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PM Modi arrives in Seychelles, to mark 50 years of relations, chart future

At Seychelles International Airport, Modi was welcomed by Seychelles President Patrick Herminie and the two leaders drove together to Seychelles' National Botanical Garden.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi landed in Victoria Saturday to start his three-day state visit to Seychelles, during which he will hold talks with President Patrick Herminie and attend the golden jubilee celebrations of the archipelago nation's National Day celebrations as Guest of Honour.

At Seychelles International Airport, Modi was welcomed by Herminie and the two leaders drove together to Seychelles' National Botanical Garden. The PM received a ceremonial Guard of Honour, in the presence of Seychelles Cabinet ministers and senior dignitaries.

"Seychelles is a valued maritime partner and a close friend in the Indian Ocean. Looking forward to a productive visit aimed at further strengthening our longstanding ties and enhancing cooperation for the benefit of the people of our nations," the PM said on X upon landing. Ahead of his departure from New Delhi, Modi said Seychelles is a valued



maritime neighbour and a key partner in the Vision Mahasagar (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) and India's shared commitment to the Global South.

Modi further said that he looks forward to the bilateral discussions aimed at further strengthening the enduring friendship. "Together, we will work to advance the progress of our peoples, and promote security

and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region," he said.

Later in the day, the PM handed over Fast Patrol Vessel Lespwar, ambulances and utility vehicles to the Seychelles Coast Guard. "The transfer of the Fast Patrol Vessel Lespwar to the Seychelles Coast Guard marks another important milestone in the growing India-Seychelles partnership in defence and maritime security. It is also the latest in a series of capability-building initiatives that reflect India's steadfast commitment to supporting the security priorities of Seychelles," Modi said in a post on X. On Sunday evening, PM Modi will participate in the country's 50th national day celebrations as Guest of Honour. When Seychelles attained freedom on June 29, 1976, a contingent from the Indian Naval Ship, INS Nilgiri, took part in the Independence Day celebrations. This year as well, an Indian Armed Forces contingent and two Indian Navy ships are participating in the event.

Why fuel prices still high amid drop in global crude oil rates, asks Congress chief

The Congress president says petrol, diesel and LPG prices should fall with crude oil, alleging the BJP is using higher taxes to boost government collections.

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

Hitting out at the Centre, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday questioned high fuel prices even when global crude oil rates had returned to the pre-West Asia war levels. He accused the BJP of "looting" and "pickpocketing" people, and alleged that the public has become just a means for the BJP to extract taxes and raise its collections.

Posing a set of three questions to the Government, the Congress chief said that during the peak of the war in West Asia, crude oil was at \$138 per barrel. Back then, petrol was ₹94.77 a litre and diesel ₹87.67 a litre, he said, adding that at present, crude oil has fallen to \$70.71 per barrel. "So why is the Modi government still selling petrol at ₹102.12 a litre and diesel at Rs 95.20 a litre?" he said in a post on X. Domestic cylinders, the 5-kg small cylinders useful for migrants, and CNG—everything has been jacked up, he wrote. "Now that conditions are normal, why are the Modi government's hands trembling when it comes to cutting the prices," Kharge further asked.

The Congress chief said when crude oil was expensive, the public suffered. Now that crude oil is cheap, why is it still that the public is bearing the brunt, he asked. "It's obvious - the public has become just a means for the BJP to extract taxes and raise its collections," he said.



Mahanagar Metro Exclusive

Illegal Liquor and Gambling Racket Flourishes Under the Shadow of Khaki in Karjan Taluka?

Mahanagar Metro Desk Pawan Makan

Vadodara / Karjan: Despite Gujarat's prohibition policy, serious allegations have emerged from Karjan Taluka in Vadodara district regarding the alleged operation of illegal liquor, gambling, and narcotics networks across several villages. Local residents claim that English liquor, country liquor, Worli Matka gambling, and the sale of cannabis-related substances continue to operate openly, raising concerns about law enforcement and public safety.

Kurali Village: Worli Matka gambling is allegedly being operated near the water tank in the New Nagri area. Sapa Village: Illegal betting activities are reportedly running in the New Settlement area, with operators allegedly arriving from Vadodara city. Kandari Village: Residents claim multiple illegal country liquor outlets are functioning without fear of enforcement. Karamdi Village: Illegal liquor manufacturing units are allegedly operating around the clock.

