump, will slap duty on US goods from Sept 8

Following the collapse of trade talks, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney announced that his government would impose tariffs on US goods starting September 8. He said details would be announced in the coming days and that the tariffs would be based on the dollar value of the new US tariffs to protect Canadian workers and businesses.

Kolkata. (Agency)

The trade deal between Canada and the US has collapsed leading to unprecedented fireworks between the two neighbours. While the Trump administration has decided to impose 50% tariffs on about \$28 billion worth of Canadian imports, Ottawa has vowed to get even by imposing counter tariffs on imports from America. In a statement that mirrored dollar-for-dollar retaliation, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said, “We cannot accept the US offer, and we will not give them what they have demanded.” He has also told the media that his government will announce details of the new tariffs in the new few days. **Uncompromising stand of Canadian PM** Mark Carney has said Canada was prepared to remove its remaining retaliatory tariffs as part of a broader trade agreement. These would be particularly applicable on US sectors like steel,

aluminum and automobiles. However, he also pointed out that his government was not willing to compromise on industries it considers essential to Canada’s economy. The breakdown in talks occurred when the United States imposed 50% tariffs on



approximately \$20 billion worth of Canadian products on Saturday morning. This move affects approximately 5% of Canada’s annual exports to the US and covers a wide range of goods. Canada has responded by preparing matching tariffs. Mark Carney said Canada will match those tariffs dollar-for-dollar to protect its workers and businesses.

He said details of the new measure would be released in the coming days, and it was expected the retaliatory action would focus on sectors such as steel and dairy. The US and Canada were working toward a deal to continue negotiations after Washington extended the tariff deadline, but Carney cited last-minute changes to the US proposal, which led to the breakdown of talks. **America has changed** The Canadian PM slammed last-minute changes to the US proposed terms which he described as incorrect and uneconomic. He further stated that he had halted negotiations and ordered the Canadian negotiating team to return from Washington to Ottawa. However, US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer blamed Canada for the failure, saying that Ottawa had refused to finalise the deal despite receiving good treatment. Carney stated that Canada’s intention was never to secure a deal at any cost or by any deadline.

Starbucks India to accelerate store expansion after business recalibration

Mumbai. (Agency)

Starbucks India is set to resume its aggressive store expansion strategy following nearly two years of recalibrating its business model amid a broader slowdown in discretionary spending, Tata Consumer Products Managing Director and CEO Sunil D'Souza has said. Starbucks, which operates in India through JV partner Tata Consumer Products Ltd (TCPL), used the last 18-24 months as an "opportunity to recalibrate" its entire business model -- from store size and capital expenditure per outlet to the pricing of beverages, he told. According to D'Souza, things have "started to fall into place" as Tata Starbucks has now reported four successive quarters of same-store sales growth. "We had four

successive quarters of same-store sales growth now, and we are seeing acceleration coming in. Now, we will again start to expand the number of stores aggressively," he said. TCPL has a 50:50 JV with US-based



Starbucks Corporation -- Tata Starbucks -- which operates around 500 Starbucks cafes in India. The company had earlier targeted opening around 100 Starbucks stores annually and sustained that pace for a few years, but moderated expansion over the last 18-24

months amid softer demand across the discretionary consumption and quick-service restaurant (QSR) segments. "But we also took the opportunity to recalibrate our entire business model, because we do think Starbucks has a significantly longer runway in India," D'Souza said. On the shape of the renewed expansion, he said it would combine both new store additions and greater density in existing markets. Starbucks has a presence in about 80 cities, which D'Souza considers "a good number" to operate in, with only limited additions to the city count going forward. "I think 80 is a good number in terms of operating, but I think you will find density of stores in cities also going up significantly," he said, adding that operating more than five stores in a city brings efficiencies of scale.

