

## Hope this will restore peace: PM Modi welcomes US-Iran deal after 100 days of conflict

Welcoming the breakthrough, PM Modi said India hoped the US-Iran agreement would restore peace in West Asia, safeguard global trade routes and pave the way for a lasting settlement.

New Delhi .(Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday welcomed the understanding reached between the United States and Iran to end the conflict in West Asia, saying India hoped the agreement would restore stability in the region and safeguard global trade routes. In a post on X, PM Modi said the conflict had caused serious economic disruption around the world and led to the loss of lives across several countries. "I welcome the understanding reached between the United States and Iran on ending the conflict in West Asia, which has caused serious economic disruption across the world and led to loss of life in many countries," he wrote. The Prime Minister said India hoped the implementation of the understanding would help bring peace to the region and ensure the smooth movement of



commerce through critical maritime routes. "India hopes that the implementation of this understanding will help restore peace and stability in the region and ensure the freedom of navigation and commerce," PM Modi said. He also expressed hope that negotiations on the remaining issues between Washington and Tehran would culminate in a lasting settlement.

"We look forward to deliberations on the remaining issues reaching a sustainable final agreement," he added.

### WHAT THE US-IRAN UNDERSTANDING INCLUDES

PM Modi's remarks came shortly after reports emerged that the US and Iran had agreed to a draft framework aimed at ending hostilities, reopening the Strait of Hormuz and restarting negotiations over Tehran's nuclear programme.

According to reports, the proposed framework also includes temporary sanctions relief for Iran, the release of frozen Iranian assets and a 60-day negotiating window to address unresolved issues between the two countries. Iranian media have additionally described the arrangement as part of a broader 14-point framework, although the full text has not been made public.

## Chhattisgarh CM's home district to appear on railway map, 291-km special line okayed

Once completed, the project will directly connect Jashpur to the national railway network.

RAIPUR .(Agency)

In a leap toward infrastructure expansion, Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai's home district, Jashpur, is set to shed its status as one of the few remaining rail-disconnected zones in India. The Ministry of Railways has officially notified the Dharamjaigarh-Pathalgaon-Lohardaga new rail line as a special railway project, formally realising the decades-old dream of local residents.

With this special railway project, the path has been cleared for connecting Jashpur to the railway network for the first time. It is expected to lay the foundation for the social, economic, and industrial development of the entire region.

The ambitious railway corridor, spanning approximately 291 kilometres, will originate from Dharamjaigarh in Raigarh district, pass through Pathalgaon in Jashpur and extend to Lohardaga in Jharkhand state. Once completed, the project will directly connect Jashpur to the national railway network.

According to the notification published in the Gazette of India by the Ministry of Railways, the project has been notified under the provisions of the Railways Act, 1989, in the public interest and for national infrastructure development.

Despite being rich in natural resources and development potential, Jashpur district has remained disconnected from the railway network until now. The new railway line will improve connectivity, offering residents safer transportation options.



### Short news

#### Apologise to Kerala: CM Satheesan slams Vice Chancellors for attending RSS event

Kerala.(Agency)

A political controversy has erupted in Kerala after Chief Minister VD Satheesan demanded an apology from three Vice Chancellors who attended an RSS centenary event addressed by RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, calling their participation a "grave lapse" that was unbecoming of their office.

In a strongly worded post on X, Satheesan said the presence of the Vice Chancellors at the RSS programme ran contrary to Kerala's educational traditions and had diminished the dignity associated with the post.

"We view with utmost seriousness the participation of three Vice-Chancellors in an RSS centenary event addressed by Sarsangchalak Mohan Bhagwat. This is a grave lapse. Their action is unbecoming of Kerala's educational tradition and the dignity of their office," Satheesan wrote. The controversy centres on the participation of the Vice Chancellors of Kerala University, Mahatma Gandhi University and Malayalam University in the RSS centenary celebrations held on Saturday.

#### No question of holding salary and pension. Bihar in good financial condition: CM Samrat Choudhary

Patna.(Agency)

Amid reports that the Bihar government has been withholding the salaries and pensions of thousands of university professors and staffers due to "poor financial condition," Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary has said that the government has issued a blanket order to clear all outstanding dues.

"Salary and pension should be treated as part of one's fundamental rights," Choudhary said.

The CM was responding to allegations by the opposition RJD and Congress that the state had "emptied its coffers through blatant welfareism before the Assembly polls." Choudhary added that Bihar would continue to flourish under the combined governance model of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former CM Nitish Kumar.

Speaking to the media on Friday at a function to mark Narendra Modi becoming the longest-serving elected Prime Minister, Choudhary said. "Bihar follows the Modi-Nitish model. We are committed to realising investments worth Rs 5 lakh crore by this November. The proposed 11 new townships will bring us an investment galore."

When asked about the pending bills, the CM explained: "We have just received pending bills worth over Rs 1,500 crore. Pensions and salaries were held up due to the absence of utility certificates. However, we have cleared the bills with a mandate not to hold back pensions and salaries under any conditions."

Thousands of teachers, non-teaching employees, and university pensioners across 13 state universities had faced severe delays in receiving their disbursements for March, April, and May.

## ATTACK ON FAITH? Alleged Conspiracy to Defame Jain Saint Exposed

### Key Accused Faces Tough Questions Investigative Report

Mahanagar Metro Desk / Pawan Makan

Ahmedabad. Can the reputation of respected religious figures and centuries-old faith traditions be damaged by unverified allegations circulated online? A controversy involving members of the Jain community has sparked serious debate after claims emerged that a coordinated campaign was allegedly designed to tarnish the image of a revered Jain saint and pressure members of the community. According to allegations highlighted during an investigative inquiry, the operation reportedly involved the use of manipulated digital content, including edited videos and morphed images, which were then circulated through social media platforms. Critics describe the tactic as a form of digital character assassination intended to create public outrage and exert pressure on community leaders. Alleged Modus Operandi: Investigators claim that modern editing tools, social media networks, and digital identities were used to create and distribute unverified content. The allegations suggest that when demands or expectations were not met, defamatory material was allegedly circulated online to damage reputations and generate public controversy. Observers have described such practices as a growing challenge in the digital age, where misinformation can spread rapidly before



facts are independently verified. Individuals Named in the Controversy: The investigation has focused on two individuals who have been publicly named in connection with the allegations: Jagat Parekh (Ahmedabad) – Alleged by investigators to be a central figure in the controversy. Hardik Hundia (Mumbai) – Allegedly linked to online support and digital dissemination activities connected to the matter. The individuals

named have been accused by investigators and community representatives, though any legal determination remains subject to judicial proceedings and evidence presented before the courts. Phone Interview Raises Questions: During a recorded phone conversation conducted as part of the investigation, Jagat Parekh was reportedly asked whether he possessed any forensic, digital, or documentary evi-

dence supporting serious allegations made against revered Jain saint Acharya Sagar Chandra Sagar Ji. According to the interview transcript cited by investigators, Parekh allegedly acknowledged that he did not possess conclusive proof and stated that he had formed suspicions based on media coverage of unrelated cases. Investigators argue that relying on assumptions rather than verifiable evidence to make serious accusations against a religious leader is irresponsible and potentially harmful. Concerns Over Judicial Process: Legal experts note that courts operate on evidence, documentation, and established legal standards rather than speculation. The controversy has therefore raised broader concerns about the misuse of legal and digital platforms for reputational attacks. Members of the Jain community have called for a thorough investigation into the matter and for accountability if any individual is found to have knowingly spread false or misleading allegations. Conclusion: The case highlights the growing dangers of misinformation, manipulated digital content, and unverified accusations in the internet era. As investigations continue, stakeholders across legal, religious, and civil society circles are emphasizing the importance of evidence-based claims, due process, and responsible public discourse.

## BJP, JD(S) target Karnataka township project, write to Rahul Gandhi over land grab

Bengaluru.(Agency)

The political battle over Karnataka's proposed Greater Bengaluru Integrated Township (GBIT) project in Bidadi intensified over the weekend, with the BJP and JD(S) separately writing to Congress leader and Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, urging him to intervene and stop the acquisition of thousands of acres of farmland for the ambitious township project.

In a letter dated June 14, Karnataka BJP president BY Vijayendra accused the Congress government of disregarding the concerns of more than 3,500 farmers from 25 villages who are opposing the acquisition of land for the proposed 18,000-acre township between Bidadi and Harohalli.

Vijayendra claimed that around 7,481 acres of fertile agricultural land were being acquired despite prolonged protests by farmers and

appealed to Rahul Gandhi to direct the state government to withdraw what he described as a "state-engineered land grab."

A day earlier, Karnataka Pradesh Yuva Janata Dal (Secular) president Nikhil Kumaraswamy also wrote to Rahul Gandhi, alleging that the state government had issued final land acquisition notifications without securing adequate public consent.

Nikhil claimed the acquisition would affect hundreds of farming families and alleged that the government had bypassed safeguards under the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition Act, 2013. He further argued that the move would disproportionately impact small and marginal farmers, Dalits, backward-class communities and landless agricultural labourers, and urged Rahul Gandhi to ensure the withdrawal of the final notifications.

The controversy deepened after Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy launched a sharp attack on Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, alleging that the township project was being driven by a nexus between the government and real estate interests.

Kumaraswamy accused the state government of attempting to acquire fertile agricultural land against the wishes of farmers and alleged that police pressure was being used to intimidate those resisting the acquisition. Describing the proposal as a "real estate venture" rather than a development initiative, he questioned plans to raise 12,000 crore through HUDCO loans and claimed the project would ultimately benefit private developers under a public-private partnership model rather than farmers or the public.

The Karnataka government, however, has strongly defended the township project,



arguing that it is essential for Bengaluru's long-term urban expansion and for reducing pressure on the city's existing infrastructure. Responding to criticism and dismissing Kumaraswamy's threat of a legal challenge, Shivakumar maintained that the project was being pursued in line with earlier planning efforts and said it would move ahead despite opposition. Referring to his recent meeting with Narendra Modi, Shivakumar said on Friday that the Prime Minister had praised the initiative, telling him that the creation of new townships would help ease pressure on Bengaluru.

## News box

## Mazar built on green belt in Tronica City razed

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

The district administration and police on Sunday carried out a demolition drive in Tronica City to remove encroachments from govt land. As part of the drive, a mazar (mausoleum), which was illegally built on a greenbelt, was razed. An official said the mazar was built on land that belonged to Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA). Joint magistrate of Loni Deepak Singhanwal said a prior notice was served to the mazar authorities, informing them that the structure was an encroachment on govt land. "When they failed to take action and remove it, the building was razed by govt authorities," he said. During the drive, around 450 police officers, including PAC, RAF, and about 300 other police personnel, were present to prevent any untoward incidents. Singhanwal said the drive was part of a larger crackdown on illegal constructions across the state being carried out on the directions of the chief minister and under the leadership of district magistrate Ravindra Kumar Mandar.

Further, district commissioner of police (rural) Surendranath Tiwari said that those found responsible for constructing illegal structures will face strict action.

## 'This is my last video': Youth rescued as Meta alerts police in Noida

Noida.(Agency)

A Meta alert saved the life of a 24-year-old man in the Jewar area. Gautam Budh Nagar police rescued the youth, who was trying to die by suicide, after Meta shared the information with the Lucknow police headquarters.

Having consumed an excessive quantity of sleeping pills after a woman spurned his marriage proposal, the youth, a labourer, posted a video on Instagram, saying, "This is my last video, who knows whether I will be there or not."

A senior police officer said that at 12.12am on Friday, the alert was received via email by the social media centre located at the headquarters of the director general of police from Meta. Taking immediate cognisance of the alert, the relevant information and location were shared with the media cell of the commissionerate, Gautam Budh Nagar. GB Nagar police commissioner Lakshmi Singh was informed too. Subsequently, necessary directions were given to Jewar officials. "Jewar police station personnel reached the young man's house within just five minutes. Police woke up the young man's father, informed him about the incident and reached the young man's room along with the family members, where he was found lying unconscious on his bed," an officer said. Police, along with the family members and neighbours, took the young man to the nearby hospital. Later, he was discharged.

"The young man told police that he fell in love with the woman, who rejected his marriage proposal, after which he became extremely distressed. Following this, he took the step," an officer in the media cell added. "The step was taken under Crisis Intervention Collaboration 2022 between Meta and UP Police," a statement said.

## Bus hits divider &amp; flips on Mahamaya flyover, 17 injured



Noida.(Agency)

About 17 people, including two minors, were injured after a bus rammed a divider and overturned on Mahamaya Flyover near Dalit Prerna Sthal in the early hours of Sunday, police said. While most of the injured were discharged after first aid, an 18-year-old woman, who suffered serious injuries, is still undergoing treatment at a hospital in Delhi. The accident occurred around 5.15am on Sunday. The impact led to the front wheel of the bus getting detached. Initial investigation found the driver lost control of the bus. Noida ADCP Manisha Singh said the driver may have fallen asleep at the wheel after dropping a passenger a few kilometres before the flyover. "Both the driver and conductor fled the scene after the crash and are currently being traced," she said. Police and local residents launched a rescue operation after receiving an alert through the emergency helpline. At the time of the incident, 29 passengers were on the bus, which was travelling from Farrukhabad to Delhi.

## Gang promised foreigners cheap flight tickets, conned them; 13 held

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Police arrested 13 members of a gang, including the two masterminds, that allegedly cheated foreigners on the pretext of booking airline tickets. The accused allegedly targeted American and European nationals via social media sites. Sector 63 police station SHO Amit Kakran said that police received a tip about the illegal operation on Saturday from a source, leading them to conduct a raid at their Sector 63 office and make the arrests. They also seized 13 laptops, 16 mobile phones used in cybercrime, and other digital devices. Police said the masterminds behind the operation are Ravi Khurana (33) and Deepka Kumar (37), both residents of Delhi. The other 11 people were either callers or worked admin jobs at the fake call centre, police said. An FIR has been registered against the accused under relevant sections of cheating, forgery of BNS, and relevant sections of the IT Act.

The accused told cops they would lure in targets from Europe and the US via ads on Facebook and Google Ads. When foreign nationals called the numbers provided, the accused would pose as representatives of an airline or travel agency.

## Heritage Area Controversy: Illegal Construction Allegedly Continues at Ahmedabad's Historic Burnt Haveli Despite Court Stay

## Questions Raised Over Enforcement of Law in Ratnapol Heritage Zone

Ahmedabad

(By PAWAN MAKAN)

Ahmedabad's historic Ratnapol area has become the center of a growing controversy after allegations surfaced that construction activity continued at the site of the city's well-known "Burnt Haveli" despite a court-issued stay order and repeated complaints from local residents. The matter has triggered concerns among residents, heritage activists, and legal observers, who argue that the case raises serious questions about administrative accountability and the protection of heritage structures within the walled city. Residents claim complaints were ignored according to local residents, multiple written representations, supported by documents and evidence, were submitted to the relevant authorities over the past six months. Residents claim that a legal stay order had also been obtained against the construction activity. However, complainants



allege that despite these efforts, construction work continued uninterrupted, leading to allegations that enforcement agencies failed to take timely action. Allegations of Political Influence Several complainants have alleged that influential individuals and vested interests may have played a role in allowing the work to proceed. They claim that repeated warnings and complaints did not result in effective intervention from the concerned departments. These allegations have not been independently verified, and no official response addressing the specific claims has been made public at

the time of reporting. Key Questions Being Raised The controversy has generated several important questions: If a valid court stay order existed, why was the construction activity allegedly allowed to continue? Were the concerned municipal authorities aware of the complaints and legal proceedings? What steps have been taken to protect the historic identity of the Burnt Haveli and the surrounding heritage precinct? Will an independent inquiry be conducted to determine whether any lapses occurred in the enforcement process? What action, if any, will be taken against those found responsible for violating court directives? Heritage Preservation Concerns The Burnt Haveli is considered a significant landmark within Ahmedabad's his-

toric urban landscape. Heritage conservation advocates argue that unauthorized construction activities in protected or historically important areas can permanently alter the character of the city and undermine preservation efforts. Experts emphasize that compliance with court orders and transparent enforcement mechanisms are essential to maintaining public trust in governance and urban planning institutions. Public Demand for Accountability Residents and concerned citizens are demanding a transparent investigation into the matter. They argue that if violations occurred despite legal restrictions, accountability must be fixed and corrective measures should be taken to prevent similar incidents in the future. As the controversy continues to attract attention, stakeholders are awaiting a formal response from the relevant authorities regarding the allegations and the status of any ongoing inquiries.