Residents have also expressed concern that illicit liquor may contain hazardous chemicals, warning that any future toxic liquor tragedy could have devastating consequences. Allegations Against Police

ALLEGED ILLEGAL LIQUOR AND GAMBLING RACKET IN KARJAN TALUKA?
Residents Claim Police Accountability Questions Amidst Fears of Toxic Liquor Tragedy

ALLEGES: NETWORK PROTECTED BY KHAKI?
Worli Matka Gambling (New Nagri Area)
Kurali, Sapa, Kandari, Karamdi
Illegal Betting (Open House from City)
Illegal Country Liquor Outlets
Liquor Manufacturing Units

PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS
FEARS OF TOXIC LIQUOR TRAGEDY: Warnings of Hazardous Chemicals and Devastating Consequences

QUESTIONS RAISED:
1. WILL VADODARA SP ORDER IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION?
2. WHEN WILL SMC CONDUCT ENFORCEMENT IN VILLAGES?
3. WHAT MEASURES WILL STATE GOVT. TAKE?

PersonnelThe report further alleges that the network is being protected by a police constable identified as Hanubha, currently posted in the D-Staff of Karjan Police Station. According to the allegations, the constable had previously faced suspension in connection with an alleged liquor-related case but later returned to duty. The report also raises questions regarding the role of the officer-in-charge of the police station, alleging that influential protection and systemic corruption may have allowed illegal activities to continue. These allegations have not been independently verified. Questions Raised Over EnforcementThe report further claims that illegal narcotics, including

cannabis products, are being distributed through an organized network while enforcement agencies, including local police and district-level units, have allegedly failed to take effective action. Questions Raised by Mahanagar MetroThe report asks: Will the Vadodara Superintendent of Police order an impartial investigation into the allegations involving local police personnel? When will the State Monitoring Cell (SMC) conduct enforcement operations in Kurali, Sapa, Kandari, and surrounding villages? What concrete measures will the state government take to dismantle alleged illegal liquor and gambling networks operating in the region? Residents say frustration is mounting and have demanded immediate legal action against those responsible. They warn that continued inaction could not only strengthen organized crime but also put public lives at risk if illegal liquor manufacturing remains unchecked.

VB G RAM G will only guarantee centralisation, burden states financially: Congress

New Delhi.(Agency)

Flagging concerns raised by multiple states, the Congress on Sunday said the VB G RAM G Act, proposed as an alternative to MGNREGA, would guarantee only centralisation and further financial stress on states.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the Modi government, "vengeful and petty" as ever, bulldozed the repeal of MGNREGA through Parliament without any thorough consultation with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development, state governments, or other relevant stakeholders.

Now it emerges that several states have raised concerns regarding its substitute VB G RAM G scheduled for launch from July 1, Ramesh said on X.

BJP-governed states like Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Uttarakhand have opposed the huge additional expenditure burden that is set to be levied on states, he said. Four other state governments have opposed the blackout period of the scheme during the peak agricultural season, Ramesh said, adding at least five states have sought an increase in the wages of rural workers. The Rural Development Minister's (Shivraj Singh Chouhan) own home state Madhya Pradesh is voicing concerns around the Modi government's new pet project, Ramesh said.

"MGNREGA guaranteed right to work derived from the Constitution. VB G RAM G will guarantee only centralisation and further financial stress on states," Ramesh said.

The Congress has alleged that the only guarantee that the law offers is that of "extreme centralisation" and "weakening of the bargaining power of rural labour". The Centre had announced that the Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act will come into force across the country from July 1, replacing the two-decade-old.



Farmers in Byramangala and Kanchugaranahalli are protesting the proposed GBIT project, opposing the acquisition of over 7,000 acres of irrigated land.

Shivakumar has been plotting to loot land in Bidadi, says HDK

New Delhi.(Agency)

Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has been plotting for years to loot the fertile agricultural land of Bidadi, Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy said while addressing thousands of farmers in Byramangala on Saturday.

The farmers of Byramangala and Kanchugaranahalli gram panchayats have been protesting against the State Government over the proposed Greater Bengaluru Integrated Township (GBIT), for which over 7,000 acres of irrigation land will be acquired.

To take a dig at the CM, Kumaraswamy placed an empty chair next to him with the

nameplate reading 'Chief Minister DK Shivakumar', hinting at his absenteeism after calling for a debate over the issue. "The Chief Minister's conspiracy to loot the land around Bidadi is not new today. They have been dreaming of looting this land for many years," the former CM said. The JDS leader also alleged that the State Government is trying to fool farmers by telling them that they are part of Bengaluru and their land will earn crores of rupees. "Real estate magnates have had their eyes on this area from the very beginning," he stated.

Kumaraswamy further added that 7,481 acres in nine villages will be used for the project



and questioned the reduction of Gomala land. He also stated that the township project was projected as 'Kumaraswamy's dream child' by the present government. "The Congress government, including the current Chief Minister, are going to implement the

township project that I had abandoned at that time," Kumaraswamy added. The Union Minister said that the land he owns was purchased with his hard-earned money. "I could have bought 150 acres. If I had bought land then and made real estate, I would have become as rich as they are. But I did not do that. I am growing millet, coconut, and areca nuts on that land," he said. Kumaraswamy assured to stand by the farmers and assured legal help. Meanwhile, there was a section of farmers who raised slogans in favour of the project, claiming that nearly 80% of them were in its favour. The police, however, managed to control the emotions.

