

Rahul Gandhi to lead NEET paper leak protest in Kota, BJP calls it toolkit move

As Rahul Gandhi prepares to address thousands of students in Kota over alleged exam irregularities and paper leaks, the BJP has accused Congress of politicising the issue, setting the stage for a high-voltage showdown.

New Delhi .(Agency)

With the NEET paper leak controversy once again at the centre of national debate, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is set to hold a major student convention in Rajasthan's Kota on today evening, positioning the event as a platform to amplify concerns over examination irregularities, paper leaks and youth unemployment.

The programme, scheduled for 5.30 pm at the Shri Ram Rangmanch in Dussehra Ground, has triggered a political confrontation between the Congress and the BJP even before Gandhi takes the stage.

A day ahead of the event, Gandhi accused the Narendra Modi government of crushing the aspirations of millions of young Indians through "paper leaks, exam mismanagement, cancelled recruitments, skyrocketing fees,



privatisation and scams". "My young and Gen Z friends, one thing is clear to me, and I want you to engrain this in your heart as well: securing the future of every young Indian is the government's responsibility. Yet, both responsibility and integrity are concepts alien to the Modi government," Gandhi wrote on X.

"Paper leaks, exam mismanagement, cancelled recruitments, skyrocketing fees, privatisation, and scams — these are the very tools with which they are shattering crores of dreams every day," he said, adding that he wanted to discuss these issues directly with students.

The Congress has projected the Kota programme as the first in a nationwide series of student conventions focused on issues affecting young people, particularly alleged paper leaks and examination-related controversies.

CONGRESS GEARS UP FOR STUDENT OUTREACH

Ahead of Gandhi's visit, Congress leaders intensified preparations in Kota. A meeting of the Mahila Congress was held at the party office in Gumanpura, where leaders discussed mobilisation efforts and assigned ward-level responsibilities to ensure strong participation.

Arvind Kejriwal slams Telegram ban, accuses Centre of failing to curb paper leak racket amid NEET-UG retest curbs

NEW DELHI .(Agency)

AP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday criticised the Centre's decision to temporarily restrict access to the Telegram messaging app ahead of the NEET-UG 2026 re-examination, calling the move "absurd" and alleging that the government has no genuine intent to stop paper leaks.

The government on Tuesday ordered a temporary restriction on Telegram until June 22, ahead of the June 21 NEET-UG retest, with the National Testing Agency (NTA) stating the step was aimed at preventing cheating networks and the spread of misinformation.

NTA Director General Abhishek Singh said the measure formed part of efforts to ensure the re-exam is conducted fairly and without malpractice.

In a post on X in Hindi, Kejriwal alleged that the Centre "has no intention of stopping paper leaks", claiming that such actions were merely symbolic.

"That's why such absurd steps are being taken — transporting papers by Army aircraft and shutting down Telegram. Will these steps stop paper leaks? Absolutely not," he said. He further alleged that the paper leak system is a "multi-billion-rupee racket" and suggested that the proceeds benefit those in power, including being used to influence elected representatives.

The government has also directed Google and Apple to remove Telegram from their app stores temporarily as part of the restrictions. NEET-UG was originally conducted on May 3 but was later cancelled on May 12 by the NTA following allegations of irregularities, leaving lakhs of candidates affected.



Vadodara accident: 6 killed, 30 injured after bus hits stationary truck

The bus was travelling from Rajasthan to Surat in Gujarat. Several passengers were trapped inside the mangled vehicle, triggering an emergency rescue operation.



Vadodara .(Agency)

Six people, including a nine-year-old child, were killed and around 30 others injured when a luxury bus travelling from Rajasthan to Gujarat crashed into a stationary truck near Kotambi International Cricket Stadium in Vadodara at around 4 am on Wednesday.

The bus, operated by Balaji Travels, was carrying passengers from Banswara in Rajasthan to Surat in Gujarat. The impact was severe enough to trap several passengers inside the mangled vehicle, triggering an emergency rescue operation. The bus driver's cabin was

crushed, and passengers in the front seats were pulled out after the fire department cut open the side of the vehicle. Four of the six victims have been identified as Vinod Damor, 30, Mukesh Dindor, 34, Preet Bhatia, nine, and Mahendra Pandya, 68. Among the injured are two children aged 12 and 10.

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)—its headquarters in Jarod is about 8 km from the accident site—the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), the Vadodara Fire and Emergency Services Department, and the police were involved in the rescue operation.

I run a recycling business: TVK leader's relative approaches cops over DMK mix-up

TVK leader Aadhav Arjuna's relative, John Britto, was accused by the DMK of being the person recently arrested in a drug smuggling case. While the party has now deleted the tweets, Britto has filed a police complaint and Arjuna has sued ex-CM MK Stalin.

Chennai.(Agency)

The Enforcement Directorate arrested one John Britto in a drug smuggling case. The DMK took to X and shamed TVK leader Aadhav Arjuna for his relative's connection with the matter. But both are different people, and now the mistaken Britto, has filed a complaint with the police. "False news about me and my relatives are being released. That John Britto is different," he told reporters on Wednesday. Aadhav Arjuna's mother-in-law Leena Rose Martin, an AIADMK MLA from Lalgudi, is the sister of John Britto.



MLA. False news about me and my relatives are being released. That John Britto is different. I'm not involved in a drug smuggling case,

but as I have the same name, it is being said so. I've filed a complaint with the commissioner's office," Arjuna's relative, Britto, told reporters.

Arjuna, meanwhile, has sued former CM MK Stalin and the DMK's IT wing, demanding a public apology within 48 hours along with Rs 1 crore over allegations linking the TVK leader to the drug smuggling case.

The legal notice has accused the DMK and its online machinery of making "false and defamatory" claims connecting Arjuna to Jon Britto, who was arrested by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence.

Centre brokers six-state deal on Kishau dam

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

In a significant breakthrough for interstate water cooperation and river basin management, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan have reached a consensus on the long-pending Kishau Multipurpose Dam Project during a meeting chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday, officials said.

The meeting marked a major step forward in the implementation of one of the most important water infrastructure projects in northern India, which has remained under discussion for several decades due to issues related to cost-sharing, water allocation and coordination among participating states, they said.

The consensus was achieved after the participating states agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the implementation of the project. Following the signing of the MoU, the project will be placed before the Union Cabinet for final approval, the officials said. The Kishau Multipurpose Dam Project is planned on the Tons River, the largest tributary of the Yamuna, along the border of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. The project has long been viewed as a critical intervention for augmenting water availability in the Yamuna basin, improving drinking.

JDS moves its MLAs to resort amid cross-voting fears before today's MLC polls

Janata Dal (Secular) will shift their MLAs to a resort on the outskirts of Bengaluru near Devanahalli later in the evening, with senior party leaders likely to hold briefings and sessions for during the legislators' stay.

Bengaluru.(Agency)

After the Congress, now HD Kumaraswamy-headed JD(S), has also begun resort politics ahead of tomorrow's Legislative Council elections. According to party sources, amid fears of cross-voting, the party has decided to move its MLAs to a resort on the outskirts of Bengaluru.

Sources added that the MLAs will be shifted to the Prestige Golf Club Resort near Devanahalli later in the evening. Besides, senior party leaders are expected to conduct briefings and sessions for the legislators during their stay. Congress also moved its MLAs to the Terrea Resort on Mysuru Road yesterday. It is located within the Wonderla amusement park premises, nearly 28 km from



Bengaluru.

The decision to shift the legislators came after yesterday's Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting. The MLAs will remain there until being transported directly to the Assembly to cast their votes.

Legislative Assembly members will vote in

the election at Vidhana Soudha where there are eight candidates for seven seats. The Congress is eyeing five of seven seats.

Each candidate requires a minimum of 28 votes to win. The Congress and the BJP are expected to comfortably win four and two seats, respectively, on the basis of their strength in the Assembly, officials said. But, a contest is likely for the seventh seat, as both the Congress and the JD(S) have fielded candidates despite lacking adequate strength to win it on their own, the officials added.

Congress's Thippannappa Kamknoor, Shivanna BS, Vinay Karthik Prakash, PV Mohan, and KPCC President BK Hariprasad; BJP's Lingaraj Patil and Raghu R; and JD(S) leader Govindaraju, are the candidates running for the seats.

Sanjay Raut abuses rebel Sena UBT MPs on camera, says do not beep it out

New Delhi.(Agency)

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut launched a profanity-laced attack on the rebel MPs reportedly eyeing a switch from the Uddhav Thackeray camp, vowing that the party would not spare "backstabbers" and challenging them to resign and openly join the NDA.

After unleashing a string of expletives and describing the rebel MPs as beimaan (betrayers), Raut, while addressing the media, urged reporters not to beep out his abuses.

"These s*** bh**** should leave...don't cut," he said, adding that "betrayal is in their blood."

He challenged any dissidents to resign first and said those elected on the party's ticket had no right to betray the mandate. Defending his



abusive remarks at the press conference, Sanjay Raut said he had not said anything wrong, as such expressions are commonly used in Maharashtra and the Marathi language. He clarified that he had not made any such remarks in Parliament, but argued that wrongdoing or corruption should not be met with praise. "If someone does something

wrong or commits corruption, will we shower flowers on them?" he asked.

He also went on to allege that some MPs from the Uddhav Sena camp were being offered Rs 50 crore to switch sides, as speculation grew over a possible split in the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT). Raut said the party had no official information about any split and was learning of reports about some MPs breaking away through the media. He said Shiv Sena (UBT) had begun legal steps, issued a whip ahead of its parliamentary party meeting scheduled for Thursday, and written to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla asking him to act strictly in line with constitutional provisions. Of the party's nine Lok Sabha MPs, only Arvind Sawant, Anil Desai and Rajabhau Waje were present at the press conference.

Out of 9 Lok Sabha MPs, only Arvind Sawant, Anil Desai and Rajabhau Waje attended Sanjay Raut's press conference in Delhi. He claimed that an "important person" had informed him that attempts were being made to bribe MPs, alleging Rs 50 crore deals with Rs 15 crore as advance, and that some MPs refused to travel without payment.

Short news

'It is our responsibility to ensure the safety of seafarers': Modi at G7, days after Indian mariners killed in US strike

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, while addressing a gathering of G7 leaders, including US President Donald Trump, raised the issue of the safety of seafarers.

All countries must ensure that maritime routes remain secure and that seafarers can perform their duties without fear, said Modi days after three Indian mariners were killed in a US military strike in the Gulf of Oman.

The prime minister, addressing an outreach session of the G7 summit, said India firmly believes lasting solutions to conflicts can only be found through dialogue, diplomacy and international cooperation. Modi said disruptions to maritime trade in the Strait of Hormuz have harmed the global economy and that many Indian citizens have lost their lives in the conflict.

Modi's comments on underlining the importance of ensuring the safety of seafarers came against the backdrop of growing anger in India over the killing of the three Indian crew members in a US military attack on a merchant ship off the coast of Oman last week.

NTA cautions parents against scammers, insists no leak of NEET-UG reexamination

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

In an unprecedented move, the National Testing Agency on Tuesday night put out two videos warning parents and students taking up the upcoming NEET-UG retest on June 21 not to believe any kind of message that advance questions were available for a price.

There is absolutely no leak of the re-exam, and anyone saying anything to the contrary is a scamster, it said. NTA Director General Abhishek Singh, who has never come out in public since he assumed office, put out a video defending the decision of the agency to ban Telegram in the interests of 22-lakh-plus genuine students.

Fraudsters used edited chats and used the platform to sell fake question papers and misled students, he said. "Channels demanding Rs 14,000 to Rs 25,000, some even Rs 10 lakh, claimed they will send the re-exam paper. They won't. There is no leaked paper for the re-exam. The money is gone the moment you transfer it. Your admit card and WhatsApp number, if you sent them, become the tools they use to scam the next student," Singh said in a broadcast made public.

Fake-proof videos show chats before the exam. "The trick is that on Telegram, whoever runs a channel can edit any old message and change what's inside it, while the date on the message stays the same. So a message edited on the fourth can be made to look exactly like it was sent on the first," he explained.



News box

NHAI earmarks land for two flyovers planned At Rajiv Chowk in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has prepared a preliminary land acquisition plan for two proposed flyovers at Rajiv Chowk as part of efforts to ease congestion at one of the city's busiest intersections. According to the plan, around 3.05 hectares of land will be required from various govt agencies and departments for the project, which is aimed at improving traffic flow between Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway and Sohna Highway. The proposal includes construction of two new flyovers. One right-turn flyover is planned for vehicles coming from the Sohna side, allowing direct access to Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway towards Sector 15 without stopping at the Rajiv Chowk traffic signal. The second flyover will facilitate uninterrupted movement from the Sector 32 side towards Sohna Highway. According to the preliminary plan, land has been identified from six agencies, including department of animal husbandry, Air Force, Tau Devi Lal stadium, department of telecommunications (DoT), green belts and other govt-owned plots. The largest share, around 0.89 hectares, has been identified from DoT land, followed by nearly 0.83 hectares from the stadium and about 0.73 hectares from Air Force land. Smaller parcels have been earmarked from green belts, govt plots and land belonging to department of animal husbandry. An NHAI official said discussions with the concerned agencies would be initiated to address land availability issues. "A meeting with GMDA officials will be held soon to resolve matters related to land under its administration. Simultaneously, the issue concerning DoT land will be taken up at the ministerial level," the official said. The project is part of a broader plan to redesign Rajiv Chowk and improve traffic flow and road safety. Last year, NHAI was tasked with conducting a feasibility study to assess traffic patterns and recommend long-term decongestion measures.

Rain, cloud cover bring relief across Haryana, IMD forecasts more thunderstorms

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Rain, thunderstorms and persistent cloud cover brought relief across Haryana on Tuesday, with temperatures falling sharply below normal in several districts. IMD has forecast continued thunderstorm activity accompanied by lightning and gusty winds over the next few days. Gurgaon AWS recorded 3.5 mm of rain during the day, while NorthCap University AWS in Gurgaon reported 6.5 mm. The maximum temperature at Gurgaon AWS settled at 32.4 degrees Celsius, nearly 3.8 degrees below the previous day's level, while Gurgaon KVK recorded a maximum temperature of 32.3 degrees Celsius, registering a fall of 4 degrees Celsius. Gurgaon AWS recorded a minimum temperature of 21.7°C, the lowest in the district, followed by 23.7°C at Gurgaon KVK AWS and 25.4°C at NorthCap University AWS. All three stations recorded lower temperatures than the previous day, with the drop attributed to widespread cloud cover, rainfall and increased moisture. IMD has placed most districts under a yellow alert for thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds of 40 to 50 kmph on June 17 and June 19. A temporary reduction in weather activity is expected on June 18, when no major warning has been issued. However, another spell of thunderstorms and gusty winds is likely to affect large parts of the state thereafter. For Gurgaon, the forecast suggests partly to generally cloudy skies over the next few days, with the possibility of light to moderate rain or thundershowers at isolated places. Daytime temperatures are expected to remain below normal, ensuring continued relief from heatwave conditions. Weather experts attribute the cooler conditions to active pre-monsoon weather systems over northwest India and believe that recurring spells of rain and cloud cover will help maintain comfortable weather across Haryana through the remainder of the week.

Share the ride, split the bill: Sector 105 RWA launches carpool initiative

Gurgaon.(Agency)

As fuel prices squeeze household budgets, the Sector 105 residents' welfare association has urged residents to carpool to Delhi, Gurgaon, Faridabad and Greater Noida. A dedicated WhatsApp group will be floated to facilitate direct coordination, where residents can share travel routes, timings and contact details.

RWA president Deepak Sharma said it is a voluntary, not for profit initiative. "If the number of cars leaving Sector 105 daily could be reduced from approximately 100 to just 35-50, it would lead to



significant decreases in both traffic congestion and pollution levels. Also, it will foster a sense of community and help tackle both the financial burden of rising fuel prices and help the environment," said Sharma. The residents are receiving the campaign with great enthusiasm. A resident also demanded an e-rickshaw shuttle service to Botanical Garden metro station — similar to arrangements in neighbouring sectors — with trips every two hours.

Ever since the US-Iran war had begun, fuel prices have been hiked for four times, with the latest increase announced last month. Petrol in Delhi-NCR costs Rs 102.12 per litre and diesel Rs 95.20 litre.