## Farmers' Cause Overshadowed by Political Infighting as Gujarat Protest Loses Momentum

Ahmedabad

(By PAWAN MAKAN)

What began as a potentially powerful farmers' movement in Gujarat ultimately lost momentum amid political infighting, leadership disputes, and a struggle for prominence among opposition figures. Instead of forcing the government onto the defensive, the protest gradually became a victim of internal divisions, leaving many farmers frustrated and disappointed. Politics Took Center Stage, Farmers' Issues Moved to the Background The protest initially showed signs of developing into a significant challenge for the government. Farmers from different regions expressed anger over their unresolved concerns and appeared prepared for a prolonged struggle. However, as events unfolded, discussions increasingly shifted away from agricultural issues and toward questions of leadership, political influence, and public recognition. Rather than presenting a united



front, opposition figures became entangled in disputes over who would emerge as the face of the movement. The public exchange of statements between prominent farmer leaders and activists weakened the perception of unity and diluted the movement's impact. A Protest That Needed No Government Intervention to Collapse One of the most striking aspects of the episode was that the government reportedly did not need to deploy extraordinary political or administrative measures to counter the agitation. Critics argue that internal disagreements among protest organizers and opposition leaders achieved what government pressure often seeks to accomplish—fragmenting a movement from within. As rival factions focused on leadership

battles, the original demands raised by farmers gradually lost visibility. Opposition Failed to Present a Unified Strategy Political observers note that the opposition was unable to build a coordinated strategy around farmers' concerns. Neither a broad coalition nor a common agenda emerged that could have transformed the agitation into a sustained public campaign. Instead, competition among various political groups appeared to dominate the narrative. The debate increasingly shifted from solving farmers' problems to determining who would gain greater political recognition from the movement. Lessons from Punjab's Farmer Movements Many analysts point to Punjab's farmer organizations as an example of how groups with different ideological backgrounds can maintain unity on core agricultural issues. Despite internal differences, farmer unions in Punjab have often demonstrated the ability to work together when common interests

are at stake. By contrast, Gujarat has repeatedly witnessed movements that begin with strong public support but eventually become entangled in political rivalries and leadership disputes. A Warning for Future Movements The disappointment expressed by several grassroots leaders after the protest's decline reflects a broader concern about the future of farmer activism in the state. While individual leaders may come and go, the challenges faced by farmers remain largely unchanged. The collapse of unity within such movements risks weakening the collective bargaining power of agricultural communities. The Final Question The biggest casualty of political competition is often the farmer whose concerns inspired the movement in the first place. As leaders pursue influence, recognition, and political advantage, many farmers are left asking whether their struggles are being represented or merely used as a platform for competing ambitions.

## Industries hit by delayed groundwater extraction approvals as regulatory agency remains headless in Haryana

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

More than 2,000 applications seeking permissions for groundwater extraction are pending before Haryana Water Resources Authority (HWRA). As a result, exporters, industrial units and ethanol manufacturers are claiming that delays in obtaining groundwater-related no objection certificates (NOCs) are affecting business operations and regulatory compliance. In fact, HWRA has been functioning without a chairperson for nearly nine months, raising concerns among industries over delayed approvals, stalled investments and licence renewals. The HWRA chairperson's post has remained vacant since Sept 2025 following the completion of the tenure of former chairperson Keshni Anand Arora. Powers have subsequently shifted to the additional chief secretary of the irrigation and water resources department. According to stakeholders, exporters are among the worst affected as several regulatory permissions and compliance requirements are linked to groundwater approvals. They claimed that licences of around 11 ethanol plants are awaiting renewal by the excise department because mandatory groundwater-related NOCs have not been issued. Industry representatives said companies requiring NOCs for groundwater extraction, expansion projects and statutory compliance have been waiting for



approvals for months. Sonipat Dyers Association member Bhupender Rana told TOI, "Industries are not seeking any relaxation in groundwater regulations. We only want timely disposal of applications. Delays in approvals are affecting expansion plans, regulatory compliance and investment decisions." According to officials, an advertisement issued in Oct 2025 reportedly attracted three eligible applicants, but the selection process could not be finalised. The post was advertised again in Feb 2026. However, only one application was received and the candidate was found ineligible, an HWRA official said. Queries seeking responses on the exact number of pending applications, reasons for the prolonged vacancy, the

impact on industries and the timeline for appointment of a new chairperson were sent to additional chief secretary (irrigation and water resources) Anurag Agarwal and irrigation minister Shruti Choudhry. Their responses were awaited at the time of filing this report. "The selection process is underway and efforts are being made to fill the post. Applications are also being processed as per the prescribed procedure," an official said. The delays have wider implications beyond individual industries. Groundwater NOCs are often linked to environmental compliance, industrial expansion, financing and licence renewals. Prolonged pendency can delay new investments, affect export-oriented units and create uncertainty for businesses

planning capacity expansion. Environmentalist Narendra Sirohi told TOI, "Haryana had emerged as one of the leading states in water management through institutional reforms and regulatory mechanisms. The delay is affecting industries, exporters and ethanol plants awaiting approvals and also raises questions about effective regulation of groundwater extraction." Experts warn that a weakened regulatory framework could undermine groundwater governance in a state where several districts are already classified as overexploited, making timely approvals and effective monitoring equally important for both economic growth and sustainable water management. The issue assumes significance because Haryana has often been projected as one of the better-performing states in water governance. After 2016, the state undertook a series of institutional reforms and established bodies such as HWRA, Micro Irrigation and Command Area Development Authority (MICADA) and Haryana Pond and Waste Water Management Authority between 2019 and 2021. Haryana also became the first state in the country to formulate and implement an integrated water resources management plan for 2022-25 and received recognition for implementation of programmes such as Atal Bhujal Yojana, Jal Shakti Abhiyan and promotion of micro-irrigation.

# Beaten, branded by husband: Woman escapes, walks to police with chain on neck

**Locked to a pillar, branded with a heated iron rod and held captive for nearly a day, a woman in Madhya Pradesh staged a dramatic escape that ended with a six-kilometre walk to a police station.**



**Rajgarh. (Agency)**

For nearly 24 hours, an iron chain around her neck kept her tied to a pillar inside her home. Her husband allegedly branded her body with a red-hot iron rod, beat her repeatedly and dared her to go to the police.

By Friday night, the same woman was standing inside a police station in Madhya Pradesh's Rajgarh district - exhausted, bruised, her feet torn by thorns, and the chain that had been used to imprison her still hanging around her neck. The extraordinary escape led to the arrest of her husband, Sardar Singh Tanwar.

**'NOW LET'S SEE HOW YOU GO TO THE POLICE'**

The victim, Mangibai Tanwar, told police that the violence began on the evening of June 10 when her husband returned home after drinking alcohol. After dinner, he allegedly started abusing her. When she objected, he walked outside, cut a tree branch and turned it into a stick. What followed, she alleged, was a brutal

assault. She was beaten with the stick, slapped repeatedly and threatened. Unable to bear the violence, Mangibai decided to approach the police and quietly left home during the night. She walked for hours towards Khilchipur police station. But before she could get there, her husband allegedly intercepted her near a temple,

assaulted her again and forced her back to the village. Back home, the punishment became even harsher. Mangibai alleged that her husband wrapped an iron chain around her neck, secured the other end to a pillar and locked it. "Now let's see how you go to the police station and file a complaint against me," he allegedly told her.

**BRANDED WITH A HEATED IRON ROD**

The woman alleged that her husband then heated an iron rod on a gas stove and pressed it against her body. The burns, she said, were inflicted on her waist, hip and right thigh. She screamed in pain, but nobody came to

help. For the next 24 hours, she remained captive inside the house. She was not allowed to leave or speak to anyone. According to her complaint, her husband was simultaneously trying to gather villagers for a

panchayat and pressure her into abandoning any plan to approach the police. Fearing further violence, she pretended to agree. In reality, she was waiting for a chance to escape.

## Asaduddin Owaisi sounds UP poll bugle from Bahraich: 'Need to build own political leadership'

**Announces party's state chief Shaukat Ali as candidate from Bahraich's Mavera Assembly seat.**

**Lucknow. (Agency)**

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) president Asaduddin Owaisi on Sunday launched his party's campaign for the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections from Bahraich, calling for the creation of an independent political leadership for Muslims and other marginalised communities. He also announced AIMIM Uttar Pradesh president Shaukat Ali as the party's candidate from Bahraich's Mavera Assembly constituency.

Addressing a rally in what is considered a Samajwadi Party stronghold, Owaisi urged voters to strengthen AIMIM in UP rather than relying on leaders elected from larger parties. He criticised the SP's local leadership and claimed the AIMIM would significantly alter the political landscape in both Bahraich and UP ahead of the next

Assembly elections. "Aane wale Vidhan Sabha chunav mein apni ek siyasi leadership ko banana padega (In the coming Assembly elections, we will have to build our own political leadership)",



Owaisi said. Invoking the Constitution and B. R. Ambedkar, he argued that political empowerment was essential for securing social and economic justice. "Agar hum samaji aur maashi insaaf ko hasil karna chahte hain to pehle siyasi insaaf hona

chahiye" (If we want to achieve social and economic justice, political justice must come first), he said. Owaisi appealed to supporters to use their votes to strengthen their own political representation and leadership. Positioning AIMIM as a potential partner in efforts to challenge the BJP, Owaisi said the responsibility of opposing the ruling party could not rest solely with Muslims. However, he maintained that any alliance would have to be based on dignity and meaningful political participation. "Agar koi BJP ko rokna chahta hai, AIMIM unka saath dene ko taiyyar hai" (If anyone wants to stop the BJP, AIMIM is ready to support them), he said. He added that future political cooperation would require respect and a share in decision-making rather than symbolic support.

## Three killed, 29 injured as runaway truck overturns bus in MP's Katni

**Nainital. (Agency)**

An out-of-control truck rammed into a car, hit a bus and crashed into a bridge in Katni, Madhya Pradesh, on Sunday, leaving three passengers in the bus dead and 29 injured, police said. The accident occurred near the Industrial Area bridge under Kuthla police station limits, when the bus, carrying around 35 passengers, was travelling from Katni to Vijayraghavgarh, while the truck was coming from the opposite direction, Superintendent of Police Abhinav Vishwakarma told PTI over the phone. Preliminary investigation suggests that the truck driver lost control of the wheel due to a brake failure, he said.

The collision impact caused the bus to overturn, leaving several passengers trapped. A crane was used to lift the bus and rescue the passengers in an operation that lasted over 35 minutes, he

added. Locals joined police personnel and administrative officials in rescue operations.

The deceased passengers were identified as Kishan Kol (30), Neelam Prajapati, and Raju Choudhary, police said. A girl, who sustained serious injuries, has been shifted to the government medical college and hospital in Jabalpur divisional headquarters, while others are being treated in the district hospital, said Vishwakarma. The driver of the truck was also injured. Eyewitnesses said the collision triggered panic, trapping

passengers inside and beneath the overturned bus. One person was trapped inside the truck's cabin. Expressing grief, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav announced a financial aid of Rs 4 lakh each to the three deceased, and Rs 1 lakh assistance for the severely injured girl.



## Second murder in 24 hours shocks Chandigarh

**Chandigarh. (Agency)**

Less than 24 hours after a chemist shop cashier was shot dead in broad daylight in Sector 11, Chandigarh witnessed another murder on Sunday night, with a youth allegedly hacked to death by a group of assailants in Mauli Jagran.



The victim, identified as Tota, was attacked with sharp-edged weapons in Vikas Nagar, Mauli Jagran. His friend, Akash, who was with him at the time, also sustained serious injuries and was admitted to hospital. According to police sources, 10 to 15 assailants allegedly

surrounded the two youths before launching a brutal attack with sharp-edged weapons. Tota suffered multiple injuries and was rushed to hospital, where doctors declared him dead. Akash is undergoing treatment and is stated to be in a serious condition.

On receiving information, a team from Mauli Jagran police station reached the spot and shifted the injured to hospital. The body of the deceased was sent for post-mortem examination. A forensic team also visited the crime scene and collected evidence. Police have begun examining CCTV footage from the area to identify the attackers and trace their movements before and after the incident.

The assailants managed to flee after the attack and had not been arrested till the filing of this report. Police have registered a case and launched an investigation. Officials are probing the motive behind the attack and whether the assailants were known to the victims.

## Maharashtra RTO services face statewide halt as employees launch indefinite strike from Tuesday

**Mumbai. (Agency)**

The Maharashtra Motor Vehicle Department (RTO) is staring at a complete administrative paralysis as the state's RTO employees have announced an indefinite, statewide strike beginning on Tuesday, to press for their long-pending demands.

The decision to launch an indefinite agitation was formalised during an emergency meeting of the Motor Vehicle Department Employees union.

Addressing the media here, union General Secretary Surendra Sartape accused the state administration of employing "delaying tactics" and showing total apathy toward the staff's grievances.

"We have given the government and the administration more than enough time to address our concerns. However, we have received nothing but empty assurances and administrative roadblocks. An indefinite

strike is now the only option left to compel the government to take a decisive, positive step," Sartape stated. The primary bone of contention is the department's failure to notify 'Service Recruitment Rules' even



three-and-a-half years after the state government approved the new organisational structure for the department. The union contends that the lack of these rules has led to a major deadlock in staff promotions, causing significant financial and professional hardship to thousands of

employees.

The strike is expected to bring the state's transport sector to a near-standstill. The affected services will include issuance and renewal of driving licenses, registration of new vehicles and issuance of RC books, mandatory vehicle fitness inspections, and processing of commercial transport permits. Transport experts believe that the timing of the strike will lead to massive backlogs, particularly for commercial operators and new vehicle buyers.

The union has made it clear that the agitation will continue unabated until the government issues a written commitment regarding the framing of the service rules and the resolution of promotion-related issues. With no immediate signs of a breakthrough in talks with the transport ministry, thousands of citizens across Maharashtra are expected to face significant inconvenience starting Tuesday.

# Cashier had no enemies, says family as police hunt Chandigarh Sector 11 shooters

**Chandigarh. (Agency)**

More than 24 hours after a cashier was shot dead by masked gunmen at a chemist shop in Chandigarh's Sector 11, police are yet to make a breakthrough in the case, even as multiple teams continue to investigate the brazen daylight murder and trace the movements of the assailants.

The victim, Janki Das, was working at Shri Kumar Chemist Shop when two masked men entered the premises on Saturday afternoon and opened fire. Police believe the attackers fired 13 rounds from an automatic pistol within seconds before fleeing. A third accomplice was allegedly waiting nearby on a motorcycle. Das's family said they were unable to comprehend why he had been targeted.

"He never had any dispute with anyone. He was a simple man. He had no enemies. We just want the people who killed him to be arrested and punished," said his wife.

Questioning the motive behind the attack, she added, "If someone wanted to attack him,

they could have done so when he returned home late at night. We don't know why they came to the shop and shot him like this."

Police on Sunday traced the suspects' movements to Kajheri village, where CCTV cameras captured the three accused after the shooting. Investigators are analysing the footage to identify the suspects and reconstruct their escape route. However, police have not yet established where the accused went after reaching Kajheri.

A photograph purportedly showing the assailants with their faces visible circulated widely on social media during the day. While some claimed the image had been generated using artificial intelligence, others speculated it had been released to help identify the suspects. Chandigarh Police did not officially comment on the photograph.

The attack has raised questions about how the assailants managed to escape despite the presence of a nearby police naka and Chandigarh's extensive CCTV surveillance network. A post-mortem examination



conducted at Government Multi-Specialty Hospital, Sector 16, on Sunday revealed that Das suffered multiple gunshot injuries to his chest, abdomen and neck. Doctors found several bullets had passed through his body,

indicating the shots were fired from extremely close range.

Following the post-mortem, the body was handed over to the family, who left for their native village in Rohru, Himachal Pradesh,

where the last rites will be performed. Investigators are also examining whether the intended target was the shop itself. Sector 11 is home to Kumar Brothers, one of the city's oldest chemist establishments, which has allegedly received extortion threats in the past. However, the shooting took place at Shri Kumar Chemist, a separate business.

According to police sources, Rajeev, a partner in Shri Kumar Chemist, told investigators that the business had never received any extortion calls. The shop was established only about a year ago, and its owners have expressed bewilderment over why it may have been targeted. Police have also questioned the owner of a garment shop in Kajheri, where the suspects are believed to have purchased a change of clothes before disappearing. CCTV footage from the area captured all three accused together, and police teams are now working to establish their identities and track their movements after they left the village. No arrests had been made till the filing of this report.