News box

After semiconductor, Jewar will be electronic components hub: Union minister Vaishnav

Noida.(Agency)

Union minister for electronics and IT Ashwini Vaishnav on Saturday said India imports printed circuit boards (PCBs) worth around Rs 40,000 crore every year but will now start manufacturing and exporting these components, taking a step towards fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a self-reliant India. The minister also said the Union Cabinet approved a bullet train corridor from Delhi to Siliguri via Jewar and Lucknow. "Once operational, the network would reduce travel time between Jewar and Lucknow to one hour and 40 minutes," he said. Speaking at the foundation stone-laying ceremony for Amber Enterprises' PCB manufacturing facility in Jewar, Vaishnav said, "India imports Rs 40,000 crore of PCBs annually, and it is a matter of pride that now this will be made in India and in Jewar. After semiconductors, Jewar will be a hub of electronic components, and this is just the beginning." To illustrate the complexity of the technology, Vaishnav displayed two printed circuit boards — one with 22 layers and another with 14. "This is just a thin slate, but it is like a 22-storey building, having all details in an organised manner. This is such a complex thing, and now this will be developed in Jewar," he said. PCBs form the backbone of nearly every electronic device, providing the platform and electrical connections for components to function, from smartphones and computers to televisions. Vaishnav said the project marked another milestone for the Yamuna City region, following the foundation stone-laying of the HCL-Foxconn semiconductor manufacturing unit in Feb. On the bullet train corridor, Vaishnav said the Cabinet approved the Delhi-Siliguri route at its last meeting. "You board the train and sip a cup of tea, and soon you will land in Lucknow," he said, adding that Delhi to Lucknow would take two hours and 10 minutes once the network was operational.

Classic case of over-implication: Delhi court dismisses plea to revive dowry case

New Delh.(Agency)

Refusing to revive criminal proceedings against a woman's former husband and his relatives in a dowry harassment case, a Delhi court held that the allegations were "completely bereft of any specific dates or distinct incidents" and amounted to sweeping, generalised accusations. Calling the implication of the husband's entire family despite them living separately a "classic case of over-implication in a matrimonial dispute", additional sessions judge Harguravinder Singh Jaggi observed that forcing individuals to face trial on vague allegations would amount to an abuse of the legal process. The complainant had alleged that she was subjected to physical and mental torture, abuse, beatings and dowry demands by her husband, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law and brother-in-law. She further claimed that her mother-in-law took possession of all her ancestral jewellery and never returned it. The woman also alleged that she was treated like a servant and was frequently locked in a room without food or water. However, the sessions court noted that the trial court had dismissed these allegations, describing them as "omnibus despite material statements on record indicating individual roles." The defence argued that the complaint was vague and did not disclose any specific demand for dowry. It further contended that the case had been filed in Delhi to harass the accused, who are residents of Rajasthan, even though the couple's divorce had already been finalised by a Jaipur court.

'I ate gender norms for breakfast': Queer entrepreneurs showcase businesses at Delhi bazaar

Noida.(Agency)

From gender-neutral makeup and handcrafted jewellery to witty stickers poking fun at social norms, dozens of queer entrepreneurs showcased their businesses at a bazaar in Delhi Saturday.

"I ate gender norms for breakfast" and "My favourite season is the fall of patriarchy" read some of the cheeky one-liners on brightly coloured stickers that drew visitors to one stall. Elsewhere, bold makeup palettes challenged the idea that cosmetics belong to one gender, while perfumes, crochet art, home decor, textiles and apparel reflected the diversity of queer-owned businesses.

Queer Bazaar, a marketplace showcasing queer artistry, entrepreneurship and community, was organised at the LaLiT, Delhi, as the closing event of the hotel's Pride Month 2026 celebrations. Held in collaboration with Keshav Suri Foundation, the bazaar brought together LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs and creators, with organisers saying the initiative aims to provide queer-owned businesses a platform to showcase their work, reach customers and build sustainable livelihoods.

"The idea behind Queer Bazaar is to provide LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs with a platform to generate livelihoods and make their businesses visible," a member of Keshav Suri Foundation said, adding that the organisation regularly hosts such initiatives to promote entrepreneurship within the community.

For Riddhiman Jain, a 30-year-old trans man exhibiting handmade jewellery, the stall represented years of overcoming self-doubt. "I didn't go to college because I was ashamed of how people would look at me. I didn't have the confidence," he said. After learning jewellery-making through a diploma course by correspondence, he built his own brand. "Today I earn my living through this. My family took time to accept my identity, but their support made this possible. Financial independence is why I do this."