Faridabad to halt waste dumping at Bandhwari from next week

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Municipal Corporation of Faridabad (MCF) has assured Municipal Corporation of Gurgaon (MCG) that it will stop dumping fresh waste at the Bandhwari landfill from next Tuesday, which could temporarily ease pressure on the overburdened dump. According to MCG officials, Faridabad currently sends around 9,000 tonnes of fresh waste every day to Bandhwari, accounting for nearly 38% of the total waste dumped there every month. The landfill has long been at the centre of environmental and public health concerns because of the tonnes of legacy waste that has been collecting at the site. Now, MCG is searching for an alternative location for dumping and processing of waste on a war footing. MCG officials said the move will significantly help clear the dump — an order that was given by the union housing and urban affairs minister Manohar Lal



Khattar last month. "Faridabad stopping its waste disposal at Bandhwari will reduce the burden significantly. We have received a verbal assurance from the MCF stating that they will stop fresh waste dumping from next week," he said. MCF

commissioner Dharendra Khadgata was not available for a comment despite repeated attempts to contact him. While MCG earlier also directed the MCF to stop fresh waste dumping at Bandhwari, the practice, however, has not stopped.

However, some environmentalists said Faridabad stopping waste dumping would not make much difference to the landfill's condition. "Faridabad will create a new landfill for their waste, which will only aggravate the issue. Besides, Gurgaon itself dumps around 1,500 tonnes of waste per day, which is more than the clearance they have got," said Vaishali Rana, an activist. On May 28, Khattar ordered MCG officials to clear Bandhwari within one year and submit daily progress reports. The landfill continues to hold an estimated 18 lakh MT of accumulated legacy waste. Two agencies are currently engaged in treating the waste. He also directed that regular drone surveys be conducted during the meeting to ensure transparent and effective monitoring of the work being carried out. He directed officials to monitor the pace and quality of work through modern technology.

Mehsana Under Scrutiny: Explosive Allegations of Illegal Liquor, Gambling Network and Protection Racket Surface

Mehsana.

(By PAWAN MAKAN)

A series of serious allegations has sparked controversy in Gujarat's Mehsana district, with claims that illegal liquor trafficking, high-stakes gambling operations and an alleged protection network are functioning openly despite the state's strict prohibition laws. According to information cited by Mahanagar Metro, several locations across Mehsana district are allegedly being used for organized gambling and illicit liquor activities. The report further claims that repeated complaints and evidence submissions to law-enforcement authorities have not resulted in significant action, raising questions about administrative oversight and accountability. Allegations of a Vast Illegal Network The report alleges that foreign liquor, illicit country-made liquor and large-scale gambling operations have been flourishing across parts of the district for years. Local sources quoted in the report claim that Mehsana has increasingly gained a reputation as a "Mini Goa" due to the prevalence of such activities. Several senior police officials have been named in the allegations. However, no



official findings or independent investigations confirming these claims have been made public at the time of writing. Claims of Influence from Inside and Outside Prison One of the most controversial allegations involves a police officer identified as Tarun Dabhi, who is described by sources as an influential figure allegedly coordinating communication within the network. The report also alleges that a bootlegger named Imran, currently lodged in Kadi

Sub Jail, continues to influence operations from inside prison while allegedly enjoying privileged facilities. These claims have not been independently verified. Locations Named in the Report The report identifies several areas where illegal activities are allegedly taking place: Rajpur village under Nandasan police jurisdiction, where high-profile gambling activities are alleged to occur. Lor village under Bavlu police limits, where another gambling operation is reportedly functioning. Areas near Gozaria Railway Gate, Bhaisariya and Lynch villages, where illegal liquor

promptly. Questions Raised Over Administrative Response According to the publication, evidence and verbal presentations regarding the alleged activities were submitted to district police authorities and the State Monitoring Cell (SMC). The report claims that despite these representations, no substantial enforcement action has been visible so far. This perceived lack of response has led to questions from local residents and activists regarding whether sufficient investigations are being conducted. Demand for Independent Investigation The publication has called for an impartial inquiry by senior state authorities, including the Director General of Police (DGP) and the State Monitoring Cell, to determine the accuracy of the allegations and identify any wrongdoing if proven. As of publication, the individuals and officials named in the allegations have not publicly responded to the claims. Authorities have also not released any official statement confirming or denying the accusations. The matter remains one of allegation and counter-allegation, and any conclusions would depend on findings from a formal investigation.

Police find 13 Bangladeshis at building sites across NCR in drive to spot illegals, to send them back

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Thirteen Bangladeshi nationals who allegedly entered India illegally through the West Bengal border and spent the past few years working at construction sites across the NCR city have been detained during a special police verification drive and are now set to be sent back to their country. The men, picked up from construction sites and settlements in sectors 69, 70 and 104, are currently undergoing legal procedures that will eventually see them handed over to Bangladeshi authorities through the Border Security Force (BSF). Police said the action was part of an ongoing campaign aimed at identifying foreign nationals living in the city without valid documents. The detainees were identified as Arif, Sumon Ali, Sabir Hussain, Rubal, Sakib, Robiul, Gulzar Hussain, Naeem, Mehboob, Hamidur Islam, Atiyar Rahman and Mohammad Hesam. Most are in the 20-30 age group and were working as labourers at different construction sites. The operation was carried out by the Sector 39 crime branch under the supervision of DCP (crime) Hitesh Yadav after specific intelligence inputs about suspected illegal migrants. Teams conducted searches over the past two days at labour colonies, slum clusters and construction sites. "During verification, documents linked to their



Bangladeshi citizenship were recovered. They were staying here illegally and working at multiple construction sites," a police officer said. According to police, several detainees admitted during questioning that they had crossed into India through the Kaliaganj border in West Bengal with the help of "agents" before

travelling to Gurgaon in search of work. Sumon Ali told TOI he entered India in 2022 and had been living and working in the city since then. "Yes, I am a Bangladeshi citizen and was staying here for the past four years. Police detained me from a construction site," he said. Another detainee, Arif, said he entered India in 2024

for employment and was picked up from a construction site near Tulip Chowk in Sector 70. According to police, the next stage will involve legal proceedings. After medical examinations conducted on Tuesday, the 13 men are expected to be shifted to the "deportation centre" at Sector 1 in IMT Manesar, where they will remain until documentation is completed. "The Bangladesh high commission will be informed. They will be handed over to the BSF after completion of all documentation. The BSF will then transfer them to Bangladeshi officials across the border," an officer said. Officials said the detentions are part of a wider district-wide verification exercise being carried out in slum settlements, rented accommodations, industrial areas, hotels and commercial establishments. Police have appealed to residents to verify tenants, domestic helpers and workers employed at shops and businesses. "This exercise is being carried out keeping national security and public safety in mind. No foreign national or Indian citizen living legally will face harassment," police spokesperson Sandeep Turan said. The latest action comes nearly a year after 10 Bangladeshi nationals detained during a similar drive were sent back through the BSF after completion of legal formalities.

Chandigarh Administration denies RTI plea seeking basis for Master Plan amendments

Chandigarh. (Agency)

The Chandigarh Administration has declined to disclose details of the proposed amendments to the city's Master Plan, citing provisions of the Right to Information (RTI) Act that exempt disclosure of records related to an ongoing decision-making process. The proposed amendments to the Chandigarh Master Plan 2031 — including a higher Floor Area Ratio (FAR), increased population density, mixed land use, and high-rise development — have come under scrutiny following an RTI application seeking to know the studies and assessments that formed the basis of the proposed changes. In response to an RTI application filed by city resident Ram Kumar Garg, the Urban Planning Department said the draft amendments had been placed in the public domain for inviting objections and suggestions from residents, but the proposal was still under consideration and had not

attained finality.

"The Draft Amendments in the Chandigarh Master Plan have been placed in the public domain for inviting objections/suggestions from the general public, and the proposal is presently under consideration, and not attained finality from the Competent Authority," the department said in its response dated June 16. The department further said the information sought was exempt from disclosure under Section 8(1)(I) of the RTI Act, 2005, and could be disclosed after the matter is finalised, subject to the provisions of the law. The response came after Garg sought details relating to the proposed changes in the Master Plan, the key planning document that guides Chandigarh's land use, housing, commercial development, transport infrastructure and future urban growth. The applicant had sought copies of all

studies, consultant reports, technical assessments, and official records relied upon while preparing the proposed amendments. The request aimed to ascertain whether the



city's infrastructure is equipped to handle the additional burden that may arise from denser development.

Specifically, the RTI application sought utility augmentation, detailed project reports, population impact projections,

carrying-capacity studies, infrastructure impact assessments, traffic studies, utility load assessments and environmental impact assessments related to the proposed amendments. It also sought records indicating whether funds had been earmarked for upgrading civic infrastructure and whether timelines or implementation plans had been prepared before the proposed planning changes are implemented.

In addition, the applicant sought file notings, inter-departmental correspondence, minutes of meetings and records relating to any expert committee constituted to examine or recommend the amendments. Copies of approvals, recommendations, observations and reports relied upon by the administration while framing the amendments were also sought. The applicant further requested that if any of the studies or assessments sought did not

exist, the administration should state so specifically. An inspection of all relevant files was also sought under the RTI Act. Officials maintained that since the amendment process is ongoing, disclosure of the information at this stage is barred under the RTI Act. They, however, pointed out that information relating to the draft amendments already available in the public domain can be accessed through the department's website. The refusal is significant as the proposed amendments, which have attracted criticism from several quarters, could have a bearing on future development patterns in the city. Urban planners, resident welfare associations and other stakeholders have been closely tracking the exercise, with several groups seeking greater transparency regarding the proposed changes and their likely impact on land-use norms and development controls. The RTI application was disposed of by the Urban Planning Department on June 16.

Monsoon stalled, south and east UP brace for heatwave spell

According to him, the prevailing weather conditions were not favourable for the further advancement of the Southwest Monsoon into Uttar Pradesh.

Lucknow. (Agency)

With the monsoon yet to reach Uttar Pradesh, the state is likely to witness another spell of heatwave conditions over the coming days as temperatures continue to soar across several districts, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The Met's report on Tuesday showed a significant rise in daytime temperatures across parts of eastern UP. Banda recorded maximum temperature of 43.4 degrees Celsius on Monday, while Prayagraj touched 44°C, figuring among the hottest cities in the country. Meteorologists attributed the heat wave to a lack of significant cloud cover. "At present, there is no major weather system influencing Uttar Pradesh. In the absence of significant cloud cover,

daytime radiative heating is taking place, leading to a rise in temperatures," said IMD scientist Atul Kumar Singh. He said



temperatures in parts of southern and eastern Uttar Pradesh are climatologically high during this period because the region falls within one of the country's peak heating zones when the sun is positioned near the Tropic of Cancer.

According to him, the prevailing weather conditions were not favourable for the further advancement of the Southwest Monsoon into Uttar Pradesh.

"As of now, there are no favourable conditions for the monsoon to advance to the state in the next four to five days. Any rainfall that occurs in the meantime is likely to be due to localised heating, instability, or western disturbances and should not be treated as monsoonal rainfall," he said. The IMD has forecast isolated rain, thunderstorms, and gusty winds at some places in both western and eastern Uttar Pradesh through June 18. However, from June 19 onwards, heatwave conditions are expected to re-emerge in isolated pockets.

NIA arrests key accused in Shambhu DFC blast case; gets 8-day custody

Mohali. (Agency)

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has made a significant breakthrough in its probe into the explosion on the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) railway track near Shambhu, arresting a key suspect allegedly involved in the conspiracy. The accused, Gurjinder Singh alias Baba Beant, was produced before a special NIA court in Mohali on Tuesday, which remanded him in eight days of police custody for further interrogation.

According to officials, Gurjinder Singh was already lodged in Patiala Jail in connection with another case. The NIA secured his custody through a production warrant and sought 14 days of remand to question him about his alleged role in the railway track blast. After hearing arguments from both sides, the court granted an eight-day remand.

Sources said investigators will now examine the accused's alleged links with foreign-based handlers, particularly those operating from Pakistan and Malaysia. The agency is also

probing the larger conspiracy behind the blast, including funding channels, logistical support, procurement of explosives, and the involvement of other associates.

The explosion occurred on the night of April 27 near Shambhu on the DFC railway track. Preliminary investigations suggested that an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) may have detonated while it was being planted on the track, foiling a possible attempt to target railway infrastructure.

The incident claimed the life of Jagroop Singh alias Jupa, a resident of Panjwar village in Tarn Taran district. Investigators

believe he was part of the alleged plot and had an active role in the operation. The NIA is now working to identify other individuals linked to the conspiracy and determine how the explosive material was sourced. Investigators are also examining whether a larger network was involved in attempts to damage critical railway infrastructure.



Proposed Gadkhal bypass to ease Kasauli traffic chaos: HC seeks status report

Shimla. (Agency)

The Himachal Pradesh High Court has taken suo motu cognisance of chronic traffic congestion and the deteriorating condition of the Gadkhal-Kasauli road, directing the state government to submit a detailed status report on the proposed Gadkhal bypass aimed at easing traffic on the busy tourist route.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice GS Sandhawalia and Justice Bipin Chander Negi observed that the road linking Gadkhal with the popular hill station of Kasauli has become a major source of inconvenience for tourists and local residents due to persistent traffic jams, particularly during the peak tourist season.

The approximately 3.02-km link road branching off the Kalka-Shimla National Highway-5 towards Kasauli is narrow and

heavily congested. The Lawrence School, Sanawar, is also located along the stretch. Traffic snarls are particularly severe during weekends and summer vacations.



In its order, the court noted that despite recurring bottlenecks, no effective measures appeared to have been taken to address the problem. The Bench said it had been informed about a proposal to construct

an alternate route bypassing the congested stretch and sought details of the progress made so far.

"It has come to the notice of this Court that the stretch from Gadkhal to Kasauli has become a nightmare for tourists and local residents, as there is constant traffic congestion, especially during the tourist season, and no efforts have been made to address the issue," the court observed.

The Bench directed the state government to file instructions on the steps taken towards construction of the proposed bypass. The matter has been listed for further hearing on July 2. Expressing concern over the condition of the road, the court also directed the Secretary, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Solan, to conduct an on-site inspection of the Gadkhal-Kasauli road as well as the Dharampur-Gadkhal stretch and submit a report before the next hearing.



'Mummy-Papa, I love you': Dehradun NEET aspirant dies by suicide

A 23-year-old woman in Dehradun allegedly died by suicide after struggling with repeated NEET attempts. Police recovered a note for her parents as investigators examine evidence and await the post-mortem report.

Dehradun. (Agency)

A 23-year-old woman in Dehradun allegedly died by suicide after reportedly struggling to clear the NEET examination, leaving behind a note for her parents that read, "Mummy-Papa, I love you."

The woman was found hanging from a ceiling fan in her room at a house in Chandramani Colony under the Patel Nagar area. Police reached the spot after being informed and sent the body for post-mortem examination. According to police, a suicide note recovered from the scene contained the emotional message addressed to her parents. Preliminary investigation suggests the woman had been preparing for the NEET examination for a long time with hopes of pursuing a career in medicine. Officials said she had failed to secure selection in previous attempts and was reportedly under

stress and disappointment. Sadar Circle Officer Ankit Kandari confirmed that a suicide note was recovered from the scene. Police are examining the note and other evidence. While the case



prima facie appears to be a suicide, authorities said further action will depend on the findings of the post-mortem report and the ongoing investigation.

Head shaved, starved, abused: Maharashtra woman alleges torture over dowry demands

A woman from Kalyan has alleged her husband and in-laws shaved her head, confined her and abused her over dowry demands. Police have booked five relatives and launched an investigation after her hospital admission.

Kalyan. (Agency)

A woman in Maharashtra's Kalyan has accused her husband and in-laws of forcibly shaving her head and subjecting her to months of physical and mental abuse after her family failed to meet alleged dowry demands. The woman, who is undergoing treatment at a hospital in Ulhasnagar, has also alleged that she was assaulted during pregnancy, denied adequate food and burned with hot water. Police have registered a case against five members of her husband's family and launched an investigation.