Mahindra & Mahindra to intensify exports with new pickup 'Lifestyler'

New Delhi. (Agency)

Homegrown auto major Mahindra & Mahindra is gearing up to intensify exports with its newly unveiled pickup targeting markets like South Africa, Australia, West Asia, and Latin America, according to company ED & CEO, Auto & Farm Sectors, Rajesh Jejurikar. The company, which has witnessed a multi-fold increase in its electric passenger vehicles sales last fiscal, is also confident of maintaining the growth trajectory with new products hitting the market, Jejurikar told. Recently, the company unveiled its pickup 'Mahindra Scorpio Lifestyler' which will hit the market in India in April 2027 and it will be launched as the 'Mahindra Lifestyler' in global markets. "The Lifestyler pickup was developed as a global platform for access for mainly leveraging a global opportunity...It is an important part of our global growth strategy. We have been outlining that the 'Lifestyler' will be an important part of our global growth strategy," he said. Sharing which global markets the upcoming



pickup can be exported to, he said it can go to markets like South Africa, Australia, West Asia, and Latin America. Even in the Asean region where there is a lot of demand for pickups, the company could look at possible markets for the new Lifestyler, he added. "We are not present in the Asean markets except Indonesia. So we would have to open up those markets with these products," Jejurikar said when asked if M&M would export to countries of the bloc thereby looking to increase overall exports. According to M&M's annual report for 2025-26, the company's automotive sector posted an export volume of 41,030 vehicles as against the previous year's exports of 34,709 vehicles, representing a growth of 18.2 per cent. The company exports its SUVs to global markets such as Australia, New Zealand, West Asia, Africa and South America. Jejurikar, however, said the pickup, which will be sold in India as 'Mahindra Scorpio Lifestyler' "could also have a play" in the domestic market. "We now see a potential emerging product opportunity in India for a product like that as well.

SBI's total business may double to 200 trillion by 2030: Chairman

SBI came into existence on July 1, 1955 through an Act of Parliament, which, among other things, provided for the transfer of the undertaking of the Imperial Bank of India

Kolkata. (Agency)

State Bank of India's total business could potentially double to around ₹200 trillion by 2030, when the bank celebrates its platinum jubilee, given the current growth trajectory, Chairman C S Setty said. SBI came into existence on July 1, 1955 through an Act of Parliament,

which, among other things, provided for the transfer of the undertaking of the Imperial Bank of India. The country's biggest lender crossed the landmark of ₹100 trillion total business, which is an aggregate of total loans and advances in the second quarter of the last financial year. This further increased to ₹110.01 trillion at the end of June 2026. Whether the bank had set a specific target for its platinum jubilee year, Setty said there was no formal milestone, but the bank's growth trajectory could take its total business to ₹170-180 trillion and potentially as high as ₹200 trillion by 2030. "We don't have any milestone, but if you take the current growth rate, I think we should be around ₹170-180 trillion, or maybe reaching ₹200 trillion. That would be another important milestone," he told in an interview. Setty said the scale of SBI's operations is closely linked to the performance of the Indian economy. "For a bank of our size, scale is



imminent, and it is fully intertwined with what is happening in the Indian economy," he said. He noted that if the Indian economy continues to grow at 7-8 per cent, SBI's balance sheet has the potential to expand around 11-12 per cent annually. "If the Indian economy grows at 7-8 per cent and our balance sheet has a potential to grow at 11-12 per cent, it means again coming to my

favourite theme that every six years SBI's balance sheet gets doubled. So I think it's potentially possible by 2030 we may have ₹200 trillion overall business," he said. Setty further said SBI has Vision 2030, which focuses on ensuring that all bank's activities benefit or address the requirements of four key stakeholders -- customers, employees, shareholders, and the government and regulators, including the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). "We are working on the requirements of all these four stakeholders. When we benchmark ourselves against the best globally, we should be able to measure up to the best standards in each of these areas," he said. For customers, he said, the focus is on improving service and experience. For employees, SBI aims to simplify processes, improve productivity and create an environment where they feel satisfied and can deliver their best.

Indian Oil to supply entire petroleum imports requirement of Mauritius

New Delhi. (Agency)

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has signed an agreement with the State Trading Corporation (STC) of Mauritius for the supply of petroleum products, under which IOC will meet the country’s entire import requirement of motor spirit (MS), high-speed diesel (HSD) and aviation turbine fuel (ATF). The agreement was signed in the presence of India’s Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri and Mauritius Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam. Puri was on a two-day visit to Mauritius starting August 20. “The five-year agreement between Indian Oil Corporation and STC is an assured long-term supply commitment to Mauritius, providing the country with security of supplies and shielding it from price volatility,” the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas



said in a statement. This is the first long-term supply agreement concluded by an Indian public sector undertaking (PSU) oil marketing company outside South Asia in recent years. The agreement positions India as the anchor fuel supplier to Mauritius and strengthens its strategic and economic footprint in the Indian Ocean region. “India has emerged as a major global refining hub, with an annual output of 267 MMT of refined petroleum products across 23 refineries, making it a net exporter of refined products,” the petroleum ministry said. It added that India already meets the petroleum demand of Nepal and Bhutan and supplies significant quantities to other countries in the region and beyond. Even during the West Asia crisis, India fulfilled its supply commitments to Nepal and Bhutan, making it a dependable energy security provider for the region. During the visit, Puri also held bilateral meetings with Patrick Gervais Assirvaden, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities; John Michael Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection; and Dhananjay Ramful, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade. Puri also participated in the groundbreaking ceremony of Indian Oil (Mauritius) Ltd’s 27.5 thousand metric tonne bunker marine fuel storage facility at Mer Rouge, Port Louis.



Kareena Kapoor

‘Not Pregnant’, Close Ally Dismisses Report That Actress Is Expecting Third Baby

Kareena Kapoor is not pregnant, confirms the actress’ close ally. A video of the actress is going viral, with social media users speculating that the actress is expecting her third child with Saif Ali Khan. However, a source close to the actress has now confirmed that there is no truth to these rumours. The video shows Kareena Kapoor in her gym wear, coming out of a building as her team tries to cover her with an umbrella. During her exit from the building and entry into the car, in a blink-and-miss appearance, a section of people noticed what looked like a baby bump. Reacting to this viral clip, a source told HT, “Kareena is not pregnant. This is not true.”

Kareena Kapoor recently went on a holiday with her family to celebrate the 55th birthday of her husband and actor, Saif Ali Khan. Following the trip, she even shared a series of pictures on Instagram, and it was her bikini shot that took our breath away. Saif and Kareena got married on October 16, 2012, in a private ceremony in Mumbai. The couple are parents to two sons, Taimur Ali Khan and Jehangir Ali Khan, and Kareena often shares glimpses of their family holidays and special moments on social media.

When Kareena Told Saif Not To Have More Kids

In an earlier interview, Kareena Kapoor Khan opened up about her family plans and revealed that she had told Saif Ali Khan that they should not have any more children. “Saif has had a child every decade—in his twenties, thirties, forties and now in his fifties. I’ve told him, in your sixties, that’s not happening. I think only a man as broad-minded as Saif could be a father of four children at very different stages. He gives his time to them all. And now, with Jeh, we are trying to balance it out. We’ve made a pact that when he’s shooting for a film, I will try not to work on one at the same time [and vice versa],” Kareena said while speaking to Vogue.

Kareena Kapoor On The Work Front

Kareena Kapoor will next be seen in Daayra. The film is described as a gritty exploration of crime, punishment and justice, with an intense focus on societal realities. The movie marks Meghna Gulzar’s next project after her 2023 film Sam Bahadur. While announcing the movie, the director posted a couple of pictures on Instagram, captured alongside the lead stars. “When the lines of Law and Justice cross. Thrilled to embark on DAAYRA with Kareena Kapoor Khan and Prithviraj Sukumaran. A much-anticipated journey with Jungle Pictures and my co-writers Yash Keswani and Sima Agarwal,” she wrote.



Mini Mathur

Says Her Father Initially Had Concerns About Kabir Khan: ‘Papa, He Is A Muslim’

Mini Mathur has spoken about marrying filmmaker Kabir Khan at a time when interfaith marriages were not necessarily an easy conversation in every household. The former MTV VJ revealed that despite coming from a conservative Mathur family, she faced no opposition from her parents. More than two decades later, Mini and Kabir have also chosen not to assign a religion to their children, Sairah and Vivaan.

In a conversation with Hauterrfly, Mini discussed marriage, surnames and how the couple decided to raise their children without formally identifying them with either parent’s faith.

Mini Mathur Did Not Change Her Name After Marriage

Mini married Kabir before her MTV years, when he was still making documentaries. She recalled that some people were surprised to discover she was already married after she won the VJ hunt.

“I was told by certain people saying, ‘We didn’t know you were married’,” she said. Marriage, however, did not prompt Mini to change her identity on official documents. She said, “I never wanted my husband’s name in my passport. I didn’t change my name.” She followed a similar principle

while deciding her children’s names. “My kids shouldn’t have either of the parents’ names. I said if they are writing Khan, then they should write Mathur as well,” Mini explained.

According to her, neither the BMC nor the passport authorities objected when she



registered her children’s names.