At another stall, Yangchen and a friend, both identifying as non-binary, displayed stickers and posters using satire to question gender norms. "Our art uses humour to take a dig at societal expectations," Yangchen said.

No longer 'cursed': CM Yogi Adityanath says Noida is now India's top investment destination

Noida.(Agency)

Declaring that Gautam Budh Nagar is "no longer cursed", chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said Noida, Greater Noida and the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority have emerged as the country's leading investment destination, driven by improved governance, faster project execution and a transformed work culture. Inaugurating the Noida Authority headquarters in Sector-96, the CM also inaugurated and laid foundation for 70 development projects worth Rs 2,479 crore, saying the region has evolved from a troubled industrial hub into a global manufacturing and investment centre.

Yogi said the Authority getting its own headquarters after 50 years was a landmark achievement and would become a new symbol of development. He said the new office would enable better coordination and help resolve the problems of citizens, farmers,

entrepreneurs and industrial associations under one roof. Marking International MSME Day, the chief minister also launched the curtain raiser for the 4th UP International Trade Show and distributed toolkits to beneficiaries of the One District One Product (ODOP) and Vishwakarma Shram Samman Yojana. He also distributed subsidy cheques to MSME units and beneficiaries of the technical upgradation scheme and Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan, besides honouring bankers for their performance. Recalling the long-held belief that visiting Noida brought bad luck to chief ministers, Yogi said previous CMs avoided the district because of the superstition. He said when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was to inaugurate the Noida Metro, the PMO suggested sending another minister instead. "I replied that I would come myself because I do not believe in such things. The government's responsibility is to solve people's problems," he said.

Yogi said one of the biggest challenges before his government after 2017 was resolving the builder-buyer dispute. Within a year, housing was provided to around 1.25 lakh homebuyers.

Later, after the Supreme Court constituted a high-level committee headed by the CEO of NITI Aayog, the government helped more than three lakh buyers get their homes. He said the Authority's new headquarters should become a model of efficient governance by taking all services online and integrating them with an Integrated Command and Control Centre. Directing officials to accelerate industrial development, Yogi asked them to issue deadline-based notices to allottees who had acquired Authority land but failed to invest. If investment was still not made, the land should be reallocated to new investors to create a fresh land bank.

Highlighting UP's transformation, the chief minister said he landed at Jewar Airport, where domestic commercial

flights have started and international services will begin soon. He said projects worth Rs 7,000 crore in electronic components and Rs 8,200 crore in solar cell manufacturing would make Gautam Buddha Nagar a major hub for electronics and solar manufacturing.

Contrasting the present with the past, Yogi said the region, once considered unsafe, is now witnessing projects such as Film City, Apparel Park, Medical Device Park and large industrial investments because of the "double-engine govt" led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Calling MSMEs the backbone of industrial growth, Yogi said the vision of a developed India rests on prosperous farmers, world-class infrastructure and strong manufacturing. He said the government transformed One District One Product into a nationally recognised brand by connecting artisans with branding, technology, design innovation and markets.

Open Plunder of 'Yellow Gold' on Pavi Jetpur Riverbank

Sand Mafia Operates Fearlessly Beneath Sihod Bridge Amid Alleged Administrative Nexus

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Pawan Makan

Chhota Udepur / Pavi Jetpur:

A major case of alleged illegal sand mining has surfaced from Pavi Jetpur taluka in Gujarat's Chhota Udepur district, raising serious concerns over the functioning of the local administration and the Mining Department. Illegal extraction of river sand has reportedly intensified beneath the Sihod Bridge and in nearby areas including Nalez, Padarwat, Oli Amba, and Tejgadh, where natural resources are allegedly being looted in broad daylight. According to local residents, heavy earthmoving machinery, including JCB excavators, is being used to extract sand from excessive depths in blatant violation of mining regulations. The extracted sand is then allegedly transported through a fleet of overloaded tractors operating without valid royalty permits. Eyewitnesses claim that nearly 150 to 200 overloaded tractors pass through the route every day, causing extensive damage to public roads worth crores of rupees and creating a constant risk of serious accidents for local commuters. Serious Questions Raised The alleged scale of the operation has prompted several questions regarding enforcement and accountability: If hundreds of overloaded tractors are operating daily, why have the local police and Mining Department's flying squads failed to stop



them? Despite previous raids and complaints, how has the alleged illegal mining resumed so quickly? Are influential individuals or political patrons protecting those involved? Continuous sand excavation near the foundations of Sihod Bridge has reportedly raised con-

cerns about the bridge's structural safety. If heavy monsoon flows trigger a structural failure, who will be held accountable? Public Anger Growing Residents claim that repeated written and verbal complaints have failed to produce any meaningful action. Frustrated by the continued inaction, locals have warned that they may launch a public agitation if authorities do not immediately crack down on the alleged illegal mining network and seize the vehicles involved. Attention is now focused on the Chhota Udepur district administration and senior authorities in Gandhinagar to determine whether decisive action will finally be taken against what residents describe as a well-organized illegal sand mining racket.