According to the complaint, Afsana, a resident of Ulhasnagar, married Sameer Ansari, a resident of Kalyan's Waldhuni area, in November 2025. Her family alleged that they had informed the groom's family before the marriage about their financial constraints and inability to provide dowry. Despite this, the woman's relatives claimed that soon after

the wedding, she began facing pressure over demands for money and other items. Afsana alleged that the harassment continued even during her pregnancy. She claimed that she was often denied adequate food and was repeatedly assaulted by her husband, mother-in-law, father-in-law and sister-in-law. She further alleged that hot water was poured on her hands, causing burn injuries. According to the complaint, she was also denied money for basic day-to-day needs. The woman alleged that on June 7, her in-laws forcibly shaved her head under the pretext that she had lice. She claimed that her husband, mother-in-law, sister-in-law and aunt-in-law were involved in the act. Afterward, she was allegedly confined to a room for nearly a week and subjected to further harassment.

According to the complaint, Afsana eventually managed to escape from her



husband's home and reached her sister's residence, where she informed her family about the alleged abuse. Her relatives then

admitted her to Ulhasnagar's Central Hospital, where she remains under treatment. The victim's brother has appealed

to the Maharashtra government and Chief Minister for intervention and strict action against the accused. The incident has triggered outrage among local residents. Senior Police Inspector Baliram Pardeshi of Mahatma Phule Police Station said police received information that the woman had been admitted to the hospital, following which a team was sent to record her statement.

"According to the complaint, the husband, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law and aunt-in-law had been demanding money and other items since the marriage. On June 7, the woman's hair was cut after she was told it could otherwise cause breathing problems for the child. Following the incident, she became mentally distressed," Pardeshi said. Based on the complaint, police have registered a case under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and further investigation is underway.

Faithline | Voyage through belief

Renuka Narayanan

It's 43°C in Delhi-NCR, and the mind turns to holiday encounters as a diversion. I remember a chatty pavement bookseller I met in Bali. "I think democracy is rubbish," declared the spike-haired, sharp-eyed young man without a preamble. "Oh God," I muttered distractedly, looking to choose a secondhand book for holiday reading, since I'd already raced through the ones I'd brought along. "Talk to me!" he said, pulling out a plastic chair and offering me a clove-scented 'Sampoorna' cigarette that I politely declined, which he then lit for himself. "Do you have an attention problem?" I said mildly, "Please talk to the Australian tourists, I'd just like to buy a book." "Talk to me!" he insisted. "You're from India, aren't you? I don't meet many Indians. What do you think about democracy? What do you think about God? I'm Muslim, what are you?" Clearly there was no escape except to leave, and I so wanted to look at the books. I extracted a yet-unread Joanna Trollope title lurking between the best-sellers and was pleased to spot Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh and, God bless us all, Malgudi Days. Also, something promisingly titled, The Revenge of the Middle-aged Woman, except that I wasn't interested. Not when I'd gone snorkelling, explored Borobudur, scampered up and down green Indonesian hillsides and cooled off in boulder-strewn rivers that looked like our Betwa and Shipra. "I'm from Sumatra," he announced, which got my attention because of Rajendra Chola's navy going there to school King Vijayatunga, who was harassing the Chettians in their China trade. So I set the book aside, sat down, and really looked at him. "Why do you have a long, straight nose?" he demanded, "Why is mine flat?" "I don't know those answers," I said, "Why do you think of democracy badly?" "Does it make life better for the poor?" he said belligerently, but I was not in the mood to argue. "Why do you want to know my religion?" I asked in return. "Everybody is fighting about religion. What do you think?" he said. "I think it's stupid to fight," I replied, "I'm sure God doesn't approve of it." He shot me a keen look. "And you're Hindu?" he asked. "Yes. Do you think Almighty God dislikes me for a different way of praying?" I laughed. "Certainly not!" he exclaimed and I rose to leave. "Twenty thousand rupiah only," he grinned (around ?100), handing back The Best of Friends by Joanna Trollope with a flourish. "Suksma," I said, Balinese for "thank you". "Om Swasti Astu," he said, palms together, meaning "May God keep you well", which is actually the Balinese greeting, not goodbye, and we parted cordially in a haze of clove that rang with shared ancestral echoes. I got another jolt of awareness about ambivalence in faith while holidaying in Goa. Strolling around Mapusa, I passed a church dedicated to the Madonna and was told she was a 'miracle lady', as Hindus speak of Kanchi Kamakshi. But in the next breath, my local informant spoke disparagingly of some religious practices as 'superstition'. A memory kicked in of someone else's words, from Shakespeare's 'Henry IV', Part One, Act Three, Scene One: Hotspur: "I cannot choose/sometimes he angers me./With telling me of the mould warp and the ant./Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies./And of a dragon and a finless fish./A clip-wing'd griffin and a moulten raven,/A couching lion and a ramping cat./And such a deal of skumble-skamble stuff/As puts me from my faith." And by and by, the counterargument goes like this: Mortimer: "In faith, he is a worthy gentleman/Exceedingly well read and profited/In strange concealments, valiant as a lion/And as wondrous affable and as bountiful /As the mines of India." Don't these medieval words put it rather well that even if beliefs differ, it's character that counts? Moreover, cultural adherence coded by centuries is hard to eliminate and why should we, when there are many inspiring stories to learn from? Of course, we have to understand them first.

Failed saga of India-Pak talks

It would be wise for Delhi to stay the course rather than try to go down the same rabbit hole all over again

Manish Tewari

ON June 10, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hosted the delegations that had travelled around the world in the wake of the May 7-10 hostilities between India and Pakistan. Their brief was to expose Pakistan's five-and-a-half-decade-old proxy war against India. These multi-party and cross-disciplinary delegations that rose above the partisan political divide underscored a rare politico-strategic national consensus. It was a unique one-off moment in an otherwise bitterly contested political landscape. Their very composition underlined the spirit of the unanimous parliamentary resolutions of February 22, 1994, and March 15, 2013, that described Pakistan as a sponsor of terrorism. These missions had carried a three-point message for their global interlocutors regarding Pakistan — terror and talks cannot go together; blood and water cannot flow together; and India will not make a distinction between terrorists and their state sponsors. This consensus echoed in the parliamentary debate during the Monsoon Session of 2025. Eleven months later, a senior functionary of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the ideological mentor of the BJP, gave a rather perplexing statement in an interview to a wire service. Dattatreya Hosabale said, "If Pakistan is like a pinprick trying to create incidents like Pulwama, we have to answer appropriately according to the situation because the security and self-respect of a country have to be protected, and the government of the day should take note of it and take care of it... But at the same time, we should not close the doors. We should always be ready to engage in dialogue. That is why diplomatic relations are maintained, trade and commerce continue, and visas are being given. So we should not stop these, because there should always be a window for dialogue... This is the one hope I think, because I believe strongly that ultimately the civil society relations [will work]. Because we have a cultural relation and we have been one nation." On the face of it, Hosabale's averment was a reasonable and fair articulation, but why it is unworkable in the case of Pakistan needs to be both understood and explained. It's the military, not any democratic dispensation and least of all civil society, that calls the shots in Pakistan. That nation does not have a military; conversely, it is a military that has a nation. This has been the case from Field Marshal Ayub Khan to Field Marshal Asim Munir over the past seven decades. The Pakistani military has an institutional obsession with retribution against India for having created Bangladesh. In the aftermath of

Pakistan's dismemberment, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto convened a conference in Multan on January 24, 1972. Two seminal decisions were taken. The first was to acquire nuclear weapons to safeguard what remained of the rump of a moth-eaten Pakistan, and the second to bleed India with a thousand cuts.

It was the second conclusion that led to 15 years of terrorism in Punjab from 1980 to 1995. This campaign of terror was upscaled to Jammu & Kashmir and the rest of India from 1989 onwards.

The Mumbai bombings (1993), the Kargil War and IC-



814 hijacking (1999), J&K Assembly attack and an assault on the Indian Parliament (2001), 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks (2008), the strikes on the Uri Army camp and the Pathankot airbase (2016), Pulwama suicide bombing (2019) and the Pahalgam massacre (2025) are just some of the milestones of this bloody journey that commenced five-and-a-half decades ago.

Concurrently, India tried its best to engage with Pakistan over the years. In the phase beginning with the Gujral Doctrine conceptualised in 1996 and underpinned by its five principles to the Composite Dialogue (1997 to 2008), the Resumed Dialogue (2011-14) and the Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue (2015 onwards). However, each effort and every initiative was derailed by a major terror attack perpetrated by Pakistan-based/trained terrorists. Then there were three backchannels established at the level of the Indian Prime Minister and Pakistan's military dictator or Army Chief, who was represented by his civilian proxies for over a decade and a half. It commenced with the RK Mishra-

Niaz Naik conversations in 1998-99 that were interrupted by the Kargil War. The threads were picked up by then NSA Brajesh Mishra and his Pakistani counterpart after the winding down of Operation Parakram between November 2002 and May 2004. This was followed by talks between former Ambassador Satinder Lambah and his Pakistani counterparts Tariq Aziz (2005-08), Riaz Mohammad Khan (2009-12) and Shahryar Khan (2013-14). Subsequently, there have been conversations between the respective NSAs that reportedly led to the ceasefire agreement of February 25, 2021. There is the DGMOs' hotline that is supposed to be activated every Tuesday. Then there was Aman Ki Asha and Track 1.5, 2, 3 and 4 conferences on establishing civil society interfaces, music and culture exchanges, tourism and religious pilgrimage initiatives, parliamentary and media confabulations, to list a few.

Unfortunately, nothing worked. Despite all these efforts, the spectre of Pakistan-sponsored terror continues to haunt the Indo-Pak dynamic. The question that India needs to answer is: what does it want from Pakistan? The answer is nothing except the cessation of state-sponsored terror. An exceptional politico-strategic consensus today exists in India vis-a-vis Pakistan. It would be wise for New Delhi to stay the course rather than try to go down the same rabbit hole all over again, notwithstanding Western prodding and pressure.

These days, Pakistan's duplicity is on full display on its western border. On the one hand, it is playing the role of a broker between the US-Israel and Iran, but on the other, it is relentlessly bombing civilian areas and hospitals in Afghanistan, a fact confirmed by UNAMA (UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan). Paradoxically, the same Taliban who rule Afghanistan today were Pakistan's spearhead as it sought strategic heft on its western front decades after the loss of Bangladesh. In January 2024, Pakistan had carried out retaliatory airstrikes against Iran.

Pakistan has been on a high since May 2025, thanks to its "rediscovery" by the Trump administration. However, the fact remains that Pakistan is structurally a failed state that can implode or go into a meltdown at any time.

The only area where a conversation is perhaps imperative is nuclear security and stability, given the inherently unstable nature of Pakistan's nuclear command-and-control system and hierarchy. This is perhaps the only track worth exploring.

Canal breaches : Faridkot's flooded fields expose deeper flaws

Punjab a long-term strategy that integrates infrastructure modernisation, crop diversification and institutional responsiveness

THE twin canal breaches in Faridkot district, which flooded thousands of acres of farmland at the onset of the paddy transplantation season, are more than an unfortunate accident. They expose the fragility of Punjab's agricultural model and the cost of postponing structural reforms. For affected farmers, the immediate concern is obvious: damaged crops, wasted inputs and fresh financial losses. Seeds, fertilisers, labour and land preparation require significant investment, much of it financed through loans. When fields are inundated overnight, compensation often arrives late and rarely covers the actual losses incurred. The incident also highlights a deeper contradiction in Punjab's water policy. For years, experts have urged farmers to reduce dependence on groundwater by shifting towards canal irrigation. Yet confidence in that transition will erode if the canal network itself proves unreliable. Farmers cannot be expected to alter cultivation practices

without assurance that public infrastructure is dependable. The crisis should also revive the debate on



Punjab's paddy-centric agriculture. Water-intensive rice cultivation, encouraged through assured procurement,

has depleted aquifers and placed enormous pressure on irrigation systems. Diversification into less water-consuming crops has remained confined to policy speeches, with few incentives strong enough to change behaviour on the ground. Another concern is administrative preparedness. Pre-monsoon vulnerability assessments, emergency response protocols and rapid compensation mechanisms should be standard practice in an agrarian state where millions depend on predictable water supply. Preventive governance is invariably cheaper than post-disaster relief. As climate variability increases, isolated failures can quickly become systemic crises. Punjab requires not only repairs to breached canals but also a long-term strategy that integrates infrastructure modernisation, crop diversification and institutional responsiveness. The Faridkot episode is a reminder that agricultural sustainability depends much on sound public policy.

Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' drives Yogi's madrasa overhaul

Yogi Adityanath is making sincere progress across UP. He has dealt with a sensitive challenge with strategic acumen, showcasing his determination to put the nation first and inclusive development.

Shehzad Poonawalla, Vijeta Rattani

As their core political strategy, the Opposition Parties such as the Congress, Samajwadi Party, TMC, etc., have engaged with the Muslim community around emotional identity politics, with no genuine concern for their real progress, reducing them to a mere vote bank. An example in this case is the madrasa education system in Uttar Pradesh. Trapped in rigid myopic theology and producing generations of students ill-equipped for modern society, no serious effort was ever undertaken by past regimes to reform or equip Muslim boys and girls with contemporary education and skills. In contrast, the BJP's development centric vision of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" is committed to uplifting the poor and vulnerable sections, irrespective of religion, caste, or creed. Implementing this vision, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath undertook the sensitive challenge of modernising the madrasa education system through reforms focused on ensuring transparency, quality, and employability, thereby enabling Muslim students to participate meaningfully in the state's progress. From vote-bank to real progress Opposition parties have pursued appeasement and rigid identity politics in their approach towards Muslims, while sidelining substantive concerns like education, healthcare, poverty alleviation, and employment. Instead of addressing these issues, they have turned to invoking emotional identity debates around the topics of Uniform Civil Code, triple talaq, and the Shah Bano case. In fact, opposition parties' rule has always been marked by riots and unrest, claiming Muslim lives, such as in Hashimpura, Meerut, Bhagalpur, etc (under Congress rule), exposing the hollowness of their politics. In Uttar Pradesh too, successive regimes before 2017 employed

this approach of keeping Muslims uneducated, isolated and confined within narrow traditions and rigid mindsets. In contrast, BJP ruled states have shown better outcomes for Muslim upliftment, whether addressing the encephalitis crisis through improved hygiene and living standards in UP, raising economic standards for Gujarati Muslims compared to Bengali Muslims, or providing security to all, which helps explain the difference between identity driven appeasement politics and development centred governance. The madrasa education system became one of the starkest symbols of deliberate neglect of the appeasement ecosystem. Over 13,300 recognised institutions with over 12 lakh students are trapped in rigid theology, inadequate infrastructure, opaque teacher appointments, outdated curricula, often taught with non civic values and separatist tendencies rather than integration with mainstream society. The Supreme Court's rejection of Kamil and Fazil degrees and reports of several madrasas functioning only on paper underscored systemic flaws and irregularities. In the political arena, community reform in education is seldom treated as a pressing priority. However, in line with the Modi government's development agenda, rooted in "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" and the vision of "Quran in one hand and computer in the other", Yogi Adityanath's administration has moved with courage and determination in overhauling the madrasa education system. His government has mandated alignment with NCERT and SCERT and made subjects including Mathematics,

Science, English, and Hindi compulsory under the New Education Policy 2020. The Madrasa Modernisation Scheme, which had been largely dormant until 2017, is now operational, and thousands of teachers have been trained under it. Accountability is enforced through audits, scrutiny of foreign funding, and digitalisation of



records and processes. The launch of the Madrasa Portal in 2017 digitalised exams, certification and records, while proposed amendments to the 2004 Act aim to integrate madrasas with national standards under rigorous oversight.

Through sincere efforts to modernise the Madrasa system, Yogi Adityanath's government also seeks to embed constitutional values, broaden horizons, integrate

with the mainstream, and dismantle the shackles of orthodoxy that have long plagued Muslim society in UP. Crucially, these reforms preserve the Islamic core of the education system, reflecting Yogi Adityanath's honesty and genuine statesmanship.

Data celebrates achievements

Yogi Adityanath's overhaul represents balanced and effective progress, yielding impressive results. More than 18,000 staff within government-aided madrasas now receive salaries under the Seventh Pay Commission, while infrastructure has been upgraded for over 7,000 madrasas. Furthermore, 8,500 unrecognised institutions have been identified through surveys.