## Blood flows as fragile pause does nothing to cap costs

Ausaf Sayeed

In a single Thursday, the war over Iran shifted from the brink of a catastrophe to the cusp of a deal. On June 11, President Donald Trump threatened to strike Iran “very hard” and seize Kharg island, through which nine-tenths of Iranian oil flows; by nightfall, he had called off the strikes, announced an agreement “approved” by all parties—Iran among them—and predicted a signing in Europe within days. It was at least the eighth time since February that he cancelled strikes at the last moment—a rhythm of ultimatum and reprieve that should temper any euphoria. Yet the breakthrough is more of a declaration than a fact. Tehran offered no confirmation; its semi-official Fars news agency said Iran had agreed to no memorandum of understanding, though it judged an eventual approval likely. Israel went further, refusing to recognise any agreement, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly blindsided by the announcement. The framework, brokered in late-night exchanges between Qatari and Iranian negotiators, focuses narrowly on reopening the Strait of Hormuz and lifting the US naval blockade, while deferring decisions on Iran’s nuclear programme and over \$16 billion in frozen Iranian funds. Trump stressed that the blockade remains in effect until the ink is dry. That a deal remains elusive after 100 days of conflict reflects irreconcilable ends, only partly papered over. Washington’s mix of strikes, blockade and coercion seeks hard limits on Iran’s nuclear and missile programmes and its proxies, plus freedom of navigation. Tehran, reconstituted around Mojtaba Khamenei and an ascendant Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps after Ali Khamenei’s death, treats its energy lifeline, sanctions relief and security guarantees as non-negotiable. The result is a double blockade around Hormuz—American warships throttling Iranian ports, while Iran restricts the waterway carrying a fifth of the world’s seaborne oil. Iran declared the strait closed after Thursday’s attacks; Washington insists shipping still flows. Into that gap has stepped a crowded field of mediators. Qatar has emerged as the indispensable broker of the present draft, its envoys hammering out the text with Iranian negotiators while its emir pressed the case with Trump by telephone. The UAE and Pakistan, too, urged restraint. Earlier direct talks hosted by Pakistan had collapsed over what Tehran called excessive demands, and Oman’s quiet neutrality continues in the background. The latest escalation has again unnerved the Gulf, exposing the paradox its leaders long dreaded—that dependence on the US as guarantor offers no insulation from the costs of its military choices. Israel remains the great complicating variable. The original Iran ceasefire pointedly excluded Lebanon, and Israel’s continuing bombardment there—more than 2,000 killed and over a million displaced—keeps reigniting the wider war. Hezbollah’s leader Naim Qassem has rejected a US-brokered truce as tantamount to surrender, while Iran insists Lebanon falls within any understanding and warns it will resume operations if the strikes persist. That Netanyahu was neither consulted before Thursday’s announcement nor willing to acknowledge a deal feeds a suspicion that Israel has little interest in US-Iran diplomacy succeeding—and ample means to derail it. The prognosis, then, is hopeful but unproven. The choreography that produced Thursday’s reprieve could unravel within a news cycle, as it has before. Markets have exhaled—oil eased, equities rallied—but the toll is heavy. The World Bank this week cut its global growth forecast to 2.5 percent, the weakest since the pandemic, warned of a fall to 1.3 percent should the war reignite; it projected global headline inflation climbing to 4 percent through 2026 against 3.3 percent last year. A settlement that secures navigation while deferring the nuclear question and frozen funds is less a peace than a pause dressed as one. For India, the war has turned lethal and personal. In four days, American forces attacked three tankers carrying Indian crews—the Marivex, the Settebello and the Jalveer—accusing each of moving Iranian oil in defiance of the blockade. Aboard the Settebello, three Indian seafarers were killed, while the Jalveer’s 20 Indians were evacuated to Oman.

## 4,399 days: A historic mandate, transforming India

Over the last twelve years, India has undergone a transformation that has touched virtually every aspect of national life.

Amit Malviya

On June 10, 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi became the longest-serving elected prime minister in India’s history, completing 4,399 consecutive days in office and surpassing the previous record held by Jawaharlal Nehru. This milestone is not merely about longevity in office. It is a reflection of the extraordinary trust that the people of India have placed in one leader and one vision across three successive general elections. In 2014, India voted for change. In 2019, it voted for performance. In 2024, it voted for continuity, confidence and the promise of a developed India. Few democratic leaders anywhere in the world have secured such a sustained and emphatic endorsement from their people. At a time when many democracies are grappling with instability, fractured mandates and frequent political transitions, India has demonstrated the strength that comes from decisive leadership backed by popular legitimacy. The world’s largest democracy has shown that political stability and democratic accountability can go hand in hand. Over the last twelve years, India has undergone a transformation that has touched virtually every aspect of national life. From financial inclusion and social welfare to infrastructure, digital governance and economic reform, governance has increasingly become synonymous with scale, speed and transparency. Hundreds of millions have gained access to banking, housing, sanitation, clean cooking fuel and healthcare. Roads, railways, airports and logistics networks have expanded at an unprecedented pace, creating the foundations of a modern and aspirational India. The Digital India revolution has placed India at the forefront of technology-enabled governance. Today, India leads the world in real-time digital payments, possesses globally admired digital public infrastructure and has emerged as the world’s third-largest startup ecosystem. Technology is no longer the privilege of a few; it has become an instrument of empowerment for millions. Equally significant has been the rise of women-led development. Through greater financial inclusion, entrepreneurship, education and grassroots participation, women have become central stakeholders in India’s growth story. Their empowerment is no longer viewed as a social objective alone but as a national development imperative. India’s growing stature on the global stage has been another defining feature of this era. Under Prime Minister Modi’s leadership, India has emerged as a trusted voice in global affairs and a reliable partner in trade, technology, development and humanitarian assistance. Whether during crises, international negotiations or



global economic transitions, India today speaks with confidence and is heard with respect. The journey has also been marked by a strong commitment to innovation and sustainability. India’s renewable energy capacity has expanded dramatically, artificial intelligence and emerging technologies are being embraced at scale, and pioneering conservation efforts have demonstrated that development and environmental stewardship can advance together. Yet the significance of this ment extends beyond policy and governance. Prime Minister Modi’s journey, from humble beginnings to becoming India’s longest-serving elected prime minister, is a testament to the strength of Indian democracy itself. It reflects a nation where public service, perseverance and dedication can take an individual from the grassroots to the highest elected

office. Having served for more than twelve years as chief minister of Gujarat and twelve years as prime minister, Narendra Modi has now spent nearly twenty-five years as an elected head of government. Few leaders in modern democratic history have enjoyed such longevity while continuing to command such broad public support. History will remember the number—4,399 days. But future generations may remember this period for something far greater: the transformation of India into a more confident, capable, connected and globally influential nation. Today is not only a milestone in the life of one leader. It is a milestone in the democratic journey of India. A moment that reflects the trust of 140 crore Indians. A moment that celebrates continuity, stability and development. A moment that reaffirms the collective resolve to build a Viksit Bharat. 4,399 days.

## Costly cure: Health policy must put poor patients first

If manufacturers are unable to recover production costs, they may simply stop supplying these medicines

THE decision of the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) to permit a 50% increase in the prices of select cancer drugs, anti-tetanus serum and childhood vaccines underscores the difficult choices inherent in public health policy. On the one hand lies the imperative of keeping essential medicines affordable in a country where a large proportion of households rely on out-of-pocket expenditure for healthcare. On the other lies the need to ensure that life-saving medicines remain available in the market. The steep rise in the prices of certain drugs and vaccines may be justifiable, but it raises questions about healthcare equity. The NPPA has cited concerns over shortages and escalating input costs. If manufacturers are unable to recover production costs, they may simply stop supplying these medicines. Yet this argument cannot obscure another reality: millions of people struggle to pay for even basic healthcare. A 50%



increase in the price of medicines used to treat cancer or prevent childhood diseases can push vulnerable families deeper into financial distress. For patients, treatment expenses often extend beyond medicines to diagnostics, travel, hospitalisation and loss of income. Any additional burden can force difficult choices between treatment and survival. The answer, thus, does not lie in choosing between affordability and availability. It lies in building mechanisms that protect both. The government must strengthen public procurement and ensure uninterrupted supplies through public hospitals. Insurance schemes should expand coverage for essential medicines, while targeted subsidies can shield poor patients from sudden price shocks. At the same time, pricing policies should be reviewed periodically to reflect genuine increases in production costs and prevent shortages. Essential medicines cannot be treated as ordinary commodities.

## Jaspal Rana was a champion who created champions

Jaspal was a tough taskmaster who brooked no nonsense from either athletes or his pistol coaching staff. But he had a soft heart

Raninder Singh

IN the sudden and untimely demise of Dronacharya Jaspal Rana on June 12, the sports fraternity lost a sportsman who has played a pivotal role in the evolution of shooting from an also-ran sport to India’s premier Olympic medal-winning discipline. It is difficult to write about this sporting icon, who, over the course of his career, seamlessly evolved from an international champion shooter to a world-class coach. It is an established fact that not every world-class athlete is cut out to be a great coach and nor is every great coach a world-class athlete. Therefore, excelling in both roles is a rare achievement. This is also true for some of our other coaches, but such coaches are few and far between who have produced the line-up of successful protégés. In 2012, when I was President of the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI), our realisation of what the future held in terms of talent evaluation, promotion and preparation for the coming years was, to put it lightly, limited. We, therefore, sought to institute a vigorous junior programme for all three facets of our sport (rifle, pistol and shotgun). Its express aim was to ensure that the country would, within a reasonable and quantifiable period of time, produce a stream of young children who would compete at the highest level in their age groups. They would not be limited by the selection policy to replace the great existing athletes in the senior team, should their talents provide a meritorious challenge to the established shooting order. Thus, they would

continuously feed the highest national talent pool with fresh lots of athletes for times to come. This junior programme was vertically linked to the education system of the CBSE schools and existing coaching institutes and academies across the country. But the problem was that



there simply were not enough qualified coaches available. This is when the NRAI reached out to Olympians and international champions of stature, such as Jaspal, to head the three wings of our sport. Jaspal assumed the role of the national chief pistol coach of the junior pistol team, as did his colleagues in other shooting

disciplines. The day he took over, he told me, “Bir ji, I am doing this at lower pay than I have ever had because I want to give back to my sport and because you have asked me to do so. But I will brook no interference in my work from either you or anyone else. You must back me and support me should such a situation arise.” I remember thinking this was exactly what we needed and replied, “I won’t interfere until you break the rules yourself.” To this, he said, “I expect just that.” He set off on the task the next day. The results started showing within a year. India began to fetch most of the medals at major competitions. In pistol, the results were clearly the best. Jaspal was a tough taskmaster who brooked no nonsense from either athletes or his pistol coaching staff. Actually, in a refreshing way, he helped the NRAI bring in a rudimentary approach to mentoring athletes: by breaking them down and rebuilding them in a classless homogeneous group of children being pushed to a constantly higher standard of disciplined self-belief and sporting achievements. There were challenges along the way, as often happens in a sporting family of such scale. Once a delegation of parents complained to me that Jaspal was not allowing children to have mobile phones. Also, he asked the parents accompanying the athletes to depart as he found that it distracted them. I backed his decision because he was right. On one point, where I found him lacking, I called him out. It upset him,

but we soon reconciled our differences and worked together. There were occasions on which varying opinions were tabled in a healthy discourse. Yes, he was a very strong-minded man. But he also had a soft heart. One had to appeal to both to win him over. Jaspal was a professional athlete. And as a coach, he attained the highest honour of being bestowed the coveted Dronacharya Award by the government, an honour that I had the privilege, as the then President of the NRAI, of recommending to the government. So what is the legacy that he leaves behind? It is that he, supported by his talented pool of coaches and support staff, has helped establish an enviable bench strength for the sport of Olympic pistol shooting. Unarguably, he was the engine that gave the sport the steam. It was this steam, in the period spanning 2013 to 2021, that helped the junior national pistol squad win at the highest international events — 104 gold medals, 55 silver and 59 bronze; world records — 8; Asian records — 1. From 2021 onwards, he capped his career amongst others, most notably with his protégé Manu Bhaker’s double Olympic medal triumph at the Paris Olympic Games. This feat is unequalled by any Indian coach in any Olympic sport. Other than the medals won, he has mentored hundreds of young athletes in achieving the honour of donning the national colours and competing internationally, where they fought but did not win on that day. However, they are ready for their big moments in the near future. In memory of my friend and colleague Dronacharya Jaspal Rana, I end by saying that we, as a family of friends and colleagues, will miss you, old friend. You have secured your name for times to come in the halls of Indian and Olympic shooting, both as an athlete and as one of the best coaching mentors in your event of pistol shooting.



# Tips for Restarting your Career after a long sabbatical

**S**abbaticals are still viewed with scepticism and fear, though their purpose is to either take some time off to rest and relax or have a chance to step back from work and focus on personal enrichment and professional development. Whether the sabbatical is for a few weeks or a year, employees aim to return to work with more focus and energy. Here are some effective tips to kick-start your second innings.

- Stay informed: Industry keeps evolving. Taking a sabbatical increases your chances of getting cut off from happenings in the industry. In case you aim to get started from where you left off in your professional journey, ensure your foundation is solid and can withstand unexpected changes. Come back with updated knowledge and skills.
- The value of networking: There is unanimous agreement among researchers that building and nurturing relationships with current and former people in the industry provides a strong medium to building a vibrant career and acts like a cushion for unplanned things.
- Speak up: After a break, some people do experience a natural reticence while speaking in

group sessions and team meetings. It's okay to keep quiet but withholding a helpful comment or pertinent questions won't do any good. Reasons to decide if it is time to hang on or move on: In a study on women returners by PWC, three in five professional women returning to the workforce are likely to experience an immediate earnings reduction of up to a third or likely to move into lower skilled or lower paid roles. Though it might be tempting to quit an unsatisfying job, there are several reasons to pause before submitting a resignation. One of the crucial reasons would be having higher self-confidence or having a better bargaining position as a job seeker if you are presently employed elsewhere.

- Exploring Opportunities: A gap in the resume does not look good, but trying to cover it up makes it worse. Align your social and professional networks with your resume as recruiters often check your digital footprint. Ensure your resume is created as per the trending format and is updated. Face the interview with the right attitude. Have a legit reason explaining your decision to go on a sabbatical and rejoining the work now.

## Tips to win office Politics

Let's face it office politics is everywhere and no one can escape for its vicious clutches. But that doesn't mean that you can't fight it or stand up against it. One has to deal these things calmly and diplomatically. So here are few tips that will help you stand against these office politics and still be loved by all.

1. Acceptance: A war is half won when you accept and acknowledge it. If you are being involved or dragged in office politics, firstly accept and acknowledge it. Then start analyzing who are the root cause for them and how can they be dealt with. Be aware that after this point too, you have a chance to either face it and fight against it or simply leave it.
2. Don't take sides: We fall in major problems when we start taking sides. It's good to have opinions but never under any circumstances take sides as it will ruin everything. When you find yourself caught in a situation like this then focus on your business objectives and don't take side with either of them. Place them on a common communication platform and ensure open communications among all parties so that no one can claim that they didn't utter those words.
3. Don't get personal: There will be times when a colleague messes up with your happiness and you just want to give them a piece of your mind. Do not do that. This will not only make you look bad in front of your boss's eyes but will also make space for more rivalry. People tend to remember about the insults and arguments meted against them even though for you it was just a matter that you chose not to give enough importance.
4. No angry mails: Before



Be it the need for power, position, money or simply greed, office politics can crop in any form and can create havoc in your life if not dealt well.

sending any correspondences via email think through it a hundred times. Though in anger you might feel you are doing the right thing but to never known when the same mail might be used against you to demean you or make you the bad person in front of all. Same goes for social media posts too. Be extremely careful.

5. Know the real culprit: Know who the trouble maker is and always maintain a safe distance from that person and if you can make peace with that person nothing better than that.

## How to deal with frenemies at work

A frenemy is one of the most dangerous workplace friends you can come across," says US-based executive coach and corporate author Ellen Lubin-Sherman. This is the kind of colleague who pretends to be your well-meaning friend but doesn't miss a chance to back-stab you. According to Donna Flagg, the author of Surviving Dreaded Conversations, frenemies range from harmless ones to workplace bullies who revel in mind games. "However, once they are put in place, they are less likely to repeat their behaviour," she says. Dealing with an office frenemy is like walking on tightrope. You can't sever ties with the colleague in question, especially if you work in the same team, neither can you afford to have heated arguments for the sake of professional appearance.