Sarthak's killers must not escape, says boss who reached hit & run spot first

Noida.(Agency)

Sarthak's killers must not escape." The words are both a plea and a promise for Akash Deep Choudhary, the city-based entrepreneur who was the first to reach the hospital after his colleague, Sarthak Mattoo (34), was run over by a Thar on Rajokri flyover on Thursday morning. For Akash, the horror began with a phone call at 6.45am. A passerby who found Sarthak critically injured on the flyover used his fingerprint to unlock his phone and called the last dialled number — one of his teammates, who then alerted Akash. "I called back immediately. The man told me Sarthak was in very bad shape.... Both his legs were crushed and dangling from the waist," Akash, co-founder of Enout, told. Sarthak had left early for Noida on his black Pulsar, riding ahead of his teammates who were following in two cars for an event assignment. He had joined the Gurgaon-based event company only three months ago after returning from the UK. "He was happy and had just cleared probation. We were working on big projects. He was one of the brightest people on our team. We were in Thailand days ago, then Bengaluru. He was always picked for the best work," he added. As Akash rushed towards Rajokri, he



called on the passerby's number again. By then, a PCR van had arrived.

"I spoke to a policewoman and asked where they were taking him. She said Safdarjung. I told them not to waste time and take him to the nearest private hospital. In such cases, every minute matters," Akash said. By the time Akash reached the hospital in Vasant Kunj, Sarthak had passed away. "I begged the doctors to save him. But they said there was nothing left to do." What followed was harder. On the way, Akash pulled out Sarthak's

emergency contact details from the company database and called his mother. He only told her there had been an accident and Sarthak had suffered injuries.

"She asked me how he was. I couldn't tell her on the phone. Telling his parents that their only child was no more... that was the hardest thing." When she eventually learnt that Sarthak had succumbed to injuries, his mother went silent. "She could not speak for three-four hours. Not a word. She spoke sobbed at the cremation," he added. The anger among Sarthak's family and

colleagues has only deepened since. Police said the Thar, carrying a Karnataka registration number, hit Sarthak from behind before making a sharp cut, causing him to skid and fall under its wheels. The driver fled. A case was registered under sections of rash driving, causing death by negligence, endangering life and causing hurt. Akash said what haunts him most is the thought that Sarthak might have survived had the SUV driver stopped and rushed him to hospital instead of fleeing. "In accidents like these, the first few minutes are everything. If he had been taken in sooner, who knows, Sarthak might still have been alive," he added.

Calling hit-and-run cases a growing pattern across the country, Akash said there has to be accountability. "This keeps happening in India. People hit someone and run, hoping to escape. It has become far too common. We cannot allow this case to fade away. Whoever did this must be found and punished," he added. Sarthak's father, Surender Mattoo, has appealed to PM Modi and home minister Amit Shah for justice. "It was his birthday. He would have turned 34 today. Instead, we lit his pyre. They left him on the road. They are killers. They should be behind bars," he added.

Odisha woman rejects man's advances. He sets her house ablaze with her inside

A woman in Sundargarh suffered severe burns after a man allegedly set her house on fire. Police have arrested the accused as investigators examine an alleged case of one-sided obsession.

Bhubaneswar. (Agency)

A 26-year-old woman suffered serious burn injuries after a man allegedly set her house on fire in an alleged case of unrequited love in Odisha's Sundargarh district. The accused has been arrested, and further investigation is underway, police said. The incident took place late on Friday night at a village in Bisra block of the district.

According to the preliminary investigation, the accused was allegedly obsessed with the woman and attacked her after she rejected his marriage proposal. Police said the woman was asleep inside her room when the accused allegedly poured petrol through a window before setting it on fire with the intention of killing her.

The victim's father, Jena Topo, alleged that his younger brother's wife spotted the accused, identified as Rajat Kiro, near the window moments before the fire broke out. He further claimed that Kiro had harassed his

daughter on several occasions after she rejected his marriage proposal.

Hearing the woman's screams and noticing the flames, family members and local residents rushed to the spot, rescued her from the burning house and shifted her to a private hospital in Rourkela.

Doctors said she sustained severe burn injuries – around 40 per cent, according to hospital sources – and remains in critical condition.

Police, accompanied by a scientific investigation team, inspected the scene and collected forensic evidence. Investigators suspect the attack was motivated by the accused's obsession with the woman, though the exact circumstances are still being probed.

"The accused has been arrested and will be produced before the court. Further investigation is going on," police told the reporters.