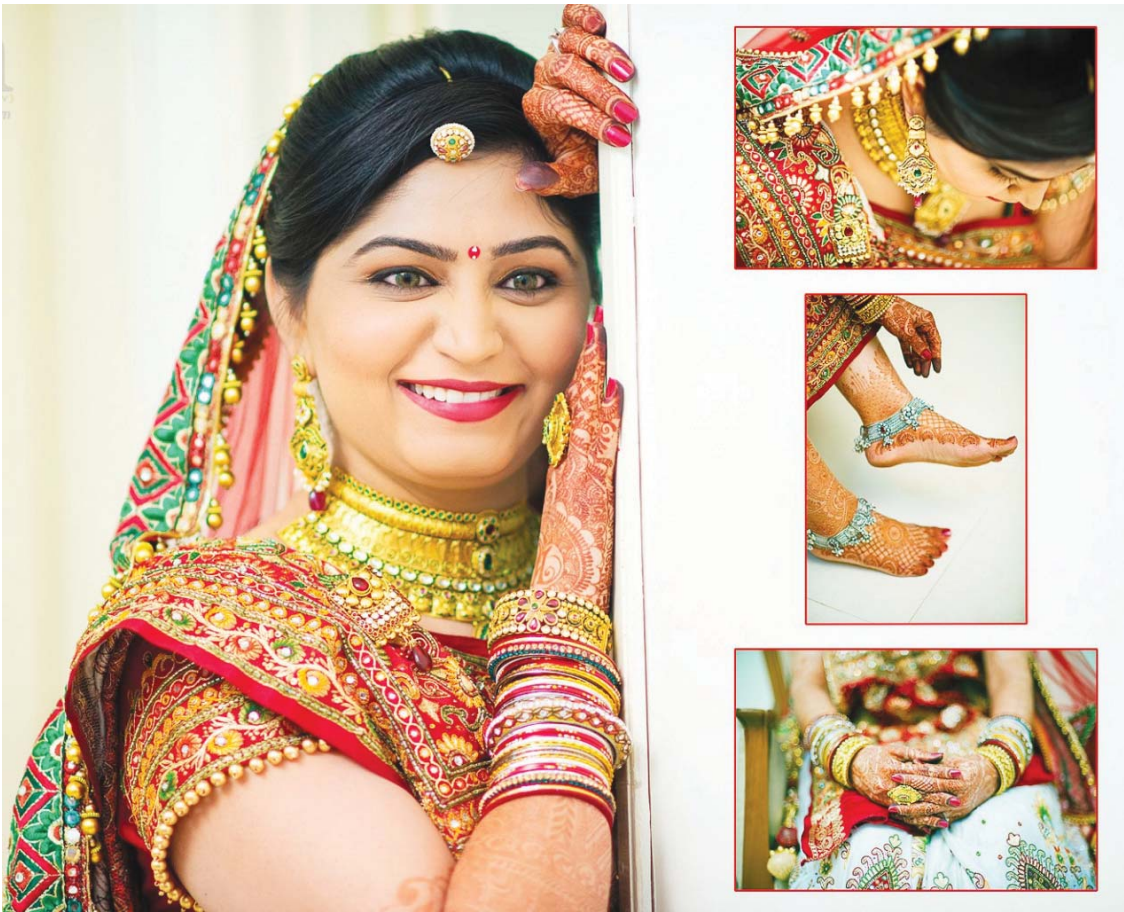
Nearly 12.35 lakh students nw have access to computer labs, modern subjects and future-ready skills. In 2026, more than 80,000 candidates appeared for the munshi/maulvi (secondary) and alim (senior secondary) examinations, an 18% increase from the previous year.

While the overall pass percentage stood at a remarkable 88.26 percent, girls outperformed with a 94.30 percent pass rate, demonstrating how the reforms are especially empowering Muslim girls. CM Yogi has honoured the top

rank holders in 2026 exams, recognising merit and motivating others into excellence too. Political opposition to the reforms aims to maintain the pre-2017 status quo of neglect. On the other hand, Yogi Adityanath is making sincere progress across UP. He has dealt with a sensitive challenge with strategic acumen, showcasing his determination to put the nation first and inclusive development.

Solah Shringar

The science behind it



It's worth a thought that the two eyes are regarded as the sun and the moon capable of seeing the past and the present. The symbolic third eye represents fire with the perceptive powers to see into the future. Women who get their nose pierced for the nose ring are said to experience less pain during childbirth. Some say that it prevents the woman from being hypnotized as it controls brain wavelength. Bangles are said to increase a woman's blood circulation and revert back to her the cosmic energy that is passing through her body due to their circular shape. Toe rings supposedly regularize the woman's menstrual cycle. Apparently nerves in the second toe, where rings are worn, are connected to the uterus and friction with the rings help to revitalize the reproductive organ.

You will notice that people wear finger rings on the fourth finger from the thumb. The belief is the nerve passing through this finger is evenly spread through brain neuron cells. Frequent metallic friction is good for the health of the wearers and helps them to handle life with ease and confidence. Necklaces like the mangalsutra are worn to control blood pressure levels and regularize blood circulation. Waistbands are not regularly used these days, but they prevent saturation of fat in the waist and maintain a woman's figure. Kajal is used purely to enhance the size and shape of the eyes.

After all the eyes are called the windows of the soul and convey the feelings of the heart. Natural kajal or kohl can be easily prepared at home by collecting soot in a silver bowl balanced over a wick burning in mustard oil. Sometimes camphor is added to the oil. This mixture is applied with a silver stick to the outer rims of the eyes. When it mixes with the natural tears, it is said

to protect the eyes from the harsh sunlight and dust. It must be of dark, kohled eyes sparkling with light that the poet has said, 'My eyes are not eyes, Beloved, but arrows of light; My eyebrows are not eyebrows but swords for your destruction.' Despite assertions by traditionalists, medical science does not corroborate claims that ornaments actually keep wearers in better health. Still, cultural rituals have grown around these beliefs. People bless a new-born infant or a new bride by offering them gold jewellery or coins for good fortune. Infants are made to wear



ornaments as protection against illness. Of course, men will argue that women have never needed an excuse to wear jewels or take care of their shringar. Nevertheless, today a lot of men also wear jewellery because it brings them luck. So the next time, Men, you are impatient with your girlfriend, daughter or spouse who is taking a little longer to dress, do remember she will probably emerge with an effusion of auspicious vibes that will radiate to you too.

'I adore wearing gems, but not because they are mine. You can't possess radiance. You can only admire it,' said Elizabeth Taylor, my favourite actor. The radiance of ornaments, jewels, pearls or gems have always been fascinating. But here in India, we don't just admire the radiance. Here it is a belief through the ages that it is wise to embellish ourselves with ornaments. Excavations revealed and cave paintings depict that during the early historical periods both men and women favoured wearing ornaments. Indian literature is replete with descriptions of women arraying themselves with ornaments while shringar rasa is a significant motif in all Indian classical dance forms. In Bhanushinger Padavali beautifying herself for a tryst with Krishna, Tagore's Radha says: Dress me with pearls and jewels Decorate my forehead with mantika My hair is spilling to the ground Bind it with garlands of champak Given that Shringar is interwoven into all Indian arts, shouldn't we pause to ask why wearing ornaments, throughout the vast and diverse India, has become

almost ritualistic? Ancient Vedic texts mention Solah Shringar with which they proclaim a woman must adorn herself. Solah Shringar or sixteen embellishments comprise the bindi, necklaces, earrings, flowers in the hair, finger rings, bangles, armlets, waistbands, ankle-bells, kajal, toe-rings, henna, perfume, sandal wood paste, the upper garment and lower garment. Though some of these have been discarded by the modern Indian woman for practical reasons, much of this list is still in vogue. The texts also claim a scientific basis to the use of Solah Shringar. Though garments are for modesty and some adornments like perfumes are to allure, the belief is many of the sixteen embellishments aid in good health and well being of the wearer. To Hindus, women are embodiments of Shakti. So traditionally, ornaments are worn to protect orifices and extremities and thus control the power that can emanate from these parts of the body. Let's trawl through some interesting hypotheses. The bindi, an ornamental dot placed on the forehead between the eyebrows signifies the mystical third eye, the invisible organ of spiritual perception and second sight.

Ever fancied crystal lips?

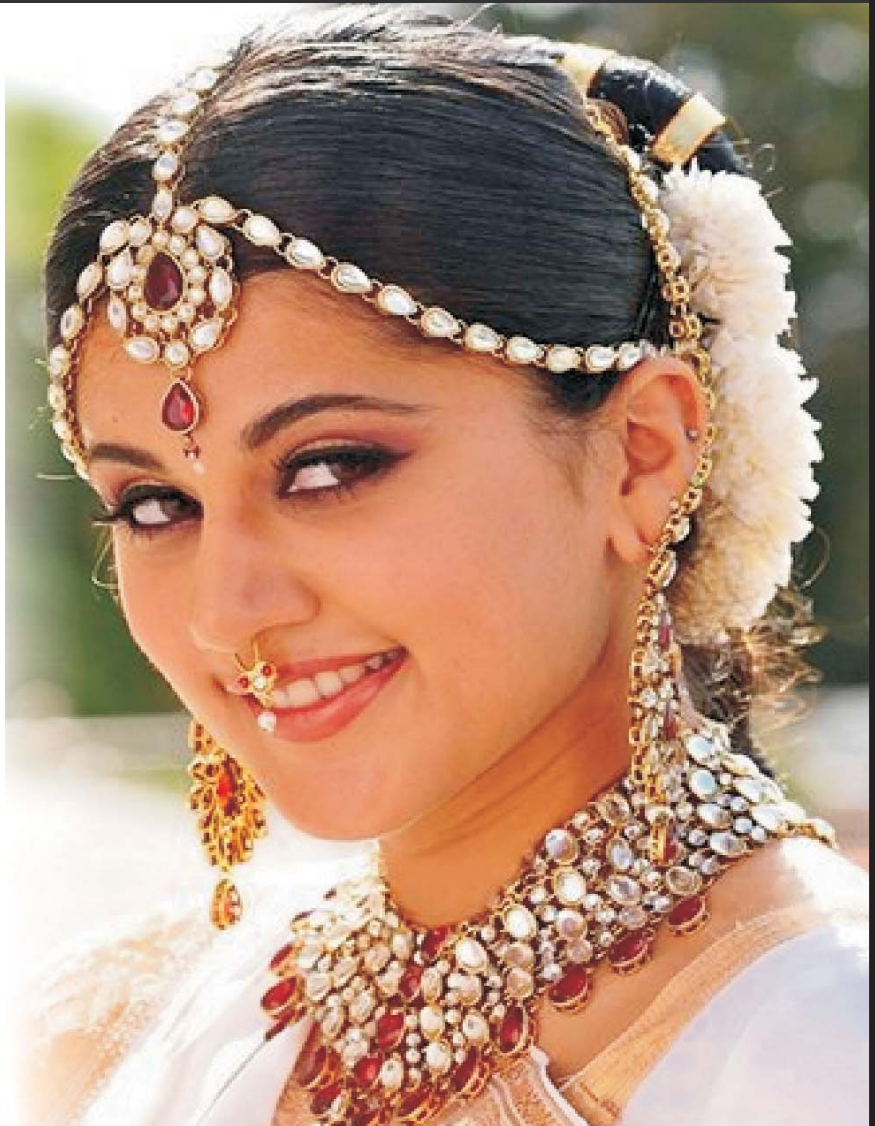


Ever fancied crystals on your lips? Crystal lips is the new trend on the block — perfect, if you are looking to make a statement with bizarre makeup trends. However, unlike other trends, this is not easy to master. You need a lot of patience for this one. Here's how you go about it... All you need is a lip liner (a colour of your choice), white liner, loose silver/gold eye shadow, eyelash glue (you can get it online or at beauty stores) and crystals (colours of your choice). Begin the process by applying the coloured lip liner. Don't make it too dark nor, too light. Then, fill in with the white liner. Dip a brush into the loose eye shadow and apply it on your lips. Allow it to set for two or three minutes. Then apply eyelash glue all over your lips. Now, take the crystals and place it on your lips. This might take some time as you need to neatly place it. You can either place them all over, or on specific areas. You could create a different pattern, too.

Decoded: Latest bridal hair and make-up trends in India

Every bride-to-be has felt like a bridezilla at some point or another. With myriad wedding concepts and themes available, zeroing in on one is difficult. And deciding on "the look" is even more stressful. Hence, prospective brides obsessively planning every single detail and expecting professional standards in all spheres is a sight not too uncommon these days. Every bride expects to look nothing less than stunning on her big day. After all, one does want to look good in those professional photo shoots which make their way to numerous social media sites. Making oneself up or visiting the local beauty parlour or salon is passe. An increasing number of brides are now hiring professional hair and makeup artists to use their magic wands - brushes or curling irons, in this case to make the magic happen. Going one step further, international hair designers and makeup artists can now be seen at high profile weddings, bringing the best in the business to Indian shores. Lisa Allen, a British make-up and hair artist based in Thailand, is one such name. Her reputation precedes her and she has been responsible for making many ecstatic brides stand out on their big days. We got in touch with Lisa to know about the latest trends in bridal hair and makeup world.

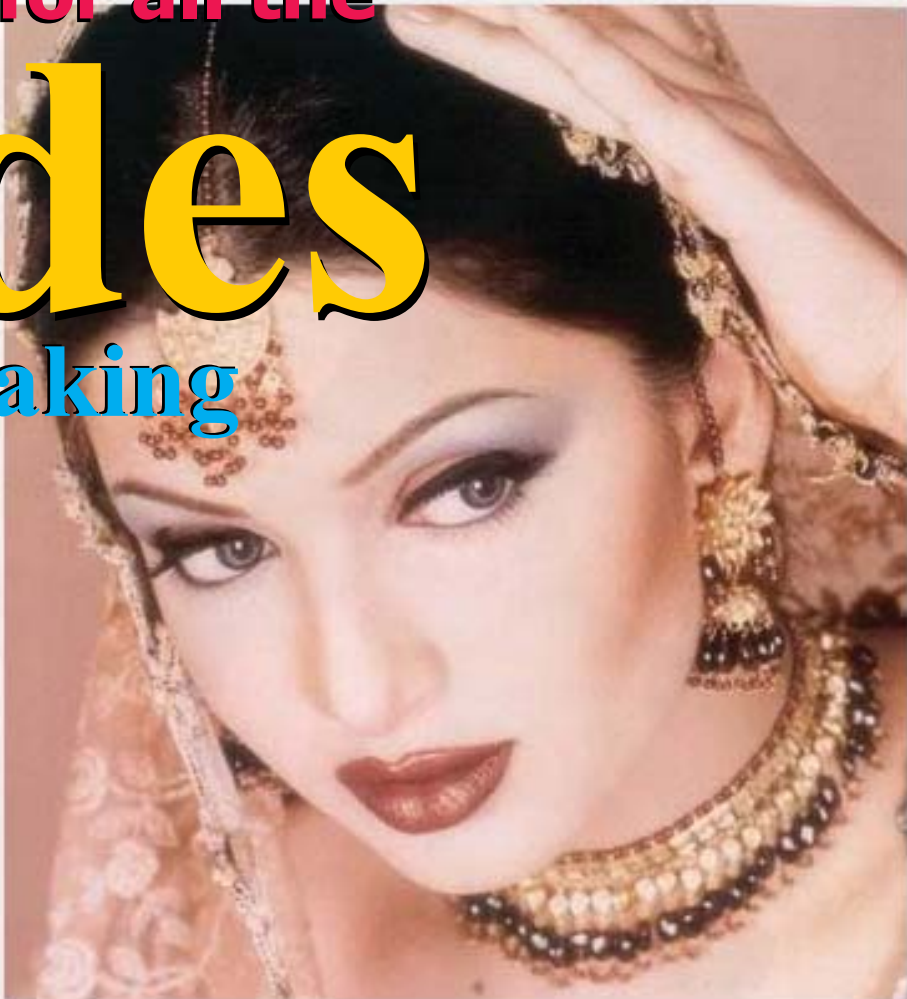
Here's what she had to share: Cutting edge tools Tools like Cloud Nine and other award winning hair straighteners produce exceptional results due to their temperature controlled, mineral coated plates. The waving/micro wand is ideal for controlling unruly hair and styling fringes, short hair or tight curls. Also, The Ultimate O Pod is a must-try to create gorgeous volumes in a matter of minutes. **Innovative accessories** Accessories like hair donuts, sausages and padding are used to create the fancy intricate up-dos, Bohemian down-dos, romantic or edgy hair in a short span of time. The hair stays secured for a longer duration and with a better grip. **Bold and bright is still right** The Indian bride can heave a sigh of relief. Bold red lipstick, dramatic eyes and glitter are still in vogue in these times of the "no make-up make-up" look! This look will always be in keeping with her traditional red or fuchsia lehenga, ghaghra or sari. **Airbrushing and contouring** Bridal make-up techniques must include skin preparation before beginning the makeup, foundation techniques for a long lasting look, contouring, long-wearing lipstick application and use of airbrush make-up, eyelash extension and its importance in enhancing the look. **Braids all the way** Braids have been the biggest hair trend of 2016. Whether it's the classic halo braid or side swept fish tail braid, they have been seen everywhere from the red carpet to chic parties.