**KNOW YOUR OFFICE FRENEMIES**

**THE SURFER**

This frenemy uses charm to get her work done by transferring her own responsibilities onto colleagues. Tip: Chalk out your



personal duties and deadlines to avoid being taken advantage of.

**THE IDEA THIEF**

This is the person who seconds your original ideas at brainstorming sessions, and passes them off as his own. Tip: When you find someone taking credit for your idea, verbally discuss it with the colleague. If it doesn't work, talk to your boss after informing the person about it.

**THE EAGER UPSTART**

This ambitious young newbie

doesn't stop raving about your productivity and work ethics, but has a hidden agenda - to take over your position through scheming. Tip: Don't get swayed by the compliments. Remind your subordinate that your take on her performance counts.

**THE PESSIMIST**

He/she thrives on negativity. She draws you into conversations about how everything about your workplace is terrible. Tip: When you find yourself being pulled into complaint mode, focus on the

positive steps you can take to resolve problems.

**Dos & don'ts**

Treat your colleague cautiously if you continue to have major problems. When handed joint projects, draw clear lines of separation of labour. Write down the facts of your complaint before bringing the matter to your boss. Leave out any personal opinions in the note. If it reads like something your boss should be aware of, then state your case as objectively as possible.

Don't retaliate. If you find that a colleague has bad-mouthed you or taken credit for your ideas, don't respond immediately even though you might be tempted to. Don't shut down lines of communication, especially via email. Having a record of your correspondence will prevent your frenemy from faking facts. Don't overreact.

Let minor matters slide. If the issue is significant, ask your colleague about it directly to avoid any misunderstandings. Don't complain at the outset of your tiff. Give your colleague the benefit of the doubt until the matter escalates.



# 5 things you should learn from your First job

**So it's your first job and you have to make sure that you create the right impression and yet stick to your deadlines.**

## 10 tips for email Etiquette

The digital age has made communication much easier and more hassle-free, what with several apps available for mobile phone chat. However, people often forget that they have to use a different, more formal tone for official email correspondence, and end up peppering their emails with too many emojis and abbreviations. Here are a few tips to keep in mind when you're sending out a work email.

**1. INTRODUCTIONS ARE IMPORTANT:** Always introduce yourself if you are writing to someone you don't know or haven't corresponded with previously. If you've got the sender's address from a mutual friend, mention that in your email. Introducing yourself is especially important if you're sending out a survey or questionnaire to people whose addresses you have got from a database.

**2. ALWAYS RUN A SPELL-CHECK:** It's important to run a spell-check for official correspondence, especially if you're sending an email from your phone. You don't want the auto-correct feature to backfire on an official email, after all. Ensure your grammar and punctuation are correct as well.

**3. USE THE REPLY-ALL FEATURE SPARINGLY:** Only use the reply-all feature for an email that really needs it. If the reply is meant for only one person, just reply to him/her. And don't use it to reply to a sender's greetings for the festive

season — you could find yourself being blamed for starting an unnecessary email thread.

**4. USE BCC FOR GENERIC MAILS:** Use the Bcc field for when you are sending out mails to a very large number of people who may not all know each other. It's also a way to ensure that all your contacts' addresses are not out there for people unknown to them to access.

**5. RESTRICT THE NUMBER OF ATTACHMENTS YOU SEND:** Send heavy files via file-hosting services so that you don't



clog the recipient's inbox. You could also zip files or resize pictures. If you know you're sending an email to someone who accesses his/her inbox on the phone, don't send several attachments with it.

**6. DON'T OVER-ABBREVIATE:** Don't use too many abbreviations or in your email, like FYI, PFA, PDF or FYR. It may confuse the recipient, who may also get the impression that you don't have the time to type out a proper email. If you must use them, restrict it only to the subject line.

**7. FORMATTING FUNDAS:** Do not use all caps and bold fonts as this will give the recipient the impression that you are shouting at him/her. The same goes for

underlining in the middle of a lot of text. Don't use fancy fonts or multiple font colours either.

**8. WATCH YOUR TONE:** Always be careful about how your email sounds. It may be an official email, but it should not sound too abrupt. You shouldn't sound over-friendly either, especially if this is the first time you are corresponding with the recipient. Moreover, don't send out an email if you're upset. Save it as a draft and re-read it when you're calmer.

**9. FIX YOUR FORWARDS:** Make it a point to clean up forwards before you, in turn, forward them to other people. Not only does this make the email look cleaner, but it also ensures that you don't give away anyone else's email addresses.

**10. CHECK WHO YOU'RE SENDING AN EMAIL TO:** Always check the To field of an unsent email before you send it. You don't want the wrong email being sent to the wrong person. What every official email should contain

**Subject line:** This is the first thing that recipients will see in their inboxes and it will determine whether they will read it or not. It should be clear and direct.

**Salutation:** Always start an email by greeting the recipient by using the word 'dear' followed by his/her name. If you aren't on a first-name basis with the recipient, use a title and a surname.

**Concise body:** Get straight to the point. If you have more than one issue to address, start with the most important, and list the rest point-by-point.

**Sign off:** Always sign off on your emails. Phrases like 'Yours sincerely' and 'yours faithfully' are acceptable for formal emails. 'Best regards' or 'kind regards' work in most other situations.

And while you are busy maintaining a balance between creating the right impression, sticking to deadlines, you also have to see that you learn various things from your job which doesn't really come under your job responsibilities. From how to cracking the meeting to how to talk to break the ice with the seniors here is a list of things that you learn both knowingly and unknowingly on your first job.

**Sticking to deadlines**

So while you were in college or school deadlines were something that you were quite flexible with. But things change when you step out in the world and get into the work zone. From bringing out a story

within a deadline or cracking a deal within a deadline, this word matters the most in the work zone and should be given utmost priority.

**Work-home balance isn't a myth**

So while you may think that balancing your work responsibilities and home chores is a total myth, in reality is isn't. While, initially it may all seem very surreal to manage all, gradually you will get used to it and then managing both becomes quite easy.

**Every penny counts**

Gone are the days when you can buy a dress or shoe or cosmetics without thinking much about the cost. When you start working you get to know the real value of hard earned money.

So in a sense your first job teaches you where to be a spendthrift and where to be a true-blue stingy.

**Being a smart worker**

Well, it is good you are a hard worker, but amidst deadlines one has to be a smart worker and make sure that he/she finishes work in time and with less errors.

**Socialize right and smart**

Certainly, there are many who are glued to social media, but when you get into a work pace and add people from your work space one has to be doubly sure to see what kind of messages and pictures they are sharing on social media. The reason being that a lot of employers these days goes through our social pages and decides whether to hire or not.

## 5 essential skills today's employers want

Apart from relevant, organisations are now looking at hiring graduates with people skills and an aptitude for leadership.

In a competitive job market, a degree that highlights your core competencies and skills is not enough to get you a job. Employers are now looking for candidates with not only the right attitude, but also the right aptitude while hiring. Here are some of the essential skills that fresh graduates will need to cultivate to secure a job:

**Communication skills:** The most significant step towards getting through the interview process is to polish your communication skills, both written and verbal.

This is the best way to stand out in the crowded candidate market and it also aids in building a strong professional network.

**Aptitude for leadership:** It is not just the academic record and domain expertise that matter these days, but also your proficiency to be a leader that companies look out for. Not everyone can master this skill; however, one can work on building their inherent leadership qualities by taking initiatives and responsibility.

**Being a people's person and a team player:** Good interpersonal skills are a key to securing your dream job. Having this skill



reflects that you are sociable and can work harmoniously with others. Interviewers will most likely test your ability of being a team player through questions relating to real-life scenarios. Some interviewers give a lot of importance to the extra-curricular abilities of the interviewee - excellence in sports, participation in student organization activities, community assistance roles with NGOs, etc - to judge the individual's ability to work in teams and inspire innovative ideas.

**Problem solving and analytical skills:** Impromptu thinking and problem solving skills are the qualities that prospective employers look for in candidates. So it is essential to build on these capabilities and flaunt them when you present yourself in the job market as this will help you gain bonus points.

**Open to learning and being proactive:** It is vital for a candidate to come across as independent and not someone who needs to be pushed for a task to be completed. In addition to this, out-of-the-box thinking and innovative ideas can get you the competitive corporate advantage. Interviewers will also try to gauge if a candidate is open to maintaining a continuous learning curve to re-skill themselves in a dynamic workplace and stay ahead.

Interviewers are impressed not with how much you know, but with how well you can convince the opposite person to think and accept your point of view. By demonstrating the right qualities and by marketing yourself efficiently, you can certainly land your first big career break!

# Indian Army unveils new dress code, phases out colonial-era traditions

**The Indian Army has unveiled Army Uniforms-2026, recasting dress, ceremony and grooming rules. The changes bring in more Indian elements, trim colonial-era practices and tighten appearance standards.**

New Delhi.(Agency)

In a major step towards reshaping military traditions around Indian values and contemporary operational requirements, the Indian Army has introduced a comprehensive new dress code that replaces several colonial-era practices while

tightening standards related to appearance, grooming and ceremonial attire.

The new regulations, detailed in the Army Uniforms-2026 manual, represent the most extensive revision of military dress and appearance norms in nearly a decade. Army officials describe the changes as part of a wider effort to strengthen the force's indigenous identity while preserving its regimental heritage and professional ethos. One of the most visible changes is the introduction of the traditional Bandi jacket into the Army's formal dress code for officers. The closed-neck Indian-style jacket can now be worn during specified formal occasions, reflecting the Army's growing emphasis on incorporating indigenous cultural elements into military customs. The revised manual also introduces a new winter uniform, designated Dress 3B, for personnel of all

ranks. The attire consists of an Angola shirt paired with a battle jacket and beret, providing a standardised winter dress pattern across formations. The Army has additionally authorised the winter ceremonial uniform Dress 1C for officers, a category that was previously restricted to Junior Commissioned Officers and other ranks.

The reforms go beyond clothing and touch upon long-standing ceremonial practices. The Army has reduced the prominence of several colonial-era accoutrements and customs, including the use of pouch belts in certain formal mess dresses. Swords, traditionally carried during some ceremonial events, will no longer be mandatory in many situations, reflecting a shift towards practicality



without compromising military decorum.

The manual also removes references to archaic terminology inherited from the colonial period, including the use of the word "Royal" in dress-related nomenclature. Senior military officials say the objective is to ensure that Army traditions are more closely aligned with India's sovereign identity and national ethos. For women officers, the revised

regulations provide greater flexibility in formal attire. Sober-coloured sarees and kurta-salwar combinations with ankle-length straight pants and dupattas have been authorised for designated occasions. At the same time, sleeveless kurtas, palazzo trousers and cigarette pants remain prohibited to maintain uniform standards of appearance.

The Army has also laid down detailed grooming and personal appearance guidelines. Visible tattoos and body piercings continue to be prohibited, while personnel are barred from wearing bracelets in uniform except under limited religious circumstances. Moustaches have been capped at a maximum length of 12 centimetres, and the use of perfumes and deodorants while in uniform has been disallowed, although after-shave lotions remain permissible.

## Every Saturday, police stations to become complaint boxes of citizens

New Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi Police has issued a comprehensive circular, asking senior officers to extend public outreach, enhance accessibility of police services, and ensure the prompt redress of public grievances. The guidelines, issued after Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu's meeting with the Commissioner of Police Satish Golchha and other senior officials, will ensure structured public grievance redressal, enhanced police-public interface, and improved accountability at all levels.

It will involve creating an open platform to address complaints, receive suggestions, and handle local public safety issues quickly.

The circular issued by CP, addressed to all Special CPs, Jt CPs and DCPs, seeks to institutionalise the conduct of Thana Divas-Jan Sunwai at police stations.

"The Thana Divas-Jan Sunwai will be organised at every police station, every Saturday, from 10 am to 2 pm. The programme shall commence from the coming week and be conducted regularly thereafter. This shall serve as an open public hearing platform where the public may present their grievances, complaints, suggestions, requests for assistance, or matters relating to police functioning and public safety," the circular read.

The presence of senior officers will ensure to facilitate expeditious resolution of grievances and to strengthen public confidence in grievance redress mechanism.

The circular also asked to adhere instructions like every Police Station shall maintain a separate information sheet for recording grievances received during the public hearing. Any complainant who comes in Jan Sunwai shall be heard, irrespective of facts that his/her complaint is registered on ICMS or not. Complaints received during the Jan Sunwai shall be accepted and subsequently uploaded on ICMS. SHOs shall ensure proper seating arrangements, assistance desks, and a citizen-friendly environment during the conduct of Thana Divas-Jan Sunwai.

## Four held, including minor girl, after arson fire in Delhi's Tughlakabad Extension building kills three

New Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi Police apprehended four people, including a minor girl, in connection with a fire at a residential building in southeast Delhi's Tughlakabad Extension that claimed three lives, officials said on Sunday.

According to the police, a fire broke out in a building on Friday at 2.24 am, engulfing the structure from the ground floor to the fifth floor. Eight people were injured and shifted to AIIMS Trauma Centre and Safdarjung Hospital. Among them, Pankaj, his grandmother Sushila Devi, and his sister Sonia Kumari succumbed to their injuries.



On the basis of CCTV footage in which a woman is seen entering the premises shortly before the fire broke out, the case was found to be a deliberate act of arson, DCP (southeast) Hemant Tiwari said.

A 17-year-old girl was later apprehended. She allegedly disclosed that a 27-year-old Sarita, a resident of Govindpuri, had provided petrol and a matchbox to set ablaze the scooter of one Deepak, a resident of the fifth floor of the building, over a monetary dispute, the DCP said.

Sarita in turn revealed that the conspiracy was hatched at the instance of one Niranjani (33) and his brother Rajkumar (27), residents of Navjeevan Camp, to avenge a personal dispute, Tiwari stated.

## Thousands join Yamuna riverfront cleanup drive across 28 ghats in Delhi

New Delhi.(Agency)

Thousands of volunteers, citizens and political leaders participated in a large-scale cleanliness drive along the Yamuna riverfront on Sunday as the Delhi government organised the 'Yamuna Tat Swachhta Abhiyan 2026' across 28 ghats.

CM Rekha Gupta joined the campaign at Dashmesh Ghat in Geeta Colony and personally took part in the cleaning activities. Union Minister and Delhi BJP president Harsh Malhotra also participated in the drive at the Yamuna Bank stretch along with party leaders and workers. Delhi ministers, MLAs, BJP workers and local residents joined the campaign at various locations.

Officials said the drive was conducted simultaneously across nearly 22 kilometres of the Yamuna riverfront, reflecting large-scale public participation. More than 500 social and

voluntary organisations also participated in the campaign.

The Delhi government said the initiative would continue regularly at



different locations and would not remain limited to a single day. CM Rekha Gupta said Yamuna rejuvenation remains among the government's top priorities. She said projects worth more than '1,000 crore related to river rejuvenation and water management have already been approved.

Under the AMRUT scheme, 12 decentralised sewage treatment plants

are being established in the Najafgarh area at a cost of '860 crore to prevent untreated sewage from entering the Yamuna, she added.

Malhotra said Yamuna is the identity and lifeline of Delhi and added that coordinated efforts are being made to make the river clean and pollution-free. The campaign covered several riverfront locations, including Kalindi Kunj, ITO Ghat, Nigam Bodh Ghat, Nizamuddin Ghat, Sonia Vihar, Geeta Colony and Wazirabad stretches.

**AAP protests over water crisis in Chhatarpur**

AAP staged a protest in Chhatarpur over the ongoing water crisis, with residents alleging severe shortages for over a month. Protesters demanded regular water supply and accused the BJP and Delhi Jal Board of facilitating black marketing of water through tankers.

## Coaching centres' Regulation easier said than done

New Delhi.(Agency)

An unusual spectacle has been unfolding on social media over the past few weeks. Several prominent coaching-centre owners and education influencers have launched a sustained attack on institutions such as the National Testing Agency (NTA) and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

While these agencies are certainly not beyond criticism and have faced legitimate questions over examination management and evaluation processes, the intensity and persistence of the campaign against them raise an important question as to why has a section of the coaching industry become so aggressively invested in discrediting public examination bodies?

The answer lies in understanding the

peculiar nature of our coaching system and its place within the country's education structure. The coaching industry is a consequence of shortcomings in our education system.



Coaching centres have flourished because schools, colleges and universities have increasingly failed to meet the expectations of students and parents. Thus this supplementary academic assistance has evolved into a parallel education system. This

dependence is not confined to government schools. Students from some of the country's most expensive private schools routinely enrol in coaching programmes.