Speeding truck rams bike, crushes woman, her 3-year-old daughter in Surat

Surat. (Agency)

A speeding dumper allegedly rammed into a bike in Gujarat's Surat, killing a 22-year-old woman and her three-year-old daughter on the spot in the Bhestan area.

The victim, Rukshana Imran Sayyed, had visited her parental home with her daughters for Muharram. She was returning to her in-laws' house on a bike with her brother and two daughters when the out-of-control dumper allegedly struck the vehicle on the Bhestan bridge.

The impact threw the family onto the road, and Rukshana and her three-year-old daughter, Zainab, were crushed under the dumper's wheels, dying instantly. Her brother and four-year-old daughter, Haika, survived the crash.

The incident plunged the family into grief. Outside the Civil Hospital post-mortem room, relatives broke down in tears. Rukshana's husband, Imran Sayyed, a cloth

trader, said the family had suffered another devastating loss within a year, recalling that his brother's body had also been brought to the same mortuary last year. According to local residents, the dumper driver was allegedly under the influence of alcohol and was driving recklessly despite heavy traffic on the bridge.

The claims have not yet been officially confirmed by the police.

Bhestan police reached the spot soon after the accident, registered a case, detained the dumper driver, and launched further legal proceedings.

The tragedy triggered public outrage, with residents demanding strict punishment for the driver and stronger enforcement against heavy vehicles operating inside Surat city. Locals also urged authorities to crack down on reckless and allegedly intoxicated drivers to prevent similar tragedies.



Over 6.6 lakh register for Haryana CET group D; 4.45 lakh complete final submission

Panchkula. (Agency)

Registration for the Haryana Common Eligibility Test (CET) for Group D posts has witnessed a strong response, with over 6.60 lakh candidates registering so far and more than 4.45 lakh successfully completing the final submission of their application forms.

Sharing the update on Sunday, Haryana Staff Selection Commission (HSSC) Chairman Himmat Singh said that 660,645 candidates have registered for the CET Group D examination, while 445,002 applicants have already completed the final submission process. He advised candidates to fill out their application forms themselves instead of relying on others. Applicants should carefully verify all details before clicking the final submit button to avoid mistakes that may create difficulties later.

The HSSC Chairman also appealed to candidates not to pay attention to rumours or misleading information circulating on social media or other platforms. He urged them to rely only on official notifications and announcements issued by the Commission.

Weeks after shanties razed, Surat civic body shifts affected residents to temporary shelter

Surat. (Agency)

NEARLY A month after over 100 families of Nasirnagar in Ved Darvaja area of Surat were rendered homeless after a controversial demolition on "private land" they had allegedly encroached for nearly four decades, the Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) on Saturday shifted around 150 persons to a community hall nearby.

Earlier, 26 of the residents moved the Gujarat High Court (HC) seeking justice and rehabilitation, claiming that they were not issued any notices before the demolitions. The HC heard the matter on Thursday and sought an explanation from the municipal and police authorities while also directing representatives of Torrent Power Ltd to remain present in the court on Monday, when the matter will be heard next. The demolitions were carried out on May 30, 31 and June 1, clearing 106 structures.

Municipal Commissioner M Nagarajan told The Indian Express on June 8 that his officers had gone there only to demarcate a road. "The land is owned by a private party who has contributed a portion under the

town planning scheme for a road. Our team went to the spot for land marking (demarcation) the road area. As per the rules, a notice is to be issued to the inhabitants of slums and the slums are later demolished after hearing from them."

The residents, however, have claimed they were not issued any notice. On June 11,



Additional City Engineer and Central Zone deputy commissioner Ashish Naik claimed in a video that his team had carried out the demolitions, "to clear a road". Around June 20, he changed his stance and said the demolition was done by municipal officials. Nagarajan declined to comment further on the matter, saying it was before the HC.

Helping love bloom in the Autumn of life: Inside Bengaluru's senior matchmaking movement

Since its inception in 2002, Anubandh Foundation has been organising matchmaking events for elderly widows, widowers and divorcees

BENGALURU. (Agency)

It was an assemblage of widows, widowers and divorcees from across the country, all gathered for a senior citizens' matchmaking event in Bengaluru on June 6. It reflected a

find love that they lost, denied and forgotten. Organised by the Anubandh Foundation, the Bengaluru event marked its fourth edition and drew attention to a growing emotional need often

superintendent with the Union Ministry of Planning in Kutch district, he saw people left alone after losing their spouses and that impacted him deeply.

"The hotel where I was staying collapsed. I met many people who lost their spouses and were left alone. That experience stayed with me," Patel said. The foundation has been working across India since 2002 to help senior citizens find companionship, maintaining a database of over 12,000 individuals and facilitating 225 marriages.

Inquiries increased significantly after Covid as many elderly people lost partners and were left isolated. "After a certain age, if you lose your partner, your children are often busy with their own families.

quiet but growing reality among older adults -- the loneliness after loss and search for companionship in later part of life.