Beauty tips for all the Brides in the making

If you have always dreamt about getting married to your knight in shining armour, then we are pretty certain you did give some thought to how you would look on your most special day. Slipping into your most extravagant outfit ever and putting on some classy make-up for the man of your life is one of best feelings ever and the happiness of a bride goes way beyond having the perfect makeup or immaculate hairstyle. There's no doubt about the fact that you want to look best on your D-day and to help you look the most gorgeous bride ever, we got in touch with Meha Bhargava, a wedding stylist and founder/CEO, Styl.Inc Image consultancy. Here's a look at some tips shared by Meha. How to get a bridal glow on your wedding day? Here are some tips to bring the perfect glow on your face, on your big day.

1. Try opting for natural ingredients like honey and tea leaves and use the same on your face to clear and prevent any possible blemishes.



2. Taking good care of your hair is also very important. Hence, make sure you apply hair masks of various sorts and oil your hair extensively.

3. Spend some time in studying your face. Doing so will help you to understand your facial features and will help you highlight the best feature of your face.

4. Eat healthy. Drink a lot of water. Sleep well and indulge in an activity of some kind. If gymming is not your thing, practice yoga.

5. Visit a spa and salon to prepare your skin for the big day and start working on the issues that have been bothering you since before.

How to get that perfect skin?

Having a perfect skin not only makes you look refreshing, it also plays a key role in making you look flawless on your wedding day. To get that enviable skin, make sure you consume healthy food, and ban caffeine and alcohol from your system. Instead, replace these with vegetables, fruits and juices which are full of antioxidants. In case your skin is relatively healthy, make sure you deep cleanse your face once in a week or use any homemade facial mask. Don't buy cosmetics that you haven't tried before.

Getting those pearly whites

A beautiful smile is the best accessory a bride can wear on her D-day. You can opt for oil pulling to whiten your teeth and improve the gum health by removing toxins and dental plaque. Apart from that, you can use hydrogen peroxide and baking soda to tackle teeth stains. Banana and orange peels are also very effective in removing teeth stains.

7 deadly Skin sins



How you age is not just a matter of your genes. Your skin is pretty much a reflection of your lifestyle, which, in turn, is all about how you eat, drink and live. If you are moaning and groaning over why your skin is suddenly looking dull, lifeless, tired or just old, check if you haven't committed one or more of the seven deadly skin sins.

1. Dehydration

Are you getting enough water? Dehydration could be the reason why you look older than you are, and wrinkled. Lack of this wonderfully-replenishing lifesaver dries out your skin — your body's largest organ — and dry skin is more susceptible to wrinkling than hydrated skin. You need about 8-12 glasses or about 2-3 litres of water a day. It will help

you slow down, or even reverse, the aging process.

2. Foods high in sugar and fat

You see the effects of oxidation all around you - the rotting of fruit is the best example. When oxygen in the air comes in contact with the fruit, it slowly turns brown and eventually rots. Oxidation, while occurring naturally outside the body, is harmful if it occurs inside your body. Inside, the process

s of oxidation releases 'free radicals' that slowly damage organs, including the skin, aging it. Certain things we eat and drink, like fried or sugary foods, are oxidants. Antioxidant foods (green teas, fresh fruits and vegetables) reverse the oxidation process.

3. Caffeine

Caffeine, found in teas, coffees, cola drinks etc., cause oxidative stress and are also dehydrating. They leave you more thirsty than when you started.

4. Alcohol

Like caffeine, alcohol is the ultimate aging double whammy - it is high in sugar, which causes oxidative stress, and dehydration. Alcohol strips your skin of nourishment.

5. Smoking

Vitamin C is an excellent antioxidant, and is also known as a free radical scavenger. Smoking depletes your body's quota of Vitamin C, not a juicer, blend the juice of three raw vegetables. Add about half the pulp back to the glass, some water and season to taste. Drink up daily to look younger.

6. No vegetable juice

Vegetable juices are fantastic antioxidants that brim with nourishing and healing properties. In a mixie, not a juicer, blend the juice of three raw vegetables. Add about half the pulp back to the glass, some water and season to taste. Drink up daily to look younger.

7. Sleep deprivation

Sleep is when your skin repairs itself. If you are not clocking enough sleep hours, you may be aging ahead of your time. There's a reason it's called 'beauty sleep'. Now, the good news. All of the above are self-induced, lifestyle choices, old habits that can be broken. It doesn't matter how old you are, the power to look young, fresh and healthy is more in your hands than you think.

Bronzing hacks you should know

It is important to remember to use a bronzer very carefully or you'll end up looking like a caricature. The idea is to have a subtle look, so you have to choose one that depending on your skin tone. Here are some things to keep in mind...

If you notice that your powder has cracked up slightly, fret not. Simply add a few drops of facial oil to the pieces and use it as a liquid bronzer.

You can also play around with your brushes to get different bronzing effects. Use a big brush to give you a softer look and a smaller one to give you a more contoured look. If you prefer using a powder bronzer, make sure that you use a small eyeshadow brush while you're blending the bronzer. Always remember to shake your brush after each application. Most of us make the mistake of applying too much powder bronzer thanks to extra powder getting accumulated on the brush. Make it a habit to clean your make-up brushes every few days.



Tips to deal with sweaty hair after working out

Exercising every day leads to sweaty and sticky hair. When your head gets itchy, you have no choice but to wash your hair every day after working out. But that is not always a practical option. What if you are running late to work, or have a meeting to attend? Here are a few options to keep in mind, so that dealing with dirty hair becomes easy...

After working out, remove your hair from the ponytail. Brush your hair and get rid of the tangles. The next thing to do is to use a hair dryer and dry up the sweaty portions in your head. This absorbs the unwanted



Go for a shower. Tie up your hair so it doesn't get wet. dry shampoo is a great solution for sweaty hair. Use your fingers and apply the dry shampoo evenly to your head. This absorbs the unwanted

sweat from your head. Blow dry your hair once again so that it looks shiny. Applying shampoo to your hair every day after working out is a bad idea, as it makes the hair dry. Instead, you could try a cleansing conditioner which could clean the sweat. Another option, though it might sound silly, is to use a dry shampoo on your roots before heading out to get sweaty. It will avoid your head from getting sweaty. As for hairstyle, don't tie up your hair immediately. Make a loose ponytail or clip just part of your hair. The best thing to do is to leave it open.

Parliamentary panel flags continuing irregularities in NTA exams despite reforms

A parliamentary panel has flagged continuing irregularities in examinations conducted by the NTA. It has asked for a time-bound reform plan as repeated disruptions deepen student anxiety and erode trust.

New Delhi.(Agency)

A Parliamentary Standing Committee headed by Congress leader Digvijaya Singh has expressed concern over continuing irregularities in examinations conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA), despite a series of reforms introduced following the

2024 examination controversy.

In its latest report, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports noted that disruptions, cancellations and allegations of irregularities in national-level competitive examinations continue to surface, causing anxiety and uncertainty among lakhs of students and their families. The committee said that while the government had initiated corrective measures and accepted several recommendations of the high-level committee chaired by former ISRO chief K. Radhakrishnan, the pace of implementation remained a matter of concern.

CALLS FOR TIME-BOUND REFORM ROADMAP

The panel urged the Ministry of Education



to publicly release a clear and time-bound implementation plan for the recommendations made by the Radhakrishnan Committee. It said

transparent timelines and periodic public disclosures would help build confidence among students and stakeholders regarding the reform process. The committee stressed that the NTA overhaul should be expedited and accompanied by measurable milestones to ensure accountability and effective monitoring.

STUDENT ANXIETY OVER EXAM CANCELLATIONS

The report highlighted that repeated exam disruptions and cancellations have had a significant psychological impact on students preparing for highly competitive entrance tests.

According to the panel, uncertainties surrounding examination schedules and allegations of malpractice have increased stress levels among candidates, making it imperative for authorities to

establish robust and foolproof systems for conducting nationwide examinations.

SEEKS GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY

The committee reiterated the need for stronger safeguards, improved oversight mechanisms and wider stakeholder consultations while implementing examination reforms.

Echoing Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's earlier observation that the NTA still requires significant improvement, the panel said examination integrity must remain the top priority and called for urgent action to strengthen the agency's functioning. The committee concluded that national competitive examinations require reliable, transparent and foolproof protocols to restore public trust and ensure that students are not adversely affected by administrative lapses or irregularities.

Red Fort blast accused planned network bigger than Indian Mujahideen: Intel

New Delhi.(Agency)

Intelligence agencies unravelling the Red Fort blast on November 10, 2025, have uncovered the accused's plan to establish a nationwide terror outfit aimed to surpass the operational capabilities of the banned Indian Mujahideen, sources said on Tuesday.

Umar Un Nabi, the prime accused in the Delhi blast, was killed in the explosion. These findings have emerged after six months of interrogation, technical analysis and extensive investigations.

In its probe, the NIA has linked the accused in the chargesheet filed before the court with the offshoot of global terrorist outfit al-Qaida. The federal probing agency found that the accused had also made rocket-improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and tested them in the Qazigund forest in J&K's Anantnag district.

These findings are part of a 7,500-page chargesheet filed by the NIA on May 14 in connection with the high-intensity vehicle-borne IED blast that rocked the national capital on November 10 last year. During follow-up investigations, the intelligence agencies have found that the "highly educated accused" were in the process of making armed drones and had planned attacks across the country. "The probe has unravelled a complex structure involving individuals from diverse educational and professional backgrounds, including doctors and engineers," said intelligence sleuths, adding, "The focus appeared to be on sustainability. There were references to recruitment pipelines, ideological indoctrination, fundraising mechanisms and technological capabilities."

The agency said that IM emerged in the early 2000s as one of the country's homegrown terror outfits. It evolved from radical elements associated with the banned SIMI.

Bhatkal module

The Indian Mujahideen came into prominence after a series of bomb blasts across cities between 2005 and 2013. A large number of IM's founding members hailed from the coastal Karnataka town of Bhatkal, which gave rise to the widely used term "Bhatkal module".

Delhi to restore eight Grade I heritage structures following Supreme Court

New Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi agencies will begin a phased restoration and preservation exercise for eight Grade I heritage structures, with conservation work expected to start next month. The Grade I category denotes monuments classified as being of the highest historical importance.

The first phase will cover eight heritage structures, including four tombs in Zamrudpur village in south Delhi, the Mahavir Library in Greater Kailash I, a gumti (small tomb) in Humayunpur village, a tomb in the LSR village area and Maharaja Agrasen Park on Boulevard Road.

The other identified sites included the historic Town Hall building in Chandni Chowk and Company Bagh. These two properties are presently being looked after by the Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation (DTDC).

Sources said that a meeting was held on Monday between agencies concerned, including MCD and experts from the School of Planning and Architecture, Jamia Millia Islamia, Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women and the Aga Khan Foundation to discuss the restoration roadmap. The initiative comes after directions from the Supreme Court to restore heritage monuments under the civic body's ownership, they said.

"The MCD does not have an in-house conservation team. Since Grade-I monuments require specialised treatment and cannot be altered, we are taking support from institutions and conservation experts to ensure the structures are restored to their original shape," sources said, adding that the Aga Khan Foundation has already submitted a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the project.

"Tenders inviting agencies and organisations to participate in the project were issued last week. Agencies with prior experience working on Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) projects will be eligible to undertake the restoration work, sources further said. The challenge in the restoration project is the crowded surroundings and encroachments around these monuments, sources added.

India's defence production hits all-time high of Rs 1.78 lakh crore in 2025-26

New Delhi.(Agency)

India's annual defence production hit an all-time high of Rs 1.78 lakh crore in the 2025-2026 financial year, the defence ministry said on Wednesday. This represents a 15.6 per cent growth over the previous fiscal's output of Rs 1.54 lakh crore and a massive 110 per cent increase since 2020-2021 when the figure was Rs 84,643 crore. The indigenous defence production has grown nearly four times from Rs 43,746 crore in financial year 2013-2014. Undertakings and other PSUs accounted for approximately 76 per



cent of total production, while the private sector contributed 24 per cent, which is a rise from 22 per cent in fiscal 2024 to 25.

Taking to X, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh credited the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the "collective efforts" of the Department

of Defence Production and all other stakeholders for the staggering growth in defence production. "This upward trajectory is a clear indicator of the country's expanding defence industrial base. With sustained policy support, several new initiatives, increased private sector participation, and growing export capabilities, the defence production sector is poised for continued acceleration in the years ahead," Rajnath Singh tweeted.

From mine blasts to wins: Behind wheelchair premier league

New Delhi.(Agency)

The journey to the Indian Wheelchair Premier League (IWPL) begins long before the players enter the cricket field. For many of the athletes participating in the tournament, it starts with years of personal challenges, life-changing setbacks and a constant struggle to prove that disability does not define ability. Players competing in the ongoing IWPL in New Delhi, being held from June 14 to 21, come from different parts of the country. Some players were born with disabilities, while others acquired them through illness or accidents. Yet despite their different journeys, many found a common identity through wheelchair cricket.

For 28-year-old Romaisar Wani, captain of the J&K Jaguars, that journey took an unexpected turn after a mine blast near the Line of Control resulted in the amputation of one of his

legs. While the incident changed the course of his life, it did not end his association with sport.

Wheelchair cricket eventually provided him with a platform to



continue competing, helping him rebuild confidence and go on to represent India at the international level. Wani is entering his third IWPL season this year, and is regarded as one of the leading names in Indian wheelchair cricket. Stories such as Wani's highlight how wheelchair

cricket has evolved into more than just a sport. For many athletes, it has become a space where they are recognised for their performance rather than their disability.

A very different journey brought 34-year-old Dharamveer Pal. Affected by polio, the captain of the MP Mavericks grew up facing barriers that often restricted access to mainstream sporting opportunities. Through wheelchair cricket, he found a platform and established himself as one of the recognised players. Having represented MP and India at various levels, Pal has become an inspiration for aspiring para-athletes. This year marks his first appearance in the IWPL. Similar determination can be seen in 32-year-old Nareesh Ariya, captain of the Rajasthan Rajwade. Affected by polio at a young age, Ariya turned to sport as a way of challenging expectations often associated with disability.

ED raids 11 locations in Rs 155 crore scam linked to AAP Goa leader, others

The agency searched 11 locations linked to Mahesh Timber case, alleging forged trade documents and fraudulent transactions involving bank losses of over 155 crore.

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday carried out raids at 11 premises in Karnal, Delhi and Goa linked to Ashok Mittal, Sourabh Dhirga, Bharat Bhushan Mittal, Raman Singhal and others in connection with a Rs 155 crore money laundering probe, the agency said.

The case under PMLA has been registered against Mahesh Timber Pvt Ltd in which Deepak Singla, the Aam Aadmi Party's Goa in-charge, was named as accused. The case is based on an FIR registered by the CBI under the Prevention of



Corruption Act and involves an alleged fraud causing a loss of approximately `155.21 crore to Oriental Bank of Commerce and its consortium banks.

According to the ED, Singla, his brother Raman Singhal and their maternal uncle Ashok Kumar Mittal ran a network of interconnected firms in India and Singapore to execute fraudulent transactions. The total value of Foreign Letters of Credit originally sanctioned for Mahesh Timber was `21.48 crore; investigators allege the amount was fraudulently enhanced to `173.04 crore through forged Bills of Lading, Bills of Entry, contracts and other trade documents submitted to banks.