At the higher education level, the phenomenon is even more pronounced. Whether it is civil services, banking recruitment, or any other postgraduate competitive examinations, success is often perceived as impossible without undergoing the rigorous regimen of a coaching institute. Entire city economies in places such as Kota, Delhi, Hyderabad and Prayagraj are significantly influenced by educational coaching. The sector generates substantial employment and contributes considerable tax revenues. It is therefore intriguing that the leaders of such a thriving industry.

## Elderly woman rescued after fire breaks out at southeast Delhi eatery

**During the incident, three commercial LPG cylinders exploded, intensifying the blaze. Nine fire tenders were rushed to the spot and the fire was brought under control around 5.40 am.**

New Delhi.(Agency)

A 70-year-old woman was rescued from an adjoining building after a fire broke out at a restaurant in southeast Delhi's Kalkaji area early Sunday, the Delhi Fire Services (DFS) said.

The woman, identified as Sita Devi, was evacuated from the second floor of a nearby building during the firefighting operation. Officials said she is stable. According to the Delhi Fire Services, information about the fire at the 'Punjabi Tadka' restaurant near the Kalkaji-Govindpuri flyover was received at 4.45 am.

Officials said the fire involved a building comprising a basement, ground floor and three upper floors, along with a temporary structure on the terrace of the third floor. During the incident, three commercial LPG cylinders exploded, intensifying the blaze. Nine fire tenders were



rushed to the spot and the fire was brought under control around 5.40 am.

Firefighters also conducted search and rescue operations in nearby buildings as a precautionary measure, during which the elderly woman was rescued safely. No casualties were reported in the incident. Cooling operations were underway at the site and the exact cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, officials said.

**Blaze at Rajouri Garden showroom, no casualties**

A fire broke out at an apparel showroom in west Delhi's Rajouri Garden market on Sunday afternoon, an official said. No casualties or injuries were reported, they said, adding that the cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained. The blaze was reported at 3.55 pm. According to officials, the fire broke out on the first floor of a building, which houses a 'lehenga' and 'chunni' showroom.

## Italian Embassy Cultural Centre brings Botticelli's 'Madonna and Child' to India

New Delhi.(Agency)

Bringing India and Italy closer this year is Sandro Botticelli's 'Madonna and Child', a masterpiece currently on display at the Italian Embassy Cultural Centre of Delhi. Brought to India just days ago, the painting offers visitors a rare opportunity to experience one of the Italian Renaissance master's celebrated works firsthand.

"In an era where we are bombarded every day by thousands of digital images, standing before one authentic work of art has become a rare experience," says Andrea Anastasio, director of the Italian Embassy Cultural Centre. "We wanted people to have an intimate relationship with the work."

This also marks the beginning of what the Italian Embassy Cultural Centre hopes will become an annual tradition: bringing

a masterpiece by an Italian master to India each year. Last year, in collaboration with KNMA, the Baroque master Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio's 'Mary Magdalene in Ecstasy' travelled to India, touring Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru.

**A mother, an omen**

In 'Madonna and Child', a tempera-on-wood painting created around the 1500s, Madonna carries the infant Jesus in her arms but does not look at him. Hers is a melancholic gaze that seems to anticipate a future neither mother nor infant can escape. The child, meanwhile, gazes intently at her with an expression unusually solemn for a baby. Between them lies an emotional distance.

At first glance, the painting appears serene. Mary cradles the infant as mothers have done across centuries.



Botticelli painted the Virgin and Child many times, but in this work he subtly unsettles the familiar image.

"Here, the gaze of the Madonna is completely withdrawn," explains Anastasio during a walkthrough of the exhibition. "The child and the mother are physically close, but emotionally seem to inhabit different realities."

Unlike many Renaissance artists striving

for anatomical precision, Botticelli favoured idealisation over realism. Mary's elongated hands, graceful posture, and delicate features are less concerned with physical accuracy than with conveying emotional meaning.

This painting was commissioned by a private patron rather than the Church, giving it an unusual intimacy. Anastasio points to an intriguing detail: Mary's gaze falls away from the viewer because the patron likely wanted a Mary who would look towards a specific part of the room.

**Travel challenges**

Transporting a 500-year-old tempera painting across continents was no small undertaking. Unlike oil paintings on canvas, 'Madonna and Child' is painted on wood, making it especially vulnerable to fluctuations in temperature and humidity.

## Sensex jumps 1,200 points as US-Iran deal lifts markets: Is the worst over for investors?

New Delhi.(Agency)

Stock markets witnessed a sharp rally on Monday, with the Sensex and the Nifty gaining nearly 2%, as a breakthrough in the US-Iran conflict and a sharp decline in crude oil prices sparked a broad-based buying spree on Dalal Street.

The S&P BSE Sensex surged 1,213.79 points, or 1.61%, to 76,741.74, while the NSE Nifty50 climbed 360.40 points, or 1.53%, to 23,983.30 in early trade. The rally was widespread, with almost all Sensex stocks trading in the green, while banking, realty, auto and consumption stocks emerged as the biggest winners. But the bigger question for investors is whether this marks the end of the recent market turmoil or whether caution is still warranted.

CRUDE OIL IS NO LONGER THE BIGGEST WORRY

The biggest trigger behind the rally was the dramatic fall in crude oil prices after the US and Iran announced that they had reached an initial agreement to end hostilities and restore shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. Brent crude fell 4.39% to \$83.50 per barrel, while US WTI crude dropped 4.84% to \$80.77 per barrel. For India, a country that imports more than 85% of its crude oil needs, lower oil prices are a major relief. A fall in crude eases inflation concerns, reduces pressure on the rupee, lowers the import bill and improves the country's current account position. Kranthi Bathini, Equity Strategist at WealthMills Securities, said the decline in crude oil prices has significantly improved the outlook for Indian markets. "The crude oil decisively coming to the range of \$80 is a big booster and positive for the economy and markets. That is the reason we can see such euphoria in Indian stock markets at this point of time," he said. He added that India is among the biggest beneficiaries of lower crude prices and many concerns that had weighed on markets in the past few months are now easing.

BANKS, AUTO, REALTY LEAD THE MARKET RALLY

The relief rally was visible across sectors, with domestic-focused companies seeing the strongest buying.

## 'Rack storage industry to grow to Rs 7,000 crore by 2030'

MUMBAI.(Agency)

India's vertical storage industry, also known as rack storage solutions, is expected to nearly double in size to around Rs 7,000 crore by 2030, driven by rising demand from manufacturers for storage facilities located close to production units and supported by government initiatives such as PM Gati Shakti and the development of multimodal logistics parks.

Vikas Choudaha, Business Head, Godrej Storage Solutions Business, part of the Godrej Enterprises Group, said companies are increasingly looking to optimise land use through vertical storage infrastructure. "We are seeing a growing number of industries wanting to make more efficient use of available land. Many are also considering two- or three-storey facilities. When we started our Chennai facility in 2001, warehouse heights were typically around 7 metres. Today, they have gone up to nearly 20 metres," Choudaha told TNIE.

He said the push for efficient land utilisation, coupled with economic growth and supportive government policies, would continue to drive demand for vertical storage solutions. Recently, the company set up a 120-foot automated rack-clad warehouse for a pharmaceutical major in Gujarat. "It is not feasible for pharma companies to maintain storage facilities outside their premises. Through efficient land utilisation, we installed a 120-foot rack-clad warehouse for a pharma firm in Gujarat," he said. Choudaha added that shrinking space availability in key urban locations is also encouraging the adoption of vertical parking facilities by malls and commercial establishments.

## Wholesale inflation rises to 9.68% in May under new series as fuel prices surge

New Delhi.(Agency)

India's wholesale inflation came in at 9.68% in May under the newly introduced Wholesale Price Index (WPI) series, driven by a sharp increase in fuel and energy costs amid continued geopolitical tensions in West Asia and rising global crude oil prices.

The latest data showed that wholesale food inflation stood at 4.49% in May, up from 3.11% in April. Fuel and power inflation also accelerated significantly, rising to 30.33% from 24.89% in the previous month. Energy costs remain a concern.

One of the biggest contributors to inflation was the crude petroleum and natural gas category, where prices surged 61.51% year-on-year. The increase comes against the backdrop of the US-Iran conflict, which has disrupted energy markets and pushed crude oil prices higher globally. India, which imports the majority of its crude oil requirements, remains particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in global energy prices. During May, state-owned fuel retailers raised petrol and diesel prices four times, increasing transportation and logistics costs across sectors. Economists have warned that a prolonged period of elevated oil prices could widen India's current account deficit, put pressure on the rupee and create additional inflationary risks for the broader economy. New inflation framework launched

Alongside the inflation data, the government recently introduced a revised WPI series and launched a Producer Price Index (PPI), marking a major update to India's inflation measurement system. The base year for the WPI has been changed from 2011-12 to 2022-23, while the number of commodities tracked has increased to 957 from 697 earlier. The revised index also reflects India's evolving energy sector by including renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power, along with nuclear electricity.

# WPI inflation rises to 9.68 pc in May as fuel, food, manufactured items see price spike

**The Commerce and Industry Ministry on Monday released the Wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation data revising the base year to 2022-23, from 2011-12 earlier.**

New Delhi.(Agency)

Wholesale price inflation shot up to 9.68 per cent in May, from 8.26 per cent in April, led by a sharp spike in prices of fuel and power, manufactured and food items.

The Commerce and Industry Ministry on Monday released the Wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation data revising the base year to 2022-23, from 2011-12 earlier. Wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation in fuel and power jumped to 30.33



per cent in May as against 24.89 per cent in April. In crude petroleum, inflation was 61.51 per cent in May, as against 56.31 per cent in the previous month.

The sharp rise in WPI inflation reflects the

impact of the West Asia crisis and the effective blockade of the Strait of Hormuz through which the majority of the crude oil is imported to India, and its spillover effect on food prices. Inflation in food articles was

3.60 per cent in May, compared to 2.43 per cent in April. In manufactured products, inflation rose to 7.48 per cent in May, from 6.68 per cent during April, data showed.

Retail or consumer price index based inflation too had surged to a 16-month high of 3.93 per cent in May, as against 3.48 per cent in the previous month.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which mainly factors in CPI when arriving at its monetary policy, has been mandated by the government to ensure that headline inflation remains at 4 per cent, with a 2 per cent margin on either side.

Earlier this month, the RBI raised its inflation projection for the current fiscal year to 5.1 per cent from 4.6 per cent, largely due to mounting input costs, driven by the pass-through of higher global energy prices to retail petrol and diesel prices. Rising global crude oil prices had led to Rs 7.50 a litre increase in petrol and diesel prices in the second half of May.

## Finance Minister warns of consumption risks due to El Niño impacting farmers' income

**While assuring that India does have a buffer of food stocks for a year, she added, "For farmers, it will have an impact because this year this income will be stressed up."**

New Delhi.(Agency)

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday flagged concerns over possible headwinds in the domestic consumption this year, due to the impact of the El Niño which is likely to adversely affect the agricultural income and productivity.

Underscoring the risks arising due to the El Niño effect this year, the Finance Minister said "Because of the El Niño, I

think we are preparing for not so good a consumption," emphasizing that the stress on rural incomes remains a key concern. While assuring that India does



have a buffer of food stocks for a year, she added, "For farmers, it will have an impact because this year this income will be stressed up." She further flagged that the shortage of fertilisers due to the current geopolitical situation has made

the situation even more challenging. She highlighted how several countries have withdrawn themselves from the fertilisers' global supply chain to ensure better stocking for their respective domestic market making the availability even more skewed.

"Some countries which do not want to get into the market, which are traditional suppliers, are no longer suppliers. They want to stock it up for themselves. And there was fear that we are going to have short supply because those who have gone out are depleting the food," added Sitharaman.

Reflecting on the budget planning process, she explained the necessity of securing supplies for the upcoming seasons, noting the volatility of global markets.

## US-Iran peace deal may help boost India's exports, stabilise rupee

New Delhi.(Agency)

The announcement that the US and Iran have finalised a deal to end their 107-day conflict and reopen the Strait of Hormuz is expected to boost India's exports to West Asia, which was severely impacted by the hostilities, spur manufacturing activity and help stabilise the rupee, according to exporters and experts.

They said the announcement, if implemented successfully, would reduce pressure on India's import bill, ease inflationary covers and create a more conducive environment for trade.

The peace agreement would be signed on June 19 in Switzerland. The US and Iran have reached a peace deal to end a four-month war that disrupted global energy supplies, pushed oil prices above USD 100 per barrel, and brought the Middle East to the brink of a wider regional conflict. India, which relies heavily on West Asia for crude oil, LPG and LNG supplies, the deal promises relief from high energy prices, pressure on the

rupee, and inflation risks that intensified during the conflict, economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI)



said. "For India, the agreement brings immediate economic relief as the conflict has exposed India's dependence on West Asia, from where it sources roughly 50 per cent of its crude oil imports, around 70 per cent of its LPG supplies and nearly 90 per cent of its LNG imports," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said. The disruption of shipping through the Gulf raised India's energy import bill, increased inflation risks, weakened the rupee and forced refiners

to seek alternative supplies from distant markets. Reopening the Strait of Hormuz is expected to stabilise energy markets, ease pressure on oil and gas prices, strengthen the rupee and improve India's growth outlook, he said. INDIA-WEST ASIA TRADE

The war (started has severely affected India's exports and imports with that region. All six members (UAE, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait) of the region are key trading partners of India.

The conflict began on February 28 when the US and Israel jointly launched military operations against Iran over its nuclear programme. Due to this, India's exports posted the steepest fall in five months, declining 7.44 per cent in March to USD 38.92 billion. India's exports to the Middle East or West Asia region fell 57.95 per cent to USD 3.5 billion in March, while imports from the Gulf nations fell 51.64 per cent. Normally India exports goods worth about USD 6 billion to this region.

# Strait of Hormuz opens again, but will petrol and diesel prices fall?

New Delhi.(Agency)

For weeks, Indian households watched with concern as the conflict in the Middle East pushed crude oil prices higher and threatened the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most important oil shipping route. The fear was simple: expensive oil could eventually mean higher fuel costs, inflation and pressure on household budgets. Now, with the Strait of Hormuz reopening after a US-Iran understanding reduced immediate supply concerns, crude oil prices have started easing. The biggest question for Indians is whether this will translate into cheaper petrol, diesel and LPG cylinders. The answer is not straightforward.

WHY THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ MATTERS TO INDIA

The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow sea passage between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, but its importance to the global economy is enormous. Nearly one-fifth of the world's oil and a significant share of LNG supplies pass through this route. For India, which imports more than 85% of its crude oil needs, any disruption in the Strait of Hormuz can increase the

country's import bill, weaken the rupee and put pressure on inflation. The reopening of the route reduces fears of a supply shortage and could help keep global crude prices in check. Lower oil prices would be positive for India because they reduce the cost of imports and ease pressure on the economy. WILL PETROL AND DIESEL PRICES FALL NOW?

A fall in global crude oil prices does not immediately mean lower prices at Indian petrol pumps. Dr Manoranjan Sharma, Chief Economist at Infomercials Ratings, said petrol and diesel prices are likely to see meaningful cuts only if crude oil remains sustainably below around \$80 per barrel.

He said oil marketing companies (OMCs) are still recovering earlier under-recoveries and are focusing on improving their financial position. "Prolonged low crude prices, rather than temporary corrections, are needed for substantial retail price cuts," he said. According to Sharma, even if prices are reduced in the near term, the cut is likely to be limited to around Rs 2-4 per litre and would be carefully calibrated rather than bringing

prices back to pre-war levels.

WILL PRICE OF LPG CYLINDER FALL?

The outlook for LPG prices also points



towards selective relief rather than a broad reduction. Sharma said the government has already supported households through periodic LPG price cuts and subsidies, including a Rs 200-per-cylinder subsidy for Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) beneficiaries. Eligible households can receive support for up to 12 subsidised domestic cylinders every year, although the amount varies across different cities. If global LPG and crude oil prices remain

lower, the government's subsidy burden could reduce, giving it more room to manage prices. However, Sharma said any further LPG relief will depend on international energy prices, government finances and policy priorities, meaning benefits may be targeted rather than available to all consumers.

HOW DOES IT AFFECT YOUR MONTHLY BUDGET?

Lower energy prices can provide relief to families by reducing spending on cooking fuel and limiting the rise in transportation costs. However, the impact may not be dramatic. According to Sharma, existing subsidies and earlier LPG price reductions already provide support to lower-income households. At the same time, limited pass-through of crude oil price declines to petrol and diesel prices, along with OMC financial considerations and the government's fiscal priorities, may restrict the overall benefits. As a result, savings from lower energy prices may only partly offset rising costs of food, education, healthcare and other household expenses.