‘I Knew That I Had To Get Married To Kabir’

Mini also recalled how her relationship with Kabir was received at home. Describing herself as a “conservative Mathur” girl, she said she had grown up being told that marriages generally happened within the same caste. Her father, whom she described as both conservative and loving, had allowed her to pursue television. Mini said this made her particularly conscious of her choices and public image.

Bhagyashri Borse NOT Opposite Aditya Roy Kapur In Milap Zaveri’s Next, T-Series Clarifies



Reports had recently suggested that Bhagyashri Borse would star as the female lead opposite Aditya Roy Kapur in Milap Zaveri’s upcoming film. The casting buzz, however, has now been addressed by the makers, with T-Series clarifying that the actor is not part of the project.

A T-Series spokesperson said in a statement, “The reports of Bhagyashri Borse being a part of T-Series and Milap Zaveri’s upcoming project with Aditya Roy Kapur are untrue. The production house will officially announce the actress soon.”

The production house has kept all the details regarding the film under wrap as of now. They are yet to reveal who has been cast opposite Aditya.

Milap Zaveri had earlier described his upcoming collaboration with Aditya Roy Kapur as an ‘intense and violent’ love story. Speaking to PTI in July, the



filmmaker said romance has become an important part of his storytelling. “I feel maybe I’ve found my forte with romance. Earlier, Marjaavaan succeeded in a big way; Ek Deewane Ki Deewaniyat was a blockbuster,” he said. He added, “So, romance is a key integral part of my stories, and I think going forward it will remain along with action. So, romance, action, dialogue baazi, these are things I like to do as a director-writer and till audiences like my films, I’ll try to keep doing them.” Zaveri did not share any further details about the project at the time.

Meanwhile, Bhagyashri has several projects in the South lined up. She will next be seen alongside Sivakarthikeyan in the Tamil film Seyon, which is being produced by Kamal Haasan.

Arjun Kapoor Loses Cool Over Fan For Recording Him Without Permission



Arjun Kapoor, who is known for his fun nature, was seen losing his cool over a fan for recording him without his knowledge. The video, which is now going viral, shows Arjun Kapoor sitting in his car when he was spotted by a fan who is known for clicking pictures of and spotting Bollywood stars. The video has the fan asking Arjun if he could click a picture with him, to which the actor obliged. However, Arjun lost his cool when he noticed that the fan was already recording him.

The video has Arjun Kapoor sitting in his car and sporting a casual look. The actor looked smart with a sharp beard and styled hair. He paired a white T-shirt with a blue unzipped jacket and accessorised the entire look with a stylish dog tag. In the now-viral clip, after noticing that the fan was trying to record a video of him, Arjun rolled up the windows while saying, “Video kyu bana raha hai? Photo le na,” as he rolled up the window of his car.

Why Is Arjun Kapoor In The News?

Arjun Kapoor made headlines after rumours of his relationship with Sahiba Bali, nearly two years after his breakup with Malaika Arora, surfaced on social media. Speculation surrounding Arjun and Sahiba first surfaced after they attended the India vs England third ODI at Lord’s on July 19. Photos and videos from the stadium showed the two watching the match together, prompting social media users to wonder if there was more than friendship between them. As discussions gathered pace online, Sahiba addressed the chatter in her own way without directly commenting on the rumours.

Arjun Kapoor Confirmed He Is Single

The renewed speculation comes nearly two years after Arjun confirmed that he was single.

The actor was previously in a long-term relationship with Malaika Arora. The couple made their relationship public in 2018 and remained together for several years before reportedly parting ways in 2024.

During promotions for Singham Again later that year, Arjun put rumours about his relationship status to rest. Responding to fans who asked about Malaika during a public event, he smiled and said, “Nahi nahi, abhi single hoon, relax karo.” Professionally, Arjun was last seen in Mere Husband Ki Biwi, alongside Bhumi Pednekar and Rakul Preet Singh. While the actor is yet to announce his next project, his latest social media banter with Sahiba Bali has once again become a talking point, keeping both fans and gossip mills busy, even if the two continue to insist, at least indirectly, that not everything on the internet should be believed.

Brighten up your house with vibrant Colours

Monsoons are obviously not a very good time for refurbishing your home, when it comes to things like painting or doing up the house. However, small changes and additions can do the trick of brightening up your house, while the weather outside is dull and dark. Here's your guide on how to make your home bright!