The federal agency has alleged that no actual import of timber ever took place. The ED told a Panchkula court during Singla's remand proceedings that investigations by the CBI and the Directorate General of Systems and Data Management of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs had established that a majority of the import documents were fake, forged and fabricated.

The agency has further alleged that a senior OBC branch manager, Suresh Kumar Ranga, who has since been terminated, allegedly verbally agreed to enhance the Letters of Credit to an unlimited amount after Mittal allegedly promised to settle him in Singapore.

Pre-wedding party, stolen keys, Rs 3 crore theft: Inside Tanishq showroom heist

New Delhi.(Agency)

On the night of June 11, Tanishq showroom employee Nitin Verma threw a party for his colleagues to celebrate his 'upcoming marriage'. The 24-year-old plied the guests with alcohol, especially cashier Gautam Raj, the employee responsible for the showroom keys. Playing the good host, he dropped Gautam off at home and allegedly stole the keys from his bag.

At 7 am the next day, Nitin and an associate used the keys to enter the showroom in Ghaziabad's Kavi Nagar and allegedly made off with jewellery and cash worth more than Rs 3 crore.

This, police said, is how Nitin and his associates pulled off the high-profile theft. Police claimed to have cracked the case within days, arresting Nitin; a woman accomplice, Kajal; who police

said was his girlfriend, and his father, Sanjay Verma (52).

The complaint

According to police officers, the theft came to light after a Tanishq showroom representative named Rohit Arora filed a complaint on June 12 alleging that Nitin, Kajal and an unidentified associate had stolen jewellery after gaining access to the premises.

A special investigation involving five police teams was launched. Using CCTV footage, local intelligence, and information from informants, the City Zone SWAT Team and Kavi Nagar Police traced and arrested the trio from the Sai Gate area of Chiranjeev Vihar on June 16.

During questioning, police said Nitin allegedly admitted to masterminding the theft after being tempted by the large



quantity of gold jewellery stored at the showroom. Police said he conspired with his father, Kajal, and two other associates to execute the plan.

"Investigations revealed that on June 11, Nitin hosted a party for showroom staff under the pretext of celebrating his upcoming marriage. During the gathering, he allegedly ensured that cashier Gautam Raj, who was responsible for the showroom keys, consumed excessive alcohol. Later, while escorting him home, Nitin is accused of stealing the keys from Gautam's bag," DCP Dhawal Jaiswal said.

The theft

The following morning, Nitin and an accomplice identified as Chintu alias Chitrnanjan used the stolen keys to enter the showroom.

While Chintu kept watch outside, Nitin entered the premises and stole a large quantity of jewellery before they fled, Jaiswal said.

Short news

4 Gujarat artists chosen for Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar: Sangeet Natak Akademi

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

FOUR ARTISTS from Gujarat have been selected for the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar for 2024 and 2025. The awardees are Haveli Sangeet practitioner Goswami Shri Ranchhodlalji, Garba artist Tvisha Vyas, Rudra Veena maker Kishorbhai Somabhai Mistry and Surat-based theatre director Kapildev Shukla, a statement issued by the Sangeet Natak Akademi on



Tuesday said.

The award, instituted by the Sangeet Natak Akademi in 2006, is conferred annually on outstanding young performers under 40 years of age across the country's performing arts disciplines. For the two years 106 artists have been selected nationally. Goswami is the first haveli sangeet practitioner in India and the first Gujarat artist associated with this tradition to receive the honour. At 31, he has composed over 20,000 original works spanning Kirtan, Dhrupad, Khayal, Thumri and Vishnupad, written across seven languages including Braj Bhasha, Sanskrit and Charani, the statement said.

Wadhwan city to get bird atlas, first in Saurashtra region & second in Gujarat

Solan.(Agency)

After Ahmedabad, Wadhwan in Surendranagar district is all set to get its bird atlas. A group of birders from Gujarat and other parts of the country, last week, completed the summer phase of The Wadhwan City Bird Atlas (WCBA) project to study the diversity, distribution, abundance and mobility pattern of birds in the 44 square kilometre area of the city which is known for its rich avian diversity.

The first-of-its-kind project for the Saurashtra region is a joint long-term, not-for-profit, volunteer-driven initiative to study the birds of Wadhwan. The project is being initiated and executed by the Collective Systems Lab for Animal Behaviour (ColLAB) and Ecology, Evolution, and Climate Change Research Cluster at Ahmedabad University, in collaboration with the Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat (BCSG), Gujarat Forest Department, Bird Count India, eBird India and Surendranagar Municipal Corporation.

One of the lead organisers of the initiative and an ornithologist at Ahmedabad University Devvratsinh Mori said that once completed, this will be the first bird atlas of Saurashtra region and second for Gujarat. Mori is also a member of the Gujarat State Board for Wildlife (GSBW) headed by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel. Speaking about the project, Mori, who belongs to Wadhwan city, said, "I already have good data of avian diversity of Wadhwan and the surrounding periphery. The presence of 259 bird species is recorded in Wadhwan which is around 42% of the total 621 bird species found in Gujarat.

FIR fears, academic disruption: Unaided schools challenge BLO duty orders for SIR exercise in Bombay HC

Mumbai.(Agency)

Private unaided schools and their teachers have approached the Bombay High Court challenging show-cause notices issued by the Election Commission for not reporting for duty as Booth Level Officers (BLOs) as part of the third phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise of the voter list, with the publication of the final electoral roll scheduled for October 7.

The petitioners claimed that BLO duties are primarily restricted to government and semi-government employees. They further contended that such duties "adversely affect the functioning of the schools, education of the students, and teachers' obligations towards the school."

They also apprehended "serious coercive steps" through FIRs, as lodged in other cases in the city. The election authorities orally assured the court that nothing would be done at their instance until the matter is heard next. Earlier this month, at least three FIRs were registered by Mumbai Police against several teachers belonging to aided schools under Section 32 (breach of official duty related to preparation of electoral rolls) of the Representation of the People Act (RPA) and Section 223 (disobedience to order by a public servant) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for failing to report for BLO duties.

'Respond to calls on official numbers, keep phones active all the time': DGP to on-field officials

"If a call cannot be attended, public representatives, mediapersons, and members of the public should be given a callback at the earliest so that public relations and communication remain effective," he said.

Lucknow.(Agency)

Amid regular complaints that police officers do not respond to calls on their official numbers, Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police (DGP) Rajeev Krishna directed that all on-field officials should keep such phones active all the time and ensure calls made on these numbers are attended.

The DGP said this while chairing a crime review meeting at the police headquarters in Lucknow. The meeting was attended by additional directors general (ADGs) of zones, inspector general (Igs), DIGs of ranges, commissioners, senior superintendents of police (SSPs), SPs, ASPs and DSPs through video conferencing.

"If a call cannot be attended, public representatives, mediapersons, and members of the public should be given a callback at the earliest so that public relations and communication remain effective," he said. A detailed review was conducted on the effective use of E-Sakshya (evidence), increase

in the number of e-summons, disposal of IGRS cases, campaign for quality and speedy disposal of pending investigations, action taken under the Yaksh App, interaction with public



representatives and media, the Zero Fatality District (ZFD) campaign and other law-and-order-related subjects.

The DGP said full implementation of the new criminal laws has to be ensured from January 2028, after which E-Sakshya (electronic

evidence) will become completely mandatory along with conventional evidence. "Therefore, it is necessary to motivate and train all police officers and investigating officers to collect adequate and quality electronic evidence," he added.

The DGP directed the circle officers to thoroughly understand the functioning and technical aspects of the monitoring dashboard and ensure its effective implementation in police stations under their jurisdiction so that continuous improvement in the quality of E-Sakshya collection can be made. It was claimed that the overall percentage of e-summons in the state has increased to 28%. If a criminal commits an offence outside his native area, the monitoring and verification carried out by his native district should also be reviewed through the Yaksh App, and accountability should be fixed wherever necessary, he said.

Vande Bharat, public buses and car pooling: Gujarat takes austerity steps for annual school enrolment drive

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

The Gujarat government has issued a directive asking officials to use public transport including Vande Bharat train service, state transport buses and car pooling for travelling as part of its annual school enrolment drive – Shala Praveshotsav and Kanya Kelavani – to be organised between June 23 and 25.

The 24th edition of Shala Praveshotsav and Kanya Kelavani, to be organised simultaneously in rural and urban areas across Balvatikas, government and grant-in aid primary, secondary and higher secondary schools, Gyan Shakti residential schools and Raksha Shakti residential schools, is focussed on tracking and enrolling 6.41 lakh drop-out students from Class 1 to X in the state in the 2025-26 academic year.

As a part of the enrolment drive, Cabinet Ministers, IAS, IPS and IFS officers, local administrators, elected members and nearly 2

lakh government teachers fan out across the state ensuring children are enrolled to government schools.

"In view of the current global circumstances, it



is requested to use Vande Bharat trains in the districts where the services are available and public transport system in other districts as far as possible," the circular issued by the education department to all the additional chief

secretaries, principal secretaries and secretaries across departments stated.

"The officials going to the same district will be able to use car pooling. The arrangements for car pooling will have to be made by the respective departments. When the officials reach the allotted district, the District Collector, District Development Officer or the Commissioner will make arrangements for transportation and other ancillary matters as per the allotted route," the directive read.

Kanya Kelavani Mahotsav and Shala Praveshotsav was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2003-04 when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat. In addition to ensuring the dropouts are brought back to the mainstream of education, it will ensure that 29 lakh students studying in Class V, VIII and X till 2025-16 are admitted to the subsequent classes, an official said.

Maharashtra bureaucratic shake-up: Vijay Singhal appointed OSD for Dharavi redevelopment project

The government simultaneously announced a series of key transfers and postings across departments and agencies, signaling a major administrative realignment.

Mumbai.(Agency)

In a significant bureaucratic reshuffle, the Maharashtra government on Tuesday appointed senior IAS officer Vijay Singhal, currently vice-chairman and managing director of CIDCO, as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) for the Dharavi Redevelopment Project, one of the country's largest urban renewal initiatives. The government simultaneously announced a series of key transfers and postings across departments and agencies, signaling a major administrative realignment.

Among the prominent appointments, Prajakta Verma (IAS: 2001) has been named Additional Municipal Commissioner of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). P Velrasu (IAS: 2002), who was serving

as Chief Executive Officer of the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC), has been



transferred as secretary, forest department, revenue and forest department. Dr Ashwini Joshi (IAS: 2006) has been appointed additional metropolitan commissioner of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region

Development Authority (MMRDA), while Deependra Singh Kushwah (IAS: 2006) will take over as CEO of MIDC.

In another important move, Ashwin Mudgal (IAS: 2007) has been posted as vice-chairman and managing director of CIDCO, succeeding Singhal. Dr Kadambari Balkawade (IAS: 2010) has been appointed development commissioner (Industries), while Sanjay Katkar (IAS:SCS:2014) will serve as commissioner, family welfare, and director of the National Health Mission. The reshuffle comes at a time when the state government is pushing ahead with major infrastructure, industrial and urban redevelopment projects, including the high-profile Dharavi redevelopment initiative.

Abandoned vehicles in front of Chennai school turn tipplers' den

CHENNAI.(Agency)

For students at the government aided school on 86th street at the backside of Mathias church in Ashok Nagar, the day begins with an unpleasant ritual: covering their nose to escape the overpowering stench of alcohol and urine outside the campus.

The school authorities say a stretch of parked and abandoned vehicles outside the campus has become a haven for drunkards, creating hygiene and safety concerns for nearly 2,500 students, and the staff across four educational institutions and a convent inside the school compound.

According to the school administration, men consume liquor outside the campus, using the parked vehicles as cover, and urinate and defecate in the area. Speaking to , headmistress Sister Shanthi Amalore P of the school said every morning scores of empty liquor bottles will be strewn both inside and outside the campus. Last year, the school had to keep classroom windows of its primary school shut to prevent foul smell from entering, forcing students to sit in poorly ventilated rooms.

"As the sisters stay in the convent on the campus, they also have to endure sleepless nights due to late-night drinking sessions, birthday celebrations and the use of foul language," she said, adding though repeated complaints have been raised, the authorities are yet to take a permanent solution. The headmistress further said the line up of parked vehicles is often secluded and that some of the covered vehicles have remained parked there for more than a decade.

Bhubaneswar electric car crash: Death toll rises to 3, driver arrested

A 65-year-old man died during treatment after the accident near Press Square, where an electric car hit pedestrians and vehicles before crashing into a tree.

BENGALURU.(Agency)

BHUBANESWAR: The shocking car crash claimed its third victim after a 65-year-old injured man succumbed during treatment at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar even as police arrested the EV driver on Tuesday.

The deceased was identified as Laxmidhar Toppo, Jeyrom Ekka (55), husband of an IAS officer, and Santosh Behera (55) of New Government Colony had died on the spot in the accident that occurred at 8 pm on Monday.

The other injured, Sankarlal Sharma (50) from Unit-III and Sulagna Dey (26) from Acharya Vihar, are undergoing treatment, while Subrat Mishra (35) from Shri Vihar in Patia was discharged after necessary medical care. Sharma's condition, however, is stated to be critical. Meanwhile, police arrested driver of the car Anil Kumar Gouda and produced him before a court. Police said Gouda worked as a driver for a coal transport businessman. As per initial investigation, he was found driving recklessly near

Press Square, leading to the deadly road accident.

Eyewitnesses had claimed that the electric car flew a few feet into air after hitting the speed breaker, following which the driver lost control. It then hit the pedestrians standing in front of a tea stall near the New Government Colony.

The car also rammed into parked motorcycles and an autorickshaw and came to a halt only after hitting a tree. Four vehicles including the car Gouda was driving have been seized by police.



NEWS BOX

Kylian Mbappe vows to make history after record-breaking night for France

New Delhi., (Agency)

Kylian Mbappe said he wants to leave a lasting mark on French football after becoming his country's all-time leading goalscorer in France's 3-1 victory over Senegal at the FIFA World Cup 2026. The France captain scored twice in New Jersey, including a stunning stoppage-time strike, to move past Olivier Giroud's long-standing record.

The milestone came on a night when France had to overcome a spirited Senegal side that troubled them for much of the first half. Speaking after the match, Mbappe made it clear that personal records are secondary to his ultimate ambition of helping France win another World Cup. "I play to leave a mark on my country's history and to help my team win the World Cup," Mbappe told reporters. "I don't think we're fully up and running yet. But it's always good to start a tournament with a win. It gives you a bit more peace of mind, even



though you're never really relaxed at a World Cup." Mbappe's brace took him to 58 international goals for France, while also moving him onto 14 World Cup goals overall. The tally sees him move ahead of Lionel Messi and French great Just Fontaine in the tournament's scoring charts and level with Germany legend Gerd Muller, with only Miroslav Klose ahead of him.

HOW DID MBAPPE BREAK THE RECORD?

The record-breaking evening did not begin smoothly for the France captain. Senegal were the brighter side in the opening half and created the better opportunities through Nicolas Jackson and Ismaila Sarr. Jackson struck the post after a rapid counter-attack, while Sarr squandered a golden chance just before the break with the goal at his mercy.

Mbappe, meanwhile, found little joy against Senegal's disciplined defensive setup and was largely kept quiet during the opening 45 minutes.

The game changed after the interval.

Michael Olise unlocked the Senegal defence with a perfectly weighted pass in the 66th minute and Mbappe timed his run brilliantly before finishing beyond Edouard Mendy to break the deadlock.

FIFA World Cup: Thomas Partey loses visa appeal, to miss Ghana opener after Canada entry ban

New Delhi. (Agency)

Ghana will be without midfielder Thomas Partey for their opening match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup after a Canadian federal court upheld a decision denying him entry into the country. Justice Roger Lafreniere rejected Partey's appeal on Tuesday, ending the midfielder's hopes of joining the Black Stars in Toronto for their Group L opener against Panama at BMO Field on Wednesday. The ruling came after Partey's legal team sought emergency relief from a visa refusal that had prevented the former Arsenal player from traveling to Canada with the rest of the Ghana squad. Lafreniere ruled that Partey had failed to demonstrate sufficient grounds for such relief. The Canadian government denied Partey's visa application because of ongoing criminal proceedings in the United Kingdom.