Short news

HP: Two held with 1.09 grams heroin in Kangra under anti-drug drive

**Dharamshala.(Agency)**  
Continuing its crackdown on narcotics under the Himachal Pradesh government's "Drug-Free Himachal Campaign", Dehra Police arrested two persons and recovered 1.09 grams of heroin (chitta) from their possession in Kangra district. Dehra district superintendent of police Mayank Chaudhary told UNI that a team from Rakkar Police Station was conducting routine patrolling and checking on June 12 when, acting on specific information, they intercepted two suspects near Lower Kaloha. He said that following due legal procedures under the NDPS Act, the police searched the duo and recovered 1.09 grams of heroin from their possession. SP Mayank said that the accused have been identified as Ashish Singh (31), a resident of Matt Umran in Pragpur tehsil, and Yudhveer (28), a resident of Chauhi village in Rakkar tehsil of Kangra district. He said that both were arrested and a case has been registered against them under the relevant provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act at Rakkar Police Station. SP said that the investigation is underway to ascertain the source of the contraband and to identify any other persons involved in the illegal drug network. Further legal action is being taken in accordance with the law, he disclosed.

Traffic curbs around Tau Devi Lal Stadium as Haryana Police recruitment physical tests begin from June 15

**Panchkula.(Agency)**  
The Panchkula Police have announced a special traffic management plan around Tau Devi Lal Stadium in view of the Haryana Police recruitment drive, where Physical Standard Tests (PST) for candidates will commence from June 15. The recruitment process is expected to continue for nearly a month and will witness the daily arrival of a large number of candidates. To ensure smooth conduct of the examinations and minimize congestion, traffic restrictions will be imposed in the vicinity of the stadium during morning hours. City Traffic SHO Varinder Kumar said that from June 15 until further orders, traffic restrictions will remain in force daily from 4 a.m. to 11 a.m. Under the revised arrangement, the stretch from the traffic signal in front of the main gate of Tau Devi Lal Stadium to the Peepal Tree Chowk will remain closed for one-way movement. In addition, the road behind the stadium will remain completely closed to vehicular traffic from both directions during the restricted period. Police officials said the measures have been introduced to facilitate orderly movement of recruitment candidates and maintain smooth traffic flow in the area. ACP Traffic Suresnder Singh appealed to residents, office-goers and motorists to plan their journeys in advance and avoid routes passing through the stadium area during the restricted hours. Commuters travelling from Panchkula towards Sectors 23, 24, 25 and Ramgarh have been advised to use alternative routes to avoid delays. DCP Crime and Traffic Amarinder Singh said the temporary traffic diversions are aimed solely at ensuring the safe and efficient conduct of the Haryana Police recruitment process.

Hyderabad: Organisers forget the first rule of 'Fight Club', land in police net

**HYDERABAD.(Agency)**  
"The first rule of Fight Club is: you do not talk about Fight Club." The organisers of a Hyderabad-based 'fight club' appear to have missed that memo. Promoted on social media under the tagline "No Rules – Just Fists", the event charged Rs 199 for spectators and Rs 349 for participants before attracting the attention of the Malkajgiri cyber crime police, who have now registered a case against the organisers. Police said the organisers were allegedly promoting and conducting a 'brutal fight club' in which participants engaged in physical combat using their fists. According to Saroomagar police, the organisers had conducted similar events in the past and a case had earlier been registered against them for a programme which nearly 300 people had attended. They had also sought permission from the Saroomagar police to conduct another event on Sunday. However, the application was rejected, and the proposed event was subsequently cancelled. The cybercrime case was registered on Saturday, based on a complaint lodged by M Narendra, a constable attached to the Social Media Unit of the IT Cell. In his complaint, Narendra stated that while monitoring social media content, including reels, shorts and online links that could affect public safety and societal interests, he came across an Instagram account allegedly operated by one Purvik Munugapati.

'There were bodies everywhere': First responders recall AI171 crash

**Ahmedabad.(Agency)**  
Among the many rescuers who worked round the clock after last year's Air India A-I 171 crash, at least three responders found themselves confronting a tragedy that echoed with the experiences of their close family members. Ahmedabad Fire and Emergency Services divisional officer Kaizad Dastoor, police inspector DB Basiya, and GVK-EMRI Emergency Ambulance Service supervisor Satinder Singh Sandhu had mere seconds to process the scale of the tragedy, which claimed 260 lives, before leading their personnel into a crisis the likes of which the city had last seen over three decades ago. The first SOS calls Sandhu, 45, manages 20 ambulances for GVK-EMRI, a not-for-profit, in the city. On June 12 last year, while still at lunch at his workplace, the 1,200-bed Ahmedabad Civil Hospital, he heard an explosion and rushed out of the building to see fire and smoke engulfing the skies, barely 200 metres away. Inspector Basiya had just completed a monthly crime

conference meeting at the city Police Commissioner's office. He and sub-inspector R M Chavda were headed to Meghaninagar police station when both of their phones kept ringing incessantly. On the other end were their colleagues who witnessed the massive



explosion from the police station's terrace. Dastoor, divisional fire officer, was in his office at the Navrangpura fire station when he got the call. However, none of them believed that a passenger aircraft could crash in the middle of

Ahmedabad. Such a thing had not happened since 1988, when Indian Airlines Flight 113 crashed into the still under-construction Kotarpur Water Works while approaching the city airport on October 19, 1988, killing 133 of the 135 people on board.

**Beyond belief**  
Sandhu, who hails from Punjab, was the "very first responder" because of his proximity to the crash site. He was also the one who noticed Vishwas Kumar Ramesh, the lone survivor from the aircraft, walking out of the IGP compound "in a daze". Sandhu claimed to have stopped him from going back to the burning aircraft and then dispatched Ramesh to a hospital. "On the day of the incident, my family was on a train to Gujarat from Punjab. They wanted to visit me for summer vacation. I called my wife and told her not to worry and that I would call her back later. I managed to do so only around 5 am on June 13 (the day after the incident). My family reached Ahmedabad around 3 pm that day. They were in disbelief about what had happened.

3-year-old lured with biscuits, sexually assaulted, dies; migrant worker arrested

**Chennai. (Agency)**  
A three-year-old girl who went missing in Tamil Nadu's Thiruvallur district on Sunday was found in the bushes with serious injuries. The girl was sexually assaulted and later died while undergoing treatment at a hospital. Police have arrested a 19-year-old man, identified as Vibin Manch from Bihar, in connection with the case. According to local residents, the child disappeared while playing near her home. A neighbour claimed she had seen a migrant worker taking the girl into a room but did not suspect anything at the time as the child's family and the man were both migrant workers living in the area. The girl's mother began searching for her around 6 pm after she failed to return home. During the search, the child was found in a nearby bush in a critical condition. Residents alleged that the accused had lured the child with a packet of biscuits

before taking her away. The girl was rushed to hospital, where she later succumbed to her injuries. "The child was inside the house, and he took her

but her condition was very serious," a neighbour said.

Police have arrested the 19-year-old accused and launched a probe into the incident.



**POLITICAL ROW ERUPTS OVER CHILD'S RAPE AND DEATH**  
The horrific incident has intensified concerns over a perceived rise in sexual offences against women and children in Tamil Nadu, an issue that featured prominently during the recent Assembly election campaign and has continued to dominate political discourse. DMK MP Kanimozhi expressed shock over the death of the three-year-old, saying reports that the child had been sexually assaulted and abandoned in a bush had left her "frozen in shock". In a post on X, she urged women to take precautions for their own safety and that of their children, while questioning the government's handling of law and order.

Teacher training for new curriculum in Maharashtra postponed due to census duty

**Mumbai.(Agency)**  
Even as Schools across Maharashtra are reopening on Monday after the summer vacation, instead of beginning with a new curriculum that is being rolled out for classes 2, 3, 4 and 6 of the Maharashtra state board schools, these classes will begin a new academic year with specially designed bridge courses. This will continue till July as the teachers are yet to undergo the mandatory training required to implement the revised syllabus. The training session, which was expected to have been conducted in summer break, as per usual practice; had to be postponed because teachers were engaged in census-duties. As a result, these classes of the Maharashtra State Board Schools will begin a new academic year with specially designed bridge courses, instead of the new curriculum. According to teachers, this delay is a clear example of how non-academic duties assigned to them have affected their core responsibility of



per the medium of instructions. It states, "The new curriculum is being implemented in the state in a phased manner from the academic year 2025-26. Accordingly, teacher teaching classes 2, 3, 4 and 6 are being trained for the implementation of the new curriculum. The state-level training for

teachers of Classes 2, 3 and 4 has been completed, while training for class 6 is still pending. In view of the Census 2027 activities currently underway in the state, the previously scheduled district level and taluka-level training programmes had been postponed." Until April there was uncertainty whether class 6 will see the curriculum revision as per the schedule of Maharashtra's rollout of the new State Curriculum Framework (SCF) under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. "But now even as the entire study material for the new curriculum is ready; it cannot be implemented until teachers are trained for it, along with teachers of Classes 2, 3 and 4; where too only state level sessions are completed, but the district and taluka level session are yet to be held for teacher training," said a senior teacher adding that the increasing load of non-academic work on teachers is dangerous for their primary duty of teaching.

School transport gets pricier: Fuel price hike forces Chennai parents to lump it

**CHENNAI.(Agency)**  
Parents are feeling the pinch as the petrol, diesel and LPG price hike is driving up school transport costs. Parents, who rely on autorickshaws and private school vans for transporting children to and from school, say they are now spending an additional Rs 300 to Rs 500 a month following the fuel price hike that came into effect about a month ago. Many parents that spoke to said they have little choice but to accept the revised fares. "School fee keeps increasing every year. On top of that, our other expenses have also gone up. We are feeling the impact of inflation in every aspect of our lives. My children study in a school about 2 km from our house, and we rely on a private van. We now pay Rs 2,500 a month, compared to Rs 2,000 earlier," said S Madhumitha, a parent from Koyambedu. Another parent, M Hariharan from K K Nagar, said he spends Rs 3,500 a month on transportation for his child, whose school is about 4 km away. "We anticipated this (fare increase) because we are aware of the increase in fuel prices," he said. V Babu, an autorickshaw driver from Adamakkam, said he increased his fare from Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,000 this year, but his profits remain low.



'Went hungry for two days': How the LPG price spike paralysed India's biggest container port

**Mumbai.(Agency)**  
At a container yard near Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT), India's largest container port, 25-year-old trailer driver Rakesh Kumar points to a line of parked trailers and recalls why he left work in March. "Everything became so expensive. Initially, I stayed hungry for two days, just on water, because dhabas shut down and the ones that were open charged a lot," said Kumar, who is from Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh and has been driving heavy vehicles for the past five years. "I left in mid-March because I couldn't sustain myself anymore." Three months later, Kumar is back, transporting containers between the port and warehouses. But many of his colleagues have not returned, setting off a crisis that has choked container movement at JNPT, stranded perishable cargo and forced a high-

level government response. At its peak, the backlog of import containers waiting to be evacuated had grown from around 17,000 in mid-April to 40,000 by the second week of May, according to Girish Thomas, Chief General Manager (Traffic) at JNPA. "If 11,000 containers were discharged from a ship, only around 5,000 would move. The backlog kept increasing every day," he says. By the third week of May, Union Ministers Piyush Goyal and Sarbananda Sonowal were holding meetings with the export-import community. Rail services were pressed into service, trailer pools were created, charges were waived. The numbers have since come down to around 24,000, Thomas says, and



are expected to stabilise at around 20,000 in the coming days. While port authorities say the situation has stabilised, drivers, transporters and exporters told The Indian Express that manpower shortages continue to affect operations at India's busiest container gateway.

The trigger was the West Asia conflict. When it disrupted LPG supply chains, prices spiked and the small cylinders that migrant drivers depend on to cook their meals in parking yards near the port became unaffordable. Dhabas (or local eateries) shut or shrank their menus. Drivers, most of them from Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and West Bengal, who send nearly 90 per cent of their earnings home and live on what's left, did the math and left. At the peak of the crisis, between March and May, around 50-60 percent of drivers were absent, according to Sanjay Potdar, chairman of the Nhava-Sheva Container Operators Welfare Association. Even now, after a partial return, the shortage stands at around 40 per cent, he said.

## NEWS BOX

## From Chambal to India U19 captain: Yashbardhan Singh Chauhan's journey in blue

New Delhi., (Agency)

When Ajay Singh, principal of The Scindia School in Gwalior, watched his student plan cricket matches from the back of a team meeting room, he was careful not to intervene. He wanted to see what the boy did when things got difficult. "If situations became challenging, he would discuss possible solutions," Singh recalls in a chat with IndiaToday.in. "He would take feedback, and others would chip in as well. There was a clarity in his mind about what should be done in different situations. He definitely had that leadership instinct." That boy was Yashbardhan Singh Chauhan.

On 11 June, the BCCI named the 17-year-old right-handed all-rounder as captain of India's Under-19 men's team for the upcoming tour of Sri Lanka: three one-day matches and two multi-day fixtures, beginning in Hambantota on 4 July. The news arrived, as it often does in Gwalior, through the local cricket network. Yashbardhan first heard from Vijay



Prakash Sharma, secretary of the Gwalior Division Cricket Association. His father, Anami Singh Chauhan, received a call shortly after from Sharma and from Lavkesh Choudhary, the boy's childhood coach at Tansen Cricket Academy.

"For several minutes, I was unable to say anything," Anami says. "It felt as though a dream that had been nurtured for years had suddenly become reality." "It is, in many ways, a borrowed dream. Anami played cricket himself, a leg-spinner, he says, with a deep connection to the game, and carried a quiet hope that someone from his family would make a name in it. When Yashbardhan came along, the signs were visible early.

"From a very young age, he displayed a different kind of passion," his father says.

"If he ever missed out on playing a match, he would become extremely upset. He always had a hunger to play and a tremendous passion for stepping onto the field.

## Japan fans win hearts again by cleaning Dallas stadium after Dutch thriller

Dallas, (Agency)

Japan supporters once again drew global praise after being spotted cleaning up the stands following their side's FIFA World Cup 2026 clash against the Netherlands. Images of fans collecting rubbish at Dallas Stadium quickly went viral on social media, continuing a tradition that has become synonymous with the Samurai Blue supporters.

The gesture came after Japan earned a dramatic 2-2 draw against the Netherlands in their Group F opener. Goals from Virgil van Dijk and Crysencio Summerville twice put the Dutch ahead, but Japan fought back on both occasions, with Daichi Kamada heading home a late equaliser in the 88th minute. While the match itself delivered plenty of entertainment, many fans online were equally impressed by what happened after the final whistle.

Supporters wearing Japan jerseys stayed behind in the stands, collecting bottles, food wrappers and other litter before leaving the stadium. The images quickly spread across



social media, earning admiration from football fans around the world.

For Japanese supporters, however, it was simply another example of a tradition they have followed for years at major international tournaments. WHY DO JAPAN FANS CLEAN STADIUMS?

Japan's supporters have built a global reputation for leaving stadiums cleaner than they found them. The practice stems from a wider culture that places emphasis on cleanliness, respect for shared spaces and collective responsibility. As a result, many Japanese fans see cleaning up after themselves as a normal part of attending a sporting event rather than an extraordinary gesture. The tradition became one of the standout stories of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. After Japan stunned Germany 2-1 in one of the tournament's biggest upsets, supporters celebrated briefly before picking up rubbish around their section of the stadium.

# FIFA World Cup 2026: Goal fest in Monterrey as Sweden put five past Tunisia

**Yasin Ayari scored twice as Sweden beat Tunisia 5-1 in Monterrey, opening with a stunning early strike he chose not to celebrate. Sweden's control was reinforced by Tunisia's errors and a technology-backed review that allowed Svanberg's record-fast substitute goal to stand.**

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

It was a goal fest in Stadio Monterrey as Sweden produced a commanding performance to put five past Tunisia in their FIFA World Cup Group F clash on June 15, Monday, led by a sensational performance by midfielder Yasin Ayari.