For many participants, the gathering was not just about remarriage alone, but about finding an emotional connection, care and another person to share everyday life with after years of living in isolation or within shrinking family circles. While some arrived alone, others were accompanied by their children, relatives or close friends, hoping to

spoken about only in private. The initiative is the brainchild of Natubhai Patel, the foundation president, who started it after witnessing the devastating impact of the 2001 Gujarat earthquake on individuals. While serving as a



Four killed, one injured as car plunges into gorge in Himachal's Chamba

Police identified one of the deceased persons as Lata Devi of Urei village in Bharmour, while the identities of the other deceased were being ascertained.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Four persons, including three women, were killed and another suffered serious injuries after the car they were travelling in plunged into a nearly

100-foot gorge in Himachal Pradesh's Chamba district on the Urei-Samra road under the Bharmour subdivision when the driver reportedly lost control, and the vehicle rolled down into a seasonal stream, police said.

Three occupants of the car died on the spot, while an injured passenger later succumbed to her injuries during treatment at Pt Jawaharlal Nehru Government Medical College in Chamba, police said. Police

identified one of the deceased persons as Lata Devi of Urei village in Bharmour, while the identities of the other deceased were being ascertained. Another injured occupant



is undergoing treatment at the medical college. According to police, the exact cause of the accident is yet to be established. Chief Minister

Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu expressed grief over the Chamba road accident and conveyed his condolences to the bereaved families. He said the state government stood firmly with the

affected families during this difficult time and directed the district administration to provide all possible assistance to them.

The chief minister also mourned the loss of six lives in a road accident on Friday evening on the Takleh-Kashapat road in the Rampur area of Shimla district.

He prayed for eternal peace for the departed souls and wished strength to the bereaved families to bear the irreparable loss.

Record stores, DJs & venue owners say new generation is embracing vinyl

Mumbai. (Agency)

When Abdul Razzak opened Royal Music Collection in Mumbai's Fort area in 1979, vinyl records were the dominant way Indians listened to music. Then came cassettes, CDs and streaming, pushing records to the margins. Nearly five decades later, many of the customers walking into his shop belong to a generation that never grew up with vinyl at all. "I've been running this store since 1979, and I've seen the entire journey of vinyl in India," says Razzak. "Vinyl records were popular for decades, but around 1990, production largely stopped. Then, around 2010, we started seeing a revival."

The resurgence is reflected in the numbers. According to market research firm IMARC, the Indian vinyl record market was valued at \$62.1

million in 2024 and is projected to reach \$112.5 million by 2033. For Razzak, the revival is most



visible in the customers walking through his doors. "A lot of young people are buying vinyl records now. They've grown up with CDs and

online music, but many are looking for something more physical they can get their hands on." While vinyl's revival is often framed as a generational shift, record store owners say the bigger change may be in what listeners are buying.

At Delhi Record Shop in Hauz Khas, owner Bachitter Singh says demand for electronic genres such as house, EDM and UK garage has grown significantly in recent years. "Traditionally, vinyl in India was associated with Bollywood, jazz and the music older generations grew up with," says Singh. "We're now seeing interest in a much wider range of genres." For 17-year-old collector Netra Sonchhatra, the journey began not with nostalgia but with one of the world's biggest pop stars.

Haryana eases pension revision for pre-2016 retirees granted notional increment

Panchkula. (Agency)

In a significant relief for retired Haryana government employees, the State Government has simplified the process for revising pensions of employees who retired before the Haryana Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 2016 came into force and have already been granted the benefit of one notional increment for pension purposes. The Finance Department has issued a general relaxation under Rules 6.24(4) and 6.24(7) of the Punjab Civil Services Rules, Volume-II, enabling eligible pension revision cases to be processed without seeking separate case-by-case approval from the Finance Department. The move is expected to reduce procedural delays and ensure uniform implementation across all government departments.

The order follows a large number of pension revision cases received from various administrative departments involving employees who retired before July 19, 2016, when the Haryana Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 2016, became applicable. These retirees had already been granted one notional increment under the Finance Department's instructions dated September 17, 2025, as clarified on June 2, 2026, but their pension revision required a separate relaxation under the pension rules for each individual case. To streamline the process, the government has now granted a general relaxation, allowing departments to revise the pensions of eligible retirees without referring each case to the Finance Department separately.