The 32-year-old faces seven charges of rape and one count of sexual assault relating to allegations made by four women between 2020 and 2022. He has pleaded not guilty to all charges, and a trial is scheduled for later this year. During the hearing, Canadian authorities argued that hosting the World Cup did not warrant exemptions to the country's immigration laws and that Partey should not receive special treatment because of his status as a professional footballer. In a statement submitted as part of the appeal, Partey stressed that he remained presumed innocent under the law. "I have not been convicted of any offense. I have pleaded not guilty, and I remain presumed innocent," Partey said. Despite being unable to travel to Canada, Partey has remained with the Ghana squad at their World Cup base in Providence, Rhode Island, where he has taken part in training and preparations. The decision is a setback for Ghana on the eve of their World Cup campaign, with head coach Carlos Queiroz forced to begin the tournament without one of his most experienced players.

Semifinal spot assured, India look to continue winning run against Uruguay in FIH Nations Cup

The Indian women's hockey team, already through to the semifinals, aims to finish unbeaten in the pool stage by defeating lower-ranked Uruguay at the FIH Nations Cup.

New Delhi. (Agency)

A semifinal spot already sealed, a relaxed Indian women's hockey team would look to end the pool engagements undefeated to bolster its confidence against a lower-ranked Uruguay in the FIH Nations Cup here on Thursday. Unbeaten India are atop Pool A with six points from two games and have already qualified for the last four, having defeated USA 3-2 and Japan 2-1 in their first two matches. India are determined to win the FIH Nations Cup to get their place back in next season's elite FIH Pro League, from which they got relegated last year. The Indian women's team was relegated from the elite FIH Pro League to the second-tier FIH



Hockey Nations Cup, following its last-place finish in the 2024-25 season, after managing only 10 points from 16 matches.

The winner of the eight-nation FIH Nations Cup will progress to next year's FIH Pro League. Going into their final pool game against a relatively easy opponent, India

would take heart from their fighting wins in the opening two games. Ranked ninth in the world, the Salima Tete-led India will definitely start as favourites against world no. 17 Uruguay, who have lost both their opening two matches. India scored all their five goals in the two matches through penalty

corners. Deepika is joint second in the goal scorers list with two strikes, while Navneet Kaurn Salima and Lalremsiami found the net once each. But going into the business end of the tournament, India's chief coach Sjoerd Marijne would expect heavy effort from his strikers and would want them to find the net from field efforts and Uruguay provides them the best opportunity to do that. With two important tournaments lined up this year -- World Cup and the Asian Games -- Marijne would also be tempted to try out new combinations in the remaining matches of the FIH Nations Cup, which is part of the team's preparations for the big ticket events.

Having conceded three goals in two matches, the Indian defence, though, needs to tighten up a bit. India's chief coach knows the significance of it. "In tournaments like this, small moments often make the biggest difference. We need to remain disciplined, stay united as a team and make the most of our opportunities." The objective is not only to achieve good results but also to continue building a strong foundation for the future. We know the expectations are high, and the players are motivated to give their best for the country,"

2nd ODI: Yashasvi Jaiswal fails in rare chance, Prince Yadav makes debut

Philadelphia. (Agency)

India made three changes to their playing XI for the second ODI against Afghanistan on a hot Wednesday afternoon in Lucknow. While fast bowler Prince Yadav received his maiden cap from vice-captain Shreyas Iyer before the toss, skipper Shubman Gill confirmed two more changes after Afghanistan opted to bowl.

IND vs AFG, 2nd ODI Score | Updates

While Delhi fast bowler Prince Yadav getting a game at his IPL home ground is a welcome sign, there was concerning news from the Indian camp as Nitish Kumar Reddy was ruled out with yet another injury scare. It forced India to tinker with their combination. In the absence of their all-rounder, India added depth to their batting unit by giving Yashasvi Jaiswal an opportunity. Yashasvi was slotted in to open the batting alongside Rohit Sharma, while captain Gill moved down to No. 3.

YASHASVI FAILS

However, the young opener failed to make use of the opportunity. After playing out a maiden while facing mystery spinner Allah Ghazanfar in the first over of the contest, Yashasvi was dismissed in the third over.

The left-handed opener cut fast bowler Saleem Safi straight into the hands of the point fielder after getting off the mark with a boundary. Incidentally, Yashasvi had played a similar shot off the previous delivery for four, but he was unable to get it past the fielder this time around.

Yashasvi looked gutted as he made the slow



walk back to the pavilion. It was his first opportunity in ODI cricket since December 2025, and it came only after he was drafted into the squad in the absence of Virat Kohli. In the series opener in Dharamsala, he warmed the bench, but the injury concern surrounding Nitish Kumar Reddy opened the door for him.

PRINCE'S SPECIAL MOMENT

Meanwhile, Prince received his maiden

India reshuffled their XI for the second ODI in Lucknow, handing Prince Yadav a debut and Yashasvi Jaiswal an opening role. Nitish Kumar Reddy's injury scare forced the late changes.

India cap from Shreyas Iyer, the vice-captain of the ODI team.

The right-arm fast bowler from Delhi has emerged as a major bright spot for Lucknow Super Giants, providing a breakthrough season during the 2026 IPL. Originally signed by the franchise as a net bowler before making his debut in 2025, the 24-year-old Delhi domestic cricketer spearheaded LSG's bowling attack by claiming 16 wickets in 14 matches. Yadav rattled opposition line-ups with his raw pace and precise variations, highlighting his campaign with a spectacular delivery to dismiss Virat Kohli. He also recorded career-best figures of 3 for 32 against Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

His consistent performances in domestic cricket and the IPL culminated in this proud milestone.

Months after Manchester United sack, Ruben Amorim lands AC Milan job

AC Milan have appointed Ruben Amorim as head coach after dismissing Massimiliano Allegri. Amorim takes up a managerial role for the first time since being sacked by Manchester United.

New Delhi. (Agency)

AC Milan have turned to Ruben Amorim in a bid to revive the club's fortunes, appointing the former Manchester United boss as their new head coach on Tuesday following a disappointing Serie A campaign that ended without Champions League qualification.

The Portuguese tactician succeeds Massimiliano Allegri, who was dismissed after Milan could only manage a fifth-place



finish in the league. While the club did not disclose the terms of the agreement, reports in the Italian media suggest the 41-year-old has signed a two-year deal. Milan endured a miserable end to the season, wrapping up their campaign with a 2-1 defeat at home to Cagliari. They won only one of their final four league games, with supporters at San Siro voicing their frustration at the final

whistle as the Rossoneri missed out on Europe's premier club competition for a second straight year. "I know exactly what this club means: history, prestige and an extraordinary fanbase around the world. It is a challenge I embrace with pride and enthusiasm, fully aware of what these colours represent," Amorim said in a statement. "I can't wait to get started and to experience every day the passion that drives AC Milan." Amorim arrives in Italy after an underwhelming 14-month stint at Manchester United. Appointed amid high expectations, he found it difficult to reverse the club's decline and was relieved of his duties in January. Earlier in his tenure, United co-owner Jim Ratcliffe had labelled him an "outstanding young manager" and insisted.



sealed late in stoppage time. For Iraq, Aymein Hussein levelled the score in the 39th minute, but they were left to rue costly errors.

HAALAND PUNISHES IRAQ

Iraq learned in the toughest way possible that Haaland is a striker, who you don't give any chances. The start to the game was very mellow for the City forward as he found himself isolated early. Iraq were applying all the pressure early as chances for both sides were far and few in between. Haaland got his first sniff of the goal in the 3rd minute, but Norway lacked that cutting edge early on. Antonio Nusa provided some impetus to the attack for the Norwegians, who were still being kept at bay by the Iraqi defence. The first chance of the game actually went in Iraq's favour as Ali Al-Hamadi's shot blazed over the post. The hydration break came at the right moment for Norway, as Nusa once again orchestrated the attack, which allowed Wolfe to lay the ball to Haaland and he made no mistake.

FIFA World Cup 2026: Should Lionel Messi have seen red vs Algeria? Fans debate decision

FIFA World Cup 2026: Lionel Messi hit a hat-trick as Argentina beat Algeria 3-0 in their World Cup opener. A disputed challenge on Aissa Mandi, ignored by the referee and VAR, kept the noise alive.

New Delhi. (Agency)

As the LED board flashed the number 10 in the 79th minute at Kansas City Stadium on Wednesday, June 17, the crowd rose to its feet to salute one of the greatest players of all time after a truly iconic performance. But even on a historic night, Lionel Messi couldn't escape controversy. What was meant to be a celebration of another masterclass on the World Cup stage — but instead, much of the post-match discussion centred on a

controversial first-half incident. Argentina ultimately cruised to a 3-0 win over Algeria in their World Cup opener, with Messi scoring a historic hat-trick at GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium. The result also marked Argentina's first successful defence of a World Cup title opening match in their history. But the spotlight briefly shifted away from his first goal, when in the 32nd minute Messi was involved in a contentious challenge with Algeria captain Aissa Mandi.

As he attempted to reach a loose ball, Algeria captain Mandi stepped across to block his path. In the ensuing challenge, Messi appeared to catch Mandi on his trailing leg, precisely on the calf from behind, with the defender going down in visible discomfort. The referee, however, opted not to award a foul, and VAR did not intervene. The decision immediately split opinion, both inside the stadium and across social media platforms. Many fans argued the challenge could have been punished more harshly,

suggesting it warranted at least a yellow card. Others went further, debating whether the contact could have been interpreted as dangerous play that might justify a red card



review in a different refereeing context. The incident quickly became one of the most discussed moments of the match online. Comments circulated widely questioning how the challenge went unpunished, while others defended the decision, suggesting it was

incidental contact in a high-speed duel for the ball. The lack of on-field sanction ensured the debate continued well beyond the final whistle. "Messi steps on Mandi's calf, but since it's Messi and Argentina, no sanction against him," one user wrote. Another questioned the decision more directly.

ARGENTINA START TITLE DEFENCE WITH WIN

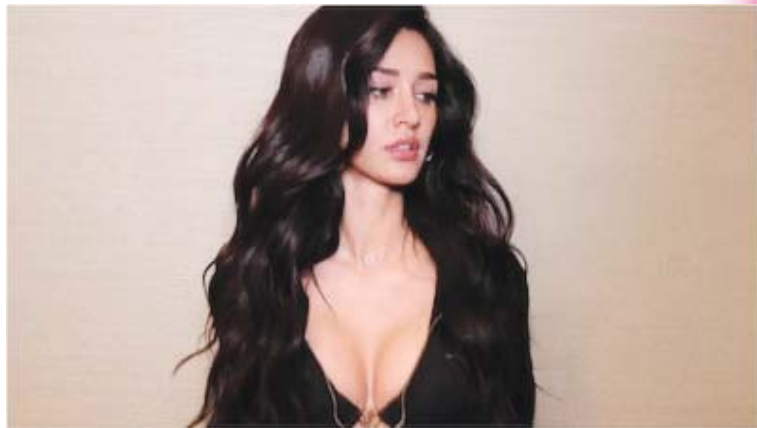
Despite the controversy, Messi's response was emphatic. The Argentina captain went on to produce one of the defining World Cup performances of his career. He opened the scoring with a brilliant strike from distance after initially having a goal already ruled out for offside. He then struck again after the break, reacting quickest to a loose ball after an attempt was spilled, before completing his hat-trick late in the second half with another trademark finish from outside the area.

Disha Patani

Leases Out Luxury Khar West Home At Rs 2.85 Lakh A Month

While Disha Patani keeps busy with films and brand commitments, one of her Mumbai properties has quietly landed a new occupant. The actor has leased out her plush apartment in the city's upscale Khar West area, adding her name to the long list of Bollywood celebrities earning through Mumbai's booming rental market. According to property registration documents accessed via Zapkey, Disha has rented out her apartment at Rustomjee Paramount, a premium residential tower in Khar West. The leave-and-license agreement was registered on June 1, 2026, and will remain in effect for 24 months.

The apartment, located on one of the higher floors of the building, spans more than 1,000 sq ft and has been leased to Kamalaben Mangalbhaj Gujar. The rental agreement begins at a monthly rent of ₹2.85 lakh. Documents further reveal that the tenant has paid a security deposit of ₹8.55 lakh, which is equal to three months' rent. There's also a 5% rent hike built into the agreement after the



first year. This means the monthly rent will increase to around ₹2.99 lakh during the second year. Going by the rental terms, the deal is expected to bring in close to ₹71 lakh for Disha over the two-year period.

Neither Disha Patani nor the tenant could be reached for comment. Disha isn't the only Bollywood star putting real estate to work. Over the past few years, celebrities including Amitabh Bachchan, Kartik Aaryan, Shahid Kapoor and Salman Khan have grabbed attention for renting out both residential and commercial properties across Mumbai.

The apartment is part of Rustomjee Paramount, a luxury project developed by Keystone Realtors Private Limited, popularly known as the Rustomjee Group. The development offers 3BHK and 4BHK residences and comes packed with high-end amenities such as a mini theatre, spa and salon, banquet hall, business centre and a sky lounge. The project has also attracted celebrity homeowners over the years. In 2021, Rani Mukerji purchased a 1,485 sq ft apartment in the complex for ₹7.12 crore, along with two parking spaces.



Aditya Sarpotdar Opens Up About His Plans For Munjya 2: 'I Will Not Make It Until...'



Maddock's Horror Universe has been one of the most successful film franchises in Bollywood and, following Thama, fans have been awaiting the release of the next film. In a recent chat, Aditya Sarpotdar has shared a major update on the upcoming films in the franchise, including Shakti Shalini and Munjya.

When asked about Munjya 2, Sarpotdar told Variety India, "I get a lot of messages about it, and it's good to know people want to watch it. But that's the point. I can't disappoint them with something that's mediocre. I would rather not make it than deliver something that's not up to the standard."

"I'm okay with being asked maybe 10 years later. 'Why didn't you make it?' But until I don't feel that my script matches a certain level of quality and is something totally new and beyond people's expectations, I will not make it," he further added.

Revealing that the focus is currently on Shakti Shalini, he concluded, "Yeah, we wrapped up the shoot and are now into post-production. It was a massive shoot, so the whole planning and execution had to be done meticulously. So now we are back in the edit room. Right now, what I really want to focus on and get right is Shakti Shalini. That's the big game," he said.

What We Know About Shakti Shalini

Shakti Shalini was officially announced during Diwali last year. The title announcement promo was attached to Thama and introduced the central character with the descriptions: "The Protector", "The Destroyer", and "The Mother Of All". The film marks another chapter in the expanding Maddock Horror Comedy Universe, which includes several interconnected titles that have found success at the box office.

Munjya 2 to star Pratibha Ranta?

Earlier, in an exclusive interview with News18 Showsha, Aditya rubbished all such reports, saying, "Sharvari is an integral part of the Munjya team." While speaking with us, when asked if Pratibha Ranta is on board for any of MHCU's films, Aditya shared, "Yaar, I don't know where this Pratibha story came from. I'm sure it's just another rumour because vo definitely nahi hai, that's not how it is."

'Most Inspiring Partner': Anand Ahuja Pens Appreciation Post For Sonam Kapoor, Drops Pics With Newborn Son



Anand Ahuja has shared a heartwarming post for his wife Sonam Kapoor. In his note, he described her as an inspiring and loving partner, while also humorously revealing that he "annoys" her every day with constant reminders of his appreciation and love. Anand also revealed that the post came after a busy few months for the couple, filled with major family milestones. Taking to Instagram, Anand Ahuja posted family photos and wrote, "Nothing is better than having the most inspiring, hard working, empathetic, beautiful partner / girlfriend / wife: P holding my hand to experience all of life with. To learn, to grow, to challenge and to cherish. Love you love you love you @sonamkapoor."

The 'Neerja' star quickly noticed her husband's post and responded in the comments section, writing, "So sweet my angel.. love you." Replying to this, Anand wrote, "I know I tell you this annoyingly every day! Lol but I had to also put it on this appreciation post after a busy 4 months that included our second baby, mothers day, our 10 year anniversary and of course your birthday @sonamkapoor."

The photos captured sweet family moments of the couple with their children.