**FIFA World Cup, Sweden vs Tunisia: Highlights**

Ayari opened the scoring for Sweden in the seventh minute with a breathtaking long-range strike, registering one of the fastest goals of the tournament. The move stemmed from Tunisia goalkeeper Chamakh rushing off his line to deal with a long ball from Victor Lindelof, only to push it into the path of Viktor

Gykeres. Although Gykeres' initial effort was blocked by Montassar Talbi, the rebound fell kindly to Ayari, who took a touch before smashing an unstoppable effort into the top corner. Despite the quality of the finish, Ayari opted not to celebrate, instead raising his arms in a restrained gesture—an emotional reaction influenced by his family ties to Tunisia.

Born in Solna to Tunisian and Moroccan heritage, and eligible to represent Tunisia through his father, the Brighton midfielder's subdued response reflected the personal significance of scoring against the country of his ancestry. Sweden, though, quickly doubled their lead through Alexander Isak after a flowing attacking move. After Benjamin Nygren regained possession near his own penalty area and launched a long clearance forward, Gykeres brought the ball under control with a composed touch before cleverly laying it off into Isak's path. The striker surged down the left flank, cut inside on the edge of the box, and fired a low effort that squeezed through Chamakh to make it 2-0 in Sweden's favour. Tunisia tried

to fight their way back into the game as they responded before the break to halve the deficit. After Valery's long throw into the near-post area was initially cleared by Lagerbierke, Mejri quickly recovered



possession and delivered a dangerous cross into the box. With Sweden's defence still committed forward, Rekik rose to glance a header past Kristoffer Nordfeldt and make it 2-1. Mejri's influence stood out throughout the first half, with the midfielder consistently pulling the strings and providing Tunisia's

key creative spark.

**SWEDEN PUT FINAL NAIL IN THE COFFIN**

Sweden, who looked the more dominant side in the second half, made it three-one in the 59th minute through Viktor Gykeres.

The costly mistake from Tunisia proved decisive as Chamakh played a short pass to Skhiri on the edge of his own area, but Isak pressed aggressively and dispossessed him. Skhiri's attempted recovery only opened the space further, allowing Isak to remain composed and square the ball to Gykeres, who smashed home a powerful finish to make it 3-1. But the talking point of the game was when Mattias Svanberg scored the second-fastest goal scored by a substitute in FIFA World Cup history. The goal, which was initially ruled out for offside, had an intervention and after the review, the goal was awarded when it was confirmed that Isak had made a subtle touch in the build-up, through cricket-like technology, 'Snicko', playing Svanberg onside.

## Why didn't Sweden's Yasin Ayari celebrate after scoring a thunderbolt against Tunisia?

IRVINE, Calif. (Agency)

Sweden made the perfect start to their FIFA World Cup Group F clash against Tunisia at Monterrey Stadium in Mexico on June 15, with midfielder Yasin Ayari producing a moment of brilliance to break the deadlock in the seventh minute. FIFA World Cup, Sweden vs Tunisia: Updates The 22-year-old scored the second-fastest goal of the 2026 FIFA World Cup with a spectacular strike from outside the penalty area. The chance originated from a long ball forward by Victor Lindelof, which Tunisia goalkeeper Chamakh rushed off his line to intercept. However, the goalkeeper could only divert the ball into the path of Viktor Gykeres. Gykeres' effort was blocked by Tunisia defender Montassar Talbi, but the loose ball fell kindly to Ayari just outside the box. The midfielder took a touch before unleashing a thunderous drive that rocketed into the top corner, giving Chamakh no chance and handing Sweden an early advantage. Despite scoring one of the goals of the tournament so far, Ayari opted against



celebrating. Instead, he raised his arms in the air and remained composed as teammates rushed over to congratulate him.

**WHY AYARI DIDN'T CELEBRATE AGAINST TUNISIA?**

Ayari's restrained response immediately attracted attention, particularly given his family connections to Tunisia. Born in Solna, Sweden, the Brighton & Hove Albion midfielder is of Moroccan and Tunisian heritage. His father is Tunisian, meaning Ayari was eligible to represent the North African nation before committing his international future to Sweden. The midfielder progressed through Sweden's youth ranks before making his senior international debut in 2023. While he ultimately chose to represent Sweden, his connection to Tunisia remains an important part of his background.

## Amad Diallo late dagger helps Ivory Coast to 1-0 win over Ecuador

**FIFA World Cup 2026: Philadelphia was painted in Ecuador's colours and La Tri created enough chances to win. But a late moment of brilliance from Amad Diallo handed Ivory Coast a dramatic 1-0 victory and an early advantage in Group E.**

Philadelphia. (Agency)

For almost 90 minutes, Philadelphia belonged to Ecuador. The streets around the stadium were painted yellow and blue, the songs rarely stopped, and thousands of fans believed their side had done enough to begin the FIFA World Cup 2026 with a positive result. Then Amad Diallo arrived with a reminder of football's cruellest truth. IVORY COAST VS ECUADOR, FIFA WORLD CUP 2026: HIGHLIGHTS

The Manchester United winger struck in the 90th minute to hand Ivory Coast a dramatic 1-0 victory over Ecuador, silencing a stadium that had felt more like Quito than Philadelphia for much of the evening. The

result leaves the Elephants level on three points with Germany at the top of Group E after the four-time champions thrashed Curacao 7-1 earlier in the day. For Ecuador, it was a painful end to a match in which they struck the woodwork twice and spent long



periods looking the more likely side to score. The defeat was particularly harsh given the atmosphere their supporters created. Several thousand Ecuador fans had gathered at the Philadelphia Museum of Art on Saturday before taking over large sections of the city on matchday. Hours before kickoff, yellow jerseys dominated the streets and parking lots surrounding the stadium. The support continued inside the ground, where Ecuador

comfortably outnumbered the orange-clad Ivory Coast fans. By full-time, however, football had delivered another reminder that atmosphere alone does not win matches.

**AMAD DELIVERS THE FINAL BLOW**

The match looked destined to become the first goalless draw of the tournament.

Ecuador had opportunities to avoid that outcome long before Amad's winner. John Yeboah rattled the crossbar with a powerful strike in the 24th minute before Alan Minda repeated the feat just six minutes later. The South Americans carried the greater threat throughout the opening half and would have felt unfortunate not to head into the break with the lead. Elye Wahi struck the woodwork in the second half, while Seko Fofana and Franck Kessie provided energy and physicality in midfield. Yet both sides continued to lack the finishing touch needed to separate themselves.

Just when the game appeared destined to end level, Wilfried Singo surged forward and picked out Amad on the edge of the box. The winger needed only one touch to create space before curling a precise finish into the corner and sparking wild celebrations among the Ivory Coast players.

## Hockey: Deepika scores brace as India rally to beat USA 3-2 in Nations Cup

**The winner of the Nations Cup will be promoted to the elite Pro league, from which India were relegated last season.**

AUCKLAND. (Agency)

The Indian women's hockey team staged a remarkable comeback to clinch a 3-2 win over the USA in its opening Pool A match of the FIH Nations Cup here on Monday. For India, Deepika netted a brace while Navneet Kaur also scored. Ashley Sessa and Madeleine Zimmer were on the score-sheet for the USA. The winner of the Nations Cup will be promoted to the elite Pro league, from which India were relegated last season. The USA got off to a great start and opened the scoring through Ashley, who found the back

of the net with a field goal in the fourth minute. The Americans doubled their advantage just three minutes later when Madeleine Zimmer (7') converted a penalty



corner to put India under early pressure. Trailing by two goals, India gradually began to assert themselves in attack. Their efforts paid off in the second quarter when drag-flick specialist Deepika (17') successfully converted a penalty corner to reduce the deficit and bring India back into the game. The momentum continued to shift

in India's favour as they earned another penalty corner midway through the quarter.

Deepika (24') stepped up once again and successfully converted another penalty corner to level the score at 2-2. India maintained the pressure and completed a stunning turnaround before half-time.

Navneet (28') converted a penalty corner to hand India the lead for the first time in the match, ensuring the team entered the break with a 3-2 advantage. The second half saw both teams battle intensely in search of goals. Both sides earned six penalty corners each over the course of the match, but neither defence allowed any further breakthroughs in the remaining two quarters. India successfully held on to their advantage in the closing stages to secure all three points and begin their Nations Cup campaign on a winning note. Following the victory, India moved to second place in Pool A with three points.

## F1: Lewis Hamilton gets a heart from Kim Kardashian after winning Barcelona GP

**Barcelona-Catalunya GP: Lewis Hamilton's first Ferrari win has drawn an immediate public reaction from Kim Kardashian. Her celebratory post, and Hamilton's own comments, have pushed relationship rumours back into the spotlight.**

New Delhi. (Agency)

Lewis Hamilton's landmark first Formula 1 victory for Ferrari has attracted attention both on and off the track, with Kim Kardashian publicly celebrating the achievement on social media. The reality television star shared a photo of Hamilton crossing the finish line after his triumph, adding a trophy and heart emoji in a gesture that quickly fuelled ongoing speculation about their relationship.

The social media post came shortly after Hamilton secured his maiden Grand Prix victory for Ferrari, an emotional milestone in his debut season with the Italian team.

The win represented a major breakthrough for Hamilton following his high-profile move to Ferrari. After years of success with Mercedes, the seven-time world champion finally delivered a Grand Prix victory for the Scuderia, prompting celebrations throughout the team and among Ferrari supporters worldwide.

Speaking after the race, Hamilton acknowledged the support system around him and highlighted the importance of having trusted people by his side.

"It's amazing to have her come this weekend and have the support," Hamilton said when asked about Kardashian's presence, as per GP



Blog. "With my friends, incredible turnout, just overall, the people. I don't really know what else to say. It's amazing to have good people around you and good people supporting you. She does that for me every day." Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff also appeared to reference Kardashian while discussing Hamilton's resurgence at Ferrari.

"Maybe his girlfriend helps," Wolff joked, before pointing to several factors behind Hamilton's improved performances, including his growing comfort within Ferrari and the strengthening relationship with his race engineer. Hamilton and Kardashian have been linked for months, although neither has publicly confirmed a romantic relationship. The pair have frequently been spotted together at high-profile events, including the Super Bowl, where speculation surrounding their connection intensified after photographs emerged showing them spending time together.

Kardashian was also present throughout the Monaco Grand Prix weekend, attending both qualifying and race day activities. She was seen inside the Ferrari garage and later cheering Hamilton during the podium celebrations, further fueling discussion about the nature of their relationship.

# Dia Mirza

## Calls Main Vaapas Aaunga 'The Most Compelling Love Story We Have Seen In A While'

**D**ia Mirza has showered praise on Imtiaz Ali's recently released film, *Main Vaapas Aaunga*. She called it one of the most moving and compelling love stories she has watched in recent times. The actress took to social media to share her heartfelt review of the film, applauding the director and the entire cast for delivering a powerful cinematic experience.

Taking to her Instagram stories, Dia Mirza shared a praising note reading, "The movie is of roses and runins...the most poignant, compelling, powerful love story we have seen in a while...Imtiaz shukriya..Naseer Saab is gut wrenching.. Diljit, Vedang and Sharvari deliver truth in every moment. #mainvaapasaaunga is a powerful cinematic experience, congratulations entire team." Tahira Kashyap also praised the film and urged people to watch it in theatres.

Sharvari shared a string of images of filmmaker Imtiaz Ali, her co-star Vedang Raina and the other technical support people, who were a part of the movie. She wrote: "This series is called 'People of Main Vaapas Aaunga'. A film may carry a few faces on screen, but it is built on the passion, patience, talent, and hard work of



to the crew who made this journey so special. Thank you for your dedication, your laughter, your resilience, and your heart. Unfortunately, I couldn't photograph everyone but sending my love to each one of y'all."

Sharvari also expressed gratitude to audiences for embracing the project and supporting it, "And to everyone who has watched, supported, shared, and embraced *Main Vaapas Aaunga*...Thank You. #MainVaapasAaunga in theatres now, book your tickets!" "Main Vaapas Aaunga' is a period romantic drama starring Sharvari, Naseeruddin Shah, and Vedang Raina. The film is set against the backdrop of the 1947 Partition of India, and explores themes of love, separation, migration, and memory. The narrative is expected to follow a romantic relationship shaped and disrupted by historical upheaval, a recurring motif in Partition-era storytelling. The film also reunites Imtiaz Ali with A. R. Rahman, and his frequent collaborator, lyricist Irshad Kamil.

so many people behind it."

"Every location, every scene, every emotion exists because an entire team showed up, gave it their all, and believed in this story."

Calling the pictures a "small love letter", the actress wrote: "These photographs are a small love letter

## Mouni Roy Shares INSIDE Glimpse Of BFF

# Disha Patani's Birthday Featuring Krishna Shroff And Stebin Ben

**M**ouni Roy recently treated fans by sharing inside glimpses from her close friend Disha Patani's birthday celebration. The actress took to social media to post a series of pictures and videos from the intimate gathering, offering a sneak peek into the fun-filled festivities attended by some of Disha's closest friends. Taking to her Instagram stories, Mouni Roy shared a series of photos from the birthday celebration. Disha Patani is posing for the camera, Stebin Ben and Krishna Shroff are also seen joining the party. The photos came after the actress addressed the controversy surrounding her personal life, including rumours about her sexual orientation.

Actress Mouni Roy made headlines earlier this year after announcing her separation from her husband, Suraj Nambiar. The couple, who tied the knot in 2022 after several years of dating, confirmed their split through a joint statement. However, the announcement soon sparked widespread speculation online, with several theories emerging about the reasons behind their decision. The controversy also dragged Disha Patani into the spotlight, as the actress unexpectedly faced trolling on social media. Now, weeks after the separation, Mouni has finally addressed the chatter surrounding her personal life, including rumours about her sexual orientation.

In a recent interview with Monika Sharma on her YouTube channel, Mouni Roy was asked to reveal the wildest rumour she has come across about herself in the industry. She promptly replied, "Oh, that I am gay." Looking back on the challenging

phase that followed her separation, Mouni shared that she was grateful to have the unwavering support of her loved ones. She added, "I feel very lucky that I have always had friends and family who have stood by me like a rock."

Mouni gave special credit to her close circle of female friends, saying they were her biggest source of strength during challenging times. She added, "I have always had great girlfriends to support me.



They have been there through my good, bad and ugly phases. It is very important to have women like that in your life — the ones who uplift you. My girlfriends are the best. Girls today should focus on financial and emotional stability. You have to be emotionally and financially independent." The actress will be next seen in *Welcome To The Jungle* with Akshay Kumar, Suniel Shetty, Arshad Warsi, Jacqueline Fernandez, Raveena Tandon, Lara Dutta, Jackie Shroff, Urvashi Rautela, Paresh Rawal, Johnny Lever, Rajpal Yadav, Shreyas Talpade, Tusshar Kapoor, Krushna Abhishek, Kiku Sharda and Daler Mehndi among others.

## Govinda's Wife Sunita Ahuja Reveals Who Will Inherit Her Entire Property Amid Separation Buzz



**S**unita Ahuja, wife of Bollywood star Govinda, has hilariously revealed that she plans to leave all her property to her beloved pet dog. Sunita was seen holding her pet Chihuahua at the Mumbai Airport, where she indulged in a light-hearted conversation with the shutterbugs. She held on to her pet dog in her arms and was later seen making the fur friend sit comfortably on the front seat of the car. While placing the dog on the front seat, Sunita hilariously said: "I will put all my properties in his (dog's) name."

To which a shutterbug asked about her nephew and comedian Krushna Abhishek: "Where will Krushna bhai go then?" Sunita said Krushna already has enough and is destined for greater success. She went on to express that she will always have her support and presence as long as she is alive.

"He is my son. He has a lot. I have to take from him now. Krushna is a bigger person than me. May god make him bigger.... As long as I am alive, he will be big and successful."

"It was during the show 'Laughter Chefs Fun Unlimited' in April when Sunita made up with her nephew Krushna and his wife Kashmera Shah after a years-long family rift.

In the episode, Krushna was seen visibly shocked as Sunita entered the stage. The actor-comedian was seen breaking down emotionally, and lied down on the floor, and apologising to his "mami" for any pain caused over the years by him.

Responding to his apology, Sunita had said that Krushna is like her own son and that she forgives him, urging everyone to move forward.

For the uninitiated, the rift between Sunita, Krushna, and Kashmera dated back nearly 14 years and had often played out in public. Krushna is the son of Govinda's elder sister, with whom the actor shared a close bond.

## Aamir Khan, Salman Khan And Kareena Kapoor Pose Together In Rare Viral Video



**A**amir Khan, Salman Khan and Kareena Kapoor Khan came together for a rare Bollywood frame recently, and the internet is understandably obsessed. A video from the event, shared by paparazzo Sneha Zala, shows the three stars posing together for the cameras, instantly triggering nostalgia among fans. In the viral clip, Aamir Khan is seen keeping it simple in a navy blue polo T-shirt, dark trousers and glasses. Kareena Kapoor Khan looks elegant in a soft pink saree, styled with a sleek bun and statement earrings. Salman Khan, meanwhile, brings his trademark rugged charm in a black vest, leather jacket and dark denims.