Colours like pink, orange, red, yellow, etc. go very well to brighten up your interiors during the monsoons. For a quick makeover, bright coloured curtains and cushion covers do the trick. "Since painting is not an ideal thing during monsoons as the weather outside is wet and so as the walls, hence experimenting with soft furnishings, wall papers and decoratives will make a significant difference," say experts.

Wallpapers:



Getting a wall highlighted with bright coloured textured wallpapers can be a good option. You can choose from colours like fuschia pink, yellow, orange, turquoise, etc would look very attractive and bright during this dull weather. Similarly, you can also put up artistic murals or paintings on light coloured walls to make them look bright.

Pop-colour your home:

Try experimenting with pop colours, be it curtains, cushions, artefacts, wall papers, bed linen, etc, a sudden hint of bright colour will give your home that bright look. Colourful cushions can make a simple house look glow; make sure you choose silk or shining fabrics for cushion covers.

Goretro:

While, many people like to move away from the conventional styles of

home decor, and love to experiment with something funkier. Retro style home furnishings are doing rounds these days; they come in bright colours and look uniquely innovative. Be it lampshades, chairs, stools or tables; these retro style furniture and home furnishings are sure to enhance the look of your house.

Play with lights:

Moreover, playing with lights is the best thing to do refurbish your home, using warm colours like yellow or orange at neglected corners would make your home look mysteriously gorgeous. Different shaped lights like a swan, dew drop, a petal or any artistic shape when placed anywhere in the living room stands out as a statement. Interestingly, 3D carpets are the newest attraction in the market. Available in pastel colours, the designs will leave you in an optical illusion when laid on the floor.



5 appliances every cook must have

Take a look at some of them...

Aparing knife

This is the basic one, needed to cut small vegetables and fruits. You can easily slice fruits with it, cut the peels of potatoes and other thick skins, devein shrimp, de-seed and section fruits, etc. Always look for one with a comfortable handle.

Measuring cup

It's not always possible to cook saying, 'take a handful of this or that'. Every kitchen must have a

measuring cup or jar to measure liquids like milk or stick or even dry ingredients like sugar, before cooking. It's better to get a transparent plastic one that allows you to see what you are measuring.

Bnderle

A blender and hand blender are must-have appliances in the kitchen. The electric blender is used to mix foods and liquids like summer mocktails and soups and is available in different sizes. Blenders with a jug make it more convenient.

Vegetable peeler

Vegetable peelers or potato peelers are a most utilised appliance. They can get the skin off

carrots and apples quickly and make the cooking process effortless. There are several designs available, like the Y or straight type. You can also use the peeler to cut slices of cheese or make thin ribbons of chocolate.

Garlic press

This nifty little gadget is most useful as we Indians uses a lot of garlic in cooking. The press pushes the cloves through holes to get the peels. So you need not mince the garlic with a knife anymore, if you have this.



Planning to cook? Then there is a list of appliance s that you must have in your kitchen.

How to take care of artificial Jewellery

Avoid spraying deodorant/perfume on the jewellery while getting ready. After removing your jewellery, store it in a soft zip up pouch so that dust doesn't easily get to it. Don't use tissues to cover them as they might cause scratches.



Do not wear your jewellery while taking a shower.

If you have to clean your jewellery, try and use only warm water. Clean your jewellery with a soft cloth and mild detergent with warm water if required. Don't clean any jewellery piece that is broken or damaged since cleaning it might damage it more.

Inspect your jewellery at regular intervals to ensure that it isn't tarnished.

How to organize your dresser

We always focus on organizing our closet, which is definitely a vital storage area to keep clean and organized for easy dressing, but your dressers are important too. Here are a few tips for getting your dresser drawers clutter-free.

Overhauling: Every month, take everything out of your drawers and refold them. It will also help you to pull out stained or torn clothing to throw away and set aside clothes you haven't worn in awhile.

Avoid stacking: Rather than stacking T-shirts, try organizing them according to their colour. This will easily help in getting to that item, stacked at the bottom, without disrupting the rest of the clothing.

Use containers: Use containers in your drawers to hold the small stuff, like a box for watches and necklaces, plus a large bowl to hold bow ties.

Pick dividers: If you have a particularly large drawer, consider picking up dividers or organizers.

Store Candles: Whether it's a new or even just a little nub of a mostly burned one, a candle placed in your drawer will keep your clothes smelling lovely. You can also use bars of soap.