Proem on being and nothingness

Saai Sudharsan Sathiyamoorthy

It takes a special kind of ignorance to prance about and pontificate on the nature of being in 2026. To many, the word belongs in the museum—an ontological artefact that always says less than it means and means less than it suggests. And they may be right; the unshaken heart of well-rounded reality remained paradoxical even to the likes of Parmenides of ancient Greece. Ultimately, what logic proves and what we humans experience are often separated by a deep chasm: what is, for it is to be, but nothing it can be. For the best part, our perception is equally incapable of seeing this nothing (or néant) as it is of the infinite that swallows us up. Yet, it is precisely now—when algorithms compose music, create art, conduct research and murmur love into the ears of the lonely and desolate—that the topic becomes inevitable as it is pertinent. Starting a conversation with a chatbot is familiar and strange at once. It dehumanises intelligence into a statistical compression of how one talks rather than converse. It imitates and reiterates rather than self-realising. It processes data and patterns rather than understanding. Ultimately, artificial intelligence is a product of human intelligence, yet not a reflection of human conscience. It has also brought us with it a promethean shame, a humiliation born out of our collective imagination's failure to grasp the enormity of what we have set in motion. And it may well be the second invention in our history whose effects have exceeded human imagination—second only to the atom bomb.

AI represents a form of tertiary retention—arguably the most powerful exosomatic memory of our collective species, an involuntary appropriation of everything known, accelerated and crested to compete with our decaying somatic natural memory. And as with every technological advancement, it is both a poison and a cure, an enabler of our faculties as well as a source of the inevitable atrophy that is to follow. Like writing, it enables memory yet degrades natural memory. It is a pharmakon that ultimately substitutes human judgement and creativity with algorithmic output, yet it possesses the same plasticity that our brains do—the ability or intelligence that transforms, reforms and morphs with training.

While this plasticity enables AI to create seemingly original output, the ultimate result has no real author but only prompts and the training set. The output, as recent experiments have shown, even if almost indistinguishable from a human's work, is nothing but an unoriginal regurgitation of the training data, devoid of the aesthetic soul and meaning animating the experience of the output.

Take the case of art. What is generated by AI may end up being competent—even great—novels, paintings or music. But as we have come to learn, the experience of any art today leaves the audience with a sense of unease—a negative bias born out of scepticism. The death of the author is the moment when the audience acutely feels the loss of the author. It is only through the experience of authorless art that the audience learns what authorship entails and evokes. Once experienced, the longing for the aura of the artist never eviscerates. Put in another way, while existence precedes essence, once the truth of existence is revealed, we humans keenly observe how any type of meaning becomes articulated and every act of consciousness occurs and that our presence in the world multiplies relations, manifests a world of meaning. From this perspective, AI is a mode of revealing, a poesis, a way the world appears and manifests. And like many products of modern technology, it is transformational—the rivers become hydroelectric resources, Earth becomes coal reserves and humans become human resources. Trained on the totality of digitised human knowledge, humans have effectively become training data, a value to be prescribed in the form of the next node for prediction. The cycle is kept going with little friction and we, having become information organisms, chime along, comfortable and away from the authentic.

The Sarna code conundrum

Demands are being raised by Adivasi organisations for a separate religion code, Sarna

Air Marshal Amit Tiwari Retd

Two recent political events attracted public attention towards the demands of the indigenous communities. One, on May 3, just a day before the first phase of Census 2027 began, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren wrote to the President, Prime Minister and Jharkhand Governor, urging them to introduce a separate religion code by the name of 'Sarna' in Census 2027. In November, 2020 such a proposal was passed in the Jharkhand Legislative Assembly. Two, tribals got irked with Home Minister Amit Shah who addressed the Adivasis as 'Vanvasis' from the platform of Janjati Suraksha Manch last month. With the population enumeration phase of Census 2027 set in February next year, demands are being raised from Adivasi organisations for a separate religion code by the name of 'Sarna'. As per the orders of the Census conducted in the year 2001 and 2011, religions - Hindu, Muslim, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikh and Jainism were given a code from one to six. It was written in it that for 'other religions', the name of the religion may be written but no separate code number shall be allotted to them. However, a look into the history of Census reveals that tribals had a different code in the census from 1871 to 1951 under the title 'Aboriginals' and 'Tribe'. Later, these titles were removed and 'Others' was inserted. In the Census 2027, the category 'Others' has been removed which means that tribals may be forced to categorise themselves amongst one of the six religious categories. This, they believe, will directly impact their religious identity.

It is important to understand that Sarna Dharma is not a monolithic religion but a collection of diverse indigenous belief systems and practices that are deeply rooted in the cultural and spiritual heritage of different Adivasi communities. Most indigenous people claim to be nature worshippers and are not Hindus, Muslims or Christians. Over fifty lakh tribal people in the entire country had put their religion as 'Sarna' in the 2011 census although it was not a code. Votaries for the separate code allege that in the 2027 census, the Adivasis are being strategically put in the column of Hindus. A section of the Adivasis are demanding delisting from the Scheduled Tribe (ST) category of those who have converted to Islam or Christianity. Article 8 of the United Nations Declaration