For the unversed, Sonam Kapoor and Anand Ahuja, who got married in 2018, welcomed their first child, son Vayu in 2022. The couple welcomed their second child, a baby boy named Rudralokh Kapoor Ahuja, on March 29, 2026.

Meanwhile, Sonam had recently celebrated her birthday on June 9 with a warm and intimate gathering. Her cousin and social media influencer Anshula Kapoor gave a peek into the celebration by sharing a series of cheerful pictures from the brunch. Alongside the photos, Anshula wrote, "The amount of cake at this brunch suggests we were planning for a small village. No regrets though. Happy birthday Sonam didi @sonamkapoor."

The pictures reflected a cozy family celebration attended by loved ones. One image showed Sonam posing with Anshula Kapoor, Arjun Kapoor, and friends, while another highlighted a lavish dessert table featuring nearly five birthday cakes. The celebration also included heartfelt family moments, including one where Sonam stood beside her husband Anand Ahuja as he held their son Vayu during the cake-cutting.



Kriti Sanon

Protects Rashmika Mandanna At Crowded Pune Mall, Viral Video Wins Internet

A promotional event for Cocktail 2 in Pune turned chaotic after Shahid Kapoor, Kriti Sanon and Rashmika Mandanna were mobbed by an overwhelming crowd at a mall. What was meant to be a fan interaction soon became difficult to manage, with several videos from the venue now going viral on social media.

While the crowd surge created panic around the stars, one particular moment featuring Kriti Sanon and Rashmika Mandanna has caught everyone's attention. In a video from the event, Kriti is seen stepping forward and shielding Rashmika with her arms as they try to make their way through the crowd.

Kriti Sanon Shields Rashmika Mandanna Amid Crowd Chaos

Several clips from the Pune event show the stars surrounded by fans and security personnel as the crowd pushes closer to them. In one video, Kriti Sanon is seen staying calm amid the commotion and carefully protecting Rashmika Mandanna as they move through the packed venue.

The video quickly went viral, with fans praising Kriti for her presence of mind and protective gesture. Many social media users appreciated the way she looked out for Rashmika during the chaos.

One user wrote, "Kriti, you are a good sister." Another comment read, "Kyaa baat hai... Kriti

protect kar rahi hai Rashmika ko." A third user wrote, "The way Kriti is protecting Rashmika — pure bond." As per reports, the situation became difficult after fans allegedly broke barricades and rushed towards the actors. The organisers reportedly struggled to control the crowd, following which the event was cut short and the stars were escorted away urgently.

In another video from the event, Shahid Kapoor is seen losing his cool amid the rush, while Kriti continues to maintain her composure and helps navigate the situation.



About Cocktail 2

Cocktail 2 stars Shahid Kapoor, Kriti Sanon and Rashmika Mandanna in the lead roles. The film is directed by Homi Adajania and is one of the most awaited romantic dramas of the year.

The film wrapped its shoot in January. Announcing the wrap, Homi had shared a fun picture with the lead cast and written, "Cocktail 2 shoot wrapped. I may be biased, but this one feels a tad special. Big love to my fab crew & cast for tolerating the absurdity."

NEWS BOX

Trump to wrap G7 summit facing skepticism at home and jitters overseas over his plan to end Iran war

EVIAN-LES-BAINS. (Agency)

U.S. President Donald Trump wraps up talks with world leaders at the Group of Seven summit on Wednesday where he's been trying to sell his tentative agreement with Iran as a pact that will ensure the Islamic Republic never develops a nuclear weapon — even though he's offered scant specificity about how that would be implemented. Trump and his fellow leaders are closing the formal talks of the leading industrial nations at a lakeside resort in the French Alps on Wednesday with sessions on the future of artificial intelligence and fostering economic growth.

The U.S. leader also plans to make a stop for a glitzy dinner at the Palace of Versailles outside of Paris before he jets back to Washington. But first, Trump finds himself trying to quell skepticism about the Iran agreement, a difficult task given that neither the White House nor Iran have released the text of the deal. He also faces jitteriness from key ally Israel about ending the conflict under these terms. "It's a great document," Trump said of the memorandum that has yet to be revealed, even though U.S. and Iranian officials are set to formally sign it at a ceremony on Friday at a stunning resort on Switzerland's Lake Lucerne. "Here's what it says: Iran will never have a nuclear weapon. It won't have one to buy, to develop — it will not have a nuclear weapon. And I would say that's about 99.9% of what I wanted," he said. But Trump will continue to have to do a sales job. Some members of his own party are doubtful that the deal he's agreed to is strong enough to defang Iran's nuclear program. At the same time, he faces an anxious international community looking for him to follow through on his promise that the deal will reopen the Strait of Hormuz to oil tanker traffic, and keep it open.

Society needs 'new social norms' in the age of AI: Nvidia's Jensen Huang

world. (Agency)

Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang - whose work helped propel artificial intelligence - stressed in an Associated Press interview Tuesday that society needs to change with the advent of AI, arguing that a fuller embrace of the technology would improve people's lives.

Huang has been optimistic about AI's potential to rapidly transform society, creating faster economic growth and more scientific breakthroughs. But as the head of a computer chip company now developing AI systems, he and others are confronting a public increasingly concerned about the potential harm the technology might bring. Huang has felt obligated to respond to critics who warn of job losses and threats to humanity itself. "We need to create new social norms," Huang said in an interview. "I would advocate that everybody use AI. Just go engage it." Huang made his case as AI has emerged as a political flashpoint, with objections to plans to build more data centers and fears that the speed with which it's being adopted could spur the layoffs of workers who might not have a safety net. Such questions have threatened public support of the technology at a time when a race has kicked off with China, a contest Huang believes can best be won by a U.S. that is open to competing globally in AI.

His close relationship with President Donald Trump also has been a source of criticism among Democrats, even as he emphasized that the computing power created by AI is vital to adding the factory jobs that have been promised for decades without much enduring success. It was an argument delivered by a 63-year-old man who has watched the technology develop and described himself as "boring" because his own life revolves mainly around work and his family.

US To Give Iran \$300 Billion "Reconstruction Fund"? What JD Vance Said

Washington. (Agency)

US Vice President JD Vance has shut down reports claiming the United States is giving \$300 billion to Iran as part of a reconstruction fund under their interim trade deal. Vance said that, instead, Washington plans to allow other countries to invest in Iran if it adheres to the terms of the US-Iran deal. The clarification came as reports claimed that Iran could have access to a \$300 billion reconstruction fund as part of the peace agreement brokered by President Donald Trump's administration. When confronted about the fund by Megyn Kelly on "The Megyn Kelly Show", Vance explained that under the deal, if Iran adheres to the terms of the deal, it will lift sanctions on the Islamic Republic to encourage investment in the country, enabling cash flow. "Let's say, for example, that the United Arab Emirates, who's been one of the best allies that we've had in the region. Let's say that they want to invest in a nuclear power plant in Iran. They really can't do that without us lifting some of the sanctions that exist in the global financial system to make that possible," Vance said. "Now, are the Emiratis going to invest in Iran, or is America going to let the Emiratis invest in Iran? Unless the Iranians change their behaviour? No. So all these people say, 'Well, you know, you're giving Iran money.' No, no, no. We're saying that if the Iranians change their behaviour, we're going to let some of these other countries invest in rebuilding their country and creating some prosperity for their people," he added.

The \$300 Billion Investment Fund

Earlier, news agency Reuters reported that a \$300 billion private fund designed to trigger investment into Iran is outlined in the US-Iran framework agreement. Citing a source with direct knowledge of the deal, the report also claimed that more than half that sum has already been committed. The fund is designed to give both sides an economic incentive to conclude a final deal, a source told the agency on condition of anonymity because the plan has not yet been announced.

Iranian tankers exit US blockade zone in Strait of Hormuz after two-month standoff

TEHRAN. (Agency)

The first tankers carrying Iranian oil exited a US blockade in the Strait of Hormuz, a tracking website said on Wednesday, two days before Washington and Tehran launch talks on an agreed peace deal still scant on details, including Iran's nuclear programme and the lifting of sanctions. The talks on a final settlement are set to begin Friday at Switzerland's Burgenstock mountain resort, as news that the Hormuz Strait will reopen sent world oil prices tumbling. Optimism that the war triggered by the February 28 US-Israeli strikes on Tehran might be coming to an end was dented, however, by fresh Israeli strikes on south Lebanon.

The TankerTrackers website, which monitors oil shipments and storage, marked Iran's "first crude oil exports in two months", citing digital tracking data corroborated by satellite imagery. "At least two National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) VLCC supertankers named DIONA (9569695) and HERO2 (9362073) have exited the US Navy blockade perimeter carrying a combined

total of 3.8 million barrels of Iranian crude oil between them," TankerTrackers said on X, later adding that a third tanker had exited. Negotiations over a final deal are to start immediately after the Swiss signing ceremony and continue during a 60-day window, leading to decisions on the fate of Iran's nuclear programme and a plan for the lifting of international economic sanctions, officials said. The United States will allow Iran to immediately begin selling oil and fuel under the deal to end the war, the Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday, citing unnamed people familiar with the agreement. A waiver of sanctions on oil sales will take effect immediately after the signing, the Journal added, also covering services such as banking, transportation and insurance. Some conservatives have expressed concern over the peace deal, with Senate Republicans reportedly requesting the text of the agreement and briefings from the Trump administration. "Let's look at it and see what it actually is," Senate Majority Leader John Thune was quoted as saying in

the Journal. Oil prices tumble Despite the deal announcement, the Israeli military said it conducted a strike in south Lebanon after it "identified a suspicious vehicle" near where



its soldiers were operating, and its forces intercepted rockets and carried out an air strike against a launcher. Iran's central military command warned Israel should "await a harsh response" to the strikes, which Lebanon's state news agency said targeted two vehicles in the town of Mayfadoun and another in nearby Shukeen, killing four. According to a senior US

official, speaking on condition of anonymity, the framework agreement has already been signed electronically by President Donald Trump, Vice President JD Vance, Iran's deputy foreign minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi and top negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf.

"Likely on Friday... a new round of negotiations between Iran and the United States to reach a final agreement will begin," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said. "In the final agreement, decisions will be made on the nuclear issues and the lifting of sanctions." Optimism over the reopening of Hormuz has sent the price of the international benchmark Brent North Sea crude down to \$78.74 a barrel in Wednesday trading. The main US oil contract, West Texas Intermediate, was \$75.85 a barrel. Broken commitments Weeks of indirect negotiations mediated by Pakistan and Qatar have built momentum for an interim deal, but a comprehensive agreement on Iran's nuclear ambitions and Western sanctions remains elusive.

UN chief Antonio Guterres to visit gang-plagued Haiti in solidarity with victims



WILMINGTON. (Agency)

The suspect in a fatal shooting Tuesday inside a Delaware hospital has been taken into custody in Philadelphia, officials said. The 23-year-old man is expected to be charged in the shooting at Wilmington Hospital and extradited to Delaware, the city of Wilmington said in a statement. Officials have declined to release information about the identities of the victims or the condition of a person who was shot and survived. The

city said the shooting is believed to have been targeted and isolated. ChristianaCare, which operates the hospital, said in an emailed statement it had diverted patients from its emergency department and was "taking all appropriate steps to ensure the safety of our patients, caregivers and visitors." A lockdown at the hospital had been lifted by Tuesday night. At the news conference, Wilmington Mayor John Carney acknowledged the victims

and hospital workers who hid as law enforcement went from room to room, clearing the building. If ever there is a place that should be a sanctuary for such violence, that is the place," Carney said.

Kristen Lackford was recovering from feeding tube surgery when her hospital room door was suddenly kicked open by law enforcement with large guns and helmets, she said. Lackford said it was scary watching the team search under her bed and in her bathroom before marking her door with a large letter "C" and never explaining why they were there. When she finally learned what had happened and that the shooter could still be in the building, Lackford said she felt like "a sitting duck." "There was absolutely nothing that I could do to make myself feel safe," she said. Violence has been a persistent problem at hospitals across the U.S. Wilmington, which has about 71,000 residents and is Delaware's largest city, is about 25 miles (40 km) south of Philadelphia.

Germany and Poland to sign a new defense deal as balance of power in Europe shifts

WARSAW. (Agency)

Germany and Poland were set to sign a new defense agreement Wednesday, putting aside their complicated past to strengthen European military cooperation at a time of heightened tension with Russia and growing uncertainty over U.S. engagement in Europe. Relations between the two neighbors in recent years have become more pragmatic in the wake of Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine in 2022 and the coming to power of a liberal government in Poland in 2023.

As the U.S. weighs a partial drawdown of its military presence in Europe, Poland is keen to ensure that major European allies take a greater role in defending the continent's eastern flank. Germany is seeking partners as it moves to revitalize its military, the Bundeswehr, after decades of neglect with ambitions to build the strongest conventional army on NATO's

European side — an effort that will make it a central pillar of European defense in the years ahead. Poland's importance as a logistics hub for



Ukraine, alongside its growing economy and heavy defense investment, has made it a compelling partner for Germany and other core European countries. "We Germans need a strong Poland as an equal partner," German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said in

Berlin after meeting with liberal Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk in December. "This is in our fundamental interest." Germany has a key role in securing Europe's eastern borders

The defense agreement is set to include plans for protecting the Baltic Sea region and details about cooperation on military mobility and infrastructure, cyber defense and new technologies.

The two countries are irreversibly tied by NATO's defense plans, which give Germany a key role in the defense of the Baltic region, together with Poland and other countries in the central and eastern European region, said Justyna Gotkowska, deputy director of the Warsaw-based think tank Center for Eastern Studies. "Germany is largely responsible for the defense of the Baltic states and without cooperation with Poland, that will not happen," Gotkowska said.



organization defending Black Americans' rights, is suing xAI and accusing it of operating dozens of turbines without permits in violation of the Clean Air Act.

The rights group says they pollute majority Black neighborhoods, but xAI says the turbines are temporary and mobile, and therefore not subject to regulation.

At the end of February, the government terminated its contracts with Anthropic after it refused to allow its tools to be used for fully automated strikes or the mass surveillance of Americans. The Pentagon then turned to Anthropic's competitors, like Google, OpenAI and xAI, to continue its pursuit of AI. At Google, more than 600 employees demanded the company not provide AI to the military for classified operations. Others have raised broad concerns about AI's threats. The US military's transition to AI is taking time, and in March the government had to acknowledge that Claude was still being used for the war in Iran.

South Korea president urges Trump to help make peace with North Korea

Trump asked Lee about developments in inter-Korean relations during an exchange at the G7 summit in France, Seoul's presidential office said in a statement Wednesday.

SEOUL. (Agency)

South Korea's president has urged US President Donald Trump to help him make peace with North Korea, "just as he has resolved the conflict in the Middle East", it added. Lee Jae Myung's office said on Wednesday. The United States and Iran are set to sign a memorandum of understanding on Friday to end their war, and there has been speculation that the Trump administration may then turn

its attention to North Korea. Trump fuelled that interest shortly after announcing the Iran deal, posting on social media an uncaptioned photograph of himself with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at their 2018 Singapore summit. Trump asked Lee about developments in inter-Korean relations during an exchange at the G7 summit in France, Seoul's presidential office said in a statement Wednesday. During the conversation, "President Lee requested that he (Trump) take the lead in achieving a peaceful resolution to the North Korea issue, just as he has resolved the conflict in the Middle East", it added.

"President Trump expressed his commitment to working toward a resolution of the North Korean issue." Lee has taken a dovish approach towards North Korea, in contrast to his more hardline



predecessor Yoon Suk Yeol. But Pyongyang has rejected his overtures, formally labelling Seoul its "most hostile" enemy and repeatedly declaring itself an "irreversible"

nuclear state. North Korea experts say the chances of a meeting between Kim and Trump is low.

"From North Korea's perspective, there is virtually no reason to meet the United States," Yang Moo-jin, former president of the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, told AFP. Kim has sought to enhance his standing with his other neighbours, for example sending troops and munitions to aid Russia's war against Ukraine.

He also recently hosted China's President Xi Jinping in Pyongyang, soon after Xi had held back-to-back summits in Beijing with Trump and Russia's Vladimir Putin. Neither Pyongyang's nor Beijing's official statements mentioned the issue of getting North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons, an outcome that experts said indicated China's tacit acceptance of them.