## Aamir Khan, Kareena Kapoor And Salman Khan Pose Together

The video has gone viral because it brings together three major Hindi film personalities who have shaped different eras of Bollywood. Kareena is seen standing between Aamir and Salman as the trio poses for the paparazzi at the event.

Fans were quick to celebrate the moment on social media, calling it a rare and nostalgic frame. The excitement is understandable, considering the cinematic history the three stars share with one another.

Aamir and Kareena have worked together in films such as *3 Idiots*, *Talaash* and *Laal Singh Chaddha*. Their pairing has often been associated with emotional and performance-driven stories. Salman and Kareena, meanwhile, have appeared together in popular entertainers like *Bodyguard* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. Aamir and Salman famously shared screen space in Rajkumar Santosh's cult comedy *Andaz Apna Apna*, a film that continues to enjoy massive recall among fans. This is why one simple appearance of the three actors together was enough to send fan pages into overdrive.

## Aamir Khan's Work Front

Aamir Khan was seen in *Sitaare Zameen Par*, directed by R.S. Prasanna and co-starring Genelia Deshmukh. The film was described as a spiritual successor to his 2007 classic *Taare Zameen Par* and revolved around a basketball coach and a team of specially abled players.

## NEWS BOX

## UN chief Guterres hails recent US-Iran peace deal, calls it 'a critical step' towards conflict settlement

LONDON. (Agency)

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres welcomed the US-Iran peace deal that paves the way for a permanent ceasefire and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. Notably, Guterres on Sunday has asserted it as a crucial step towards the settlement of the conflict.

The US and Iran finalised a deal to end their 107-day war and open the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway used to ferry one-fifth of the global oil supplies, on Friday after an in-person signing of the agreement in Switzerland. US President Donald Trump made the announcement on Truth Social on Sunday evening, easing pressure on the global energy markets, as officials said the peace agreement would be signed on June 19 in Switzerland. Guterres welcomed the announcement that the "United States and Iran have agreed on a peace deal that provides for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, as well as a framework for further negotiations," a statement issued by his spokesperson, Stephane Dujarric, said Sunday. "This represents a critical step towards the peaceful settlement of the conflict," Dujarric said. The Secretary-General expressed "deep appreciation" for the constructive role played by Pakistan, Qatar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and other regional countries in supporting the negotiations that led to the peace deal.

He reaffirmed that the United Nations stands ready to support the parties in achieving a durable and comprehensive peace.

## South Korea Sentences Ex-President To 30 Years Over Drone Incursion In North

world. (Agency)

A South Korean court handed former president Yoon Suk Yeol a 30-year prison sentence on Friday for sending drones into North Korea to "manufacture" a crisis ahead of his disastrous martial law bid.

The military drone flights two months before Yoon suspended civilian rule in 2024 had sparked anger in Pyongyang, which accused the South of also dropping propaganda leaflets. Yoon is already in detention while he appeals a separate life sentence for leading an insurrection with his martial law declaration. Judges said Friday the ex-president intended to provoke Pyongyang "into carrying out armed or equivalent acts against South Korea's military or people", according to a summary of their ruling seen by AFP. Yoon planned to "heighten inter-Korean military tensions and manufacture a national crisis" that could then justify martial law, the judges added, convicting him on charges of benefiting the enemy. He was given 30 years in jail over the drone incursion, a spokesperson for the Seoul Central District Court told AFP Friday. Yoon's legal team said he appealed the sentence, arguing that the drone operation was in response to North Korea sending balloons carrying trash across the border that year. Regarding "our military's operations in response to North Korea's persistent provocations as acts aiding the enemy" amounts to "disregarding the state's fundamental duty to safeguard its liberal democratic system", Yoon's lawyers said in a statement. The former president has insisted his martial law declaration was "solely for the sake of the nation". The shock late-night national televised address in December 2024 that suspended civilian rule plunged South Korea into an unprecedented political crisis. Martial law lasted only about six hours as lawmakers raced to the assembly building and voted it down in an emergency session. However, it triggered protests, sent the stock market plunging and caught key allies like the United States off-guard.

## Yemen's 'Spider-Man' falls into volcanic crater as daredevil stunt goes wrong, dies

World. (Agency)

A Yemeni adventurer and social media personality known as the "Spider-Man of Yemen" has died after falling into a volcanic crater while attempting to scale a near-vertical rock face without safety equipment, according to local officials and media reports.

Al Qa'q' bin Antar, 30-year-old, popularly known online as Antar Al Absi, was climbing the steep walls of the Haradhat Damt volcanic crater in Yemen's southern Al Dhale province on Friday when he lost his grip and plunged into the crater. Videos of the fatal fall have since circulated widely on social media. The incident was confirmed by Yemen's Civil Defense Authority, which said Antar fell into the crater while attempting one of the high-risk climbs that had made him famous among followers across the Arab world. Authorities said the crater is around 120 metres deep. A short video released by the Civil Defense Authority appears to show Antar scaling the rocky cliff face without any visible safety gear. In the footage, he can be seen clinging to the rock wall before suddenly losing his hold and falling into the crater. Specialist rescue teams, including divers and water-recovery personnel, were dispatched to the remote site. According to the authority, rescuers faced difficult conditions because of the crater's steep and rocky terrain. After a search operation lasting about four hours, divers recovered Antar's body from approximately 30 metres below the water surface. Haradhat Damt, also known as the Hardah Dam crater, is a volcanic formation near the city of Damt in Yemen. The landmark is known for its towering rock walls and a hot sulphur-rich lake at the bottom, attracting adventurers and visitors despite the challenging terrain. Antar had emerged as one of Yemen's best-known adventure content creators, amassing a large following through videos documenting dangerous climbs and expeditions across some of the country's most rugged landscapes.

# EU moves Ukraine's membership bid forward, but tough road ahead

**In purely practical terms a mammoth workload still lies ahead to align Ukraine's laws, institutions, and standards with the EU's.**

BRUSSELS. (Agency)

The EU on Monday moves Ukraine's bid to join onto the next stage after a long delay -- but that doesn't mean Kyiv's path to full membership is getting easier. Foreign ministers from the 27-nation bloc will formally kick off negotiations with Ukraine, and neighbouring Moldova, on aligning with a first "cluster" of EU laws. Ukraine's progress was stuck for some two years as Hungary's nationalist leader Viktor Orban vetoed all progress, but his election defeat by rival Peter Magyar in April opened up the way. "This is a recognition of the determination, courage and hard work shown by both countries in advancing reforms, even in the face of immense challenges," EU chief Ursula von der Leyen

said in a joint statement with European Council President Antonio Costa.

"In a world marked by growing uncertainty, a larger European Union is in our common interest." But despite the fanfare -- and Kyiv's pleas for quick progress four years after it applied for membership in the wake of Russia's invasion -- that doesn't mean the war-torn country is going to join the bloc any time soon. In purely practical terms a mammoth workload still lies ahead to align Ukraine's laws, institutions, and standards with the EU's. That involves negotiating through 35 "chapters" covering everything from the environment and agriculture to justice and security -- grouped into six "clusters". But, as ever in the EU, the question is also deeply political and there are myriad points at which any member state who wants can slam the brakes on Kyiv.

"This is a long process. Ukraine is at war. It has organised crime issues to solve. It would be the third biggest country in the EU," a European diplomat told AFP on condition of anonymity. "The prospect of Ukraine

enlargement happening soon never was realistic." Hungary's Magyar, for one, has pledged a referendum on Kyiv joining if Ukraine completes all the negotiations



"within the next 10 to 15 years". Beyond that there seems to be a broader willingness to temper Kyiv's ambitions -- and growing talk of possible alternatives Associate member?

"It is clear to everyone that an immediate accession of Ukraine to the EU is, of course, not possible," German Chancellor Friedrich

Merz said in April. Merz has proposed making Ukraine an "associate member" of the EU without voting rights, while Kyiv goes through the lengthy process of joining fully. That plan has drawn scepticism from Ukraine, which fears that any suggested interim solutions will see it stranded permanently in a halfway house.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has insisted Ukraine's accession should be "complete -- with full rights". But there is a broader push to shake up the EU's accession process as Ukraine, Moldova and other hopefuls knock on the door. Six countries including Germany and France have urged the bloc to discuss limiting voting rights on key issues for new members, and tightening rule-of-law safeguards. Western Balkan duo Montenegro and Albania are the closest candidates in line to join, and a raft of new members could make the EU ungovernable. For Ukraine and its supporters, admitting Kyiv is of fundamental interest to the bloc and the EU needs to send a clear signal on a timeline.

## World leaders welcome US-Iran peace deal

World. (Agency)

The United States and Iran agreed to a peace deal and an end to military operations on all fronts, signalling the apparent end to more than three months of war in the Middle East. Here are reactions from across the globe:

**'Critical step': UN**

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the peace deal as a "critical step towards the peaceful settlement of the conflict."

**'Ready to support': France**

President Emmanuel Macron called for "the urgent and unconditional reopening of the Strait of Hormuz," adding that France and the UK were "ready to support."

France will also support "the determined efforts of the Lebanese authorities to restore the sovereignty of the State." The agreement "must address concerns related to Iran's nuclear and ballistic programs," he added.

**'Mine clearance': UK**

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said "toll-free freedom of navigation must now be

restored in the Strait of Hormuz," adding that the UK was ready "to offer support on mine clearance."



"It remains the UK's firm and longstanding position that Iran must never have a nuclear weapon," Starmer said.

**'Regional security': Qatar**

Qatar's foreign ministry expressed its "full support for all efforts and initiatives aimed at enhancing regional security and stability."

**'Remain vigilant': Turkey**

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stressed "the need to avoid rhetoric, provocations, and actions that could escalate tensions in the period leading

up to the signing of the agreement, and to remain vigilant against possible sabotage."

**'Free and safe navigation': Japan**

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said she hopes that "free and safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz will actually be ensured, and that a final agreement on Iran's nuclear issue and other matters will be achieved as soon as possible."

**'Longstanding concerns': Australia**

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Foreign Minister Penny Wong called for "continued restraint and constructive engagement" from the US and Iran. "Iran must address longstanding concerns about its nuclear program and the threat it poses to international security," they said in a joint statement.

**'Get fuel flowing': New Zealand**

Prime Minister Chris Luxon said the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz "will help restore stable trade routes, get fuel flowing and keep our economy moving."

## Oil and gas supplies could take months to return to normal after Iran deal, energy experts say

NEW YORK. (Agency)

High oil and gasoline prices and energy supply problems won't be solved overnight, despite an agreement to end the Iran war and open the Strait of Hormuz announced Sunday. It will likely take months before energy companies can resume operations to the point of meeting the world's demand, according to energy experts. The slow pace of the process of shipping and refining crude oil, and doubts about the security of traveling through the strait mean the effect won't be seen immediately, they said. Ships loaded with crude oil have been stranded in the Persian Gulf for more than three months, unable to safely travel through the waterway, through which about a fifth of the world's oil and gasoline supplies typically traveled before the war began.

"It's going to take time for people to feel comfortable and for insurance to be in place ... particularly to get people on the

ground to restart some of these assets," said Daniel Evans, global head of fuels and refining research at S&P Global Energy. First, ships that have been



stranded will have to exit the strait, and then new tankers will have to come in to be loaded, Evans said. "To bring a ship in, you need to be confident that you've got a big enough window of safety to bring it in, load it and move it out," he added. Oil tankers also move slowly, he explained. It takes months to travel from the strait to distant countries, deliver the crude oil to a refinery for processing and then arrive at its final destination.

In addition, some producers in the Middle East paused extracting oil from the ground, known as a shut-in, when they ran out of storage space. Restarting those operations can be a slow process. Countries such as Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, where there are alternate pipelines or routes besides the Strait of Hormuz to deliver oil, may be among the quickest to resume production, said Alan Gelder, senior vice president of refining, chemicals and oil markets at ood Mackenzie, an analytics firm. "But places like Iraq could be much more challenged because they've had a much bigger shut-in, their fields are more difficult ... it may well take about a year before they get back," he said. Investment in the energy system, which can take years to see the results, ground to a halt after the strait's closure, Gelder said. So it will take time for this capital to restart. Countries that shut in oil production won't want to restart until they know there is a stable.

## For sure': Macron to preach stronger Europe vision at G7 swansong

EVIAN-LES-BAINS. (Agency)

Emmanuel Macron, this week, hosts world leaders in his last G7 summit as French president, feeling that Donald Trump's second mandate has vindicated his dream of a stronger Europe, but with that vision far from being fulfilled. Then, a fresh-faced former banker still shy of his 40th birthday, Macron came to power in 2017 short on political experience but big on ideas, one of which was that Europe should gain strategic autonomy and be less reliant on the United States. Macron most famously articulated his vision at this year's World Economic Forum in Davos, where, wearing aviator sunglasses due to an eye condition and punctuating his speech with the English phrase "for sure", he said Europe needed to stand up to "bullies" and be "much stronger and more autonomous". Now into the final year of his presidency, Macron has a chance to push his vision at the meeting of the seven leading powers, where Trump will sit down at the table with France's top European allies, plus Canada and Japan. "France holds the G7 presidency with a clear ambition -- to restore the G7 as a forum for frank dialogue among major economies," Macron said in Davos in January. With Trump at centre stage at the G7 in Evian-les-Bains, Macron

will meet the US leader before the summit gets underway on Monday and then host him for dinner at the Palace of Versailles outside Paris on Wednesday.

**'Battle of ideas'**

Macron's aides do not tire of claiming that Trump's protectionist trade policies, American freelancing on the international stage and even threats to leave NATO have vindicated the French leader. His chief foreign policy advisor Emmanuel Bonne stated simply: "Macron was right." But far from seeing Macron's vision implemented, Europe has largely played the role of bystander in the Iran crisis, while only the most limited progress has been made towards assuming its own defence.

While Macron may have "won the battle of ideas", he has only partially succeeded in translating his intuition into collective action to change Europe, said the former French diplomat Michel Duclos, a resident senior fellow at the Institut Montaigne. "We're indeed witnessing a conceptual victory for Macron," said Duclos. But the former ambassador added: "In diplomacy, being right is sometimes less important than achieving operational

results." The radical moves by the Trump administration -- notably the threats to annex the Danish territory of Greenland --



boosted Macron's credibility, while allies have also been impressed by bold initiatives such as sharing France's nuclear deterrent.

"In terms of relations with the United States, Macron understood early on that Trump wasn't an aberration of history but the manifestation of something much deeper," added Rym Momtaz of Carnegie Europe. However, "he didn't know how, or wasn't able, to convince his European partners quickly enough of the need for transformation."

**'Articulate a vision'**

In the latest failure emblematic of Europe's shortcomings, France and Germany last week said they had agreed to abandon the FCAS joint fighter jet programme dating back to 2017 due to disagreements between the companies involved. Over the last decade, Macron has also been accused by critics of flip-flopping on key issues, notably moving after Russia invaded Ukraine from a position of seeking rapprochement with Moscow to full-throated support of Kyiv. He also went from being criticised for siding too much with Israel to infuriating the Israeli leadership by recognising a Palestinian state last year. Domestic political instability has seen no less than five French prime ministers during his second mandate since 2022, and his flagship pension reform to ease long-term budget pressure has been shelved. A European diplomat, who asked not to be named, said that the French leader is "one of the few to articulate a vision". But Macron also suffered from a "credibility problem" linked to "his political weakness" and budgetary setbacks in France, the diplomat added.



on purpose. "This is their deliberate decision," he said. Damage at the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, a monastic complex, was substantial and a serious fire had broken out, said Tkachenko, who accused Russia of deliberately striking "the heart of one of the largest Christian shrines."

The roof of the Dormition Cathedral caught fire during the overnight attack, said Metropolitan Epiphanius, head of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. He condemned the strike as another Russian crime "against humanity, against history, against Christianity" and appealed for prayers to save the site. The Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, also known as the Monastery of the Caves, is a sprawling complex of monasteries and churches, including some underground, built from the 11th

Some of the churches at the UNESCO-listed World Heritage site are connected by a labyrinthine complex of caves spanning more than 600 meters (2,000 feet). The cathedral, churches and other buildings overlook the right bank of the Dnipro River and have been a pilgrimage site for centuries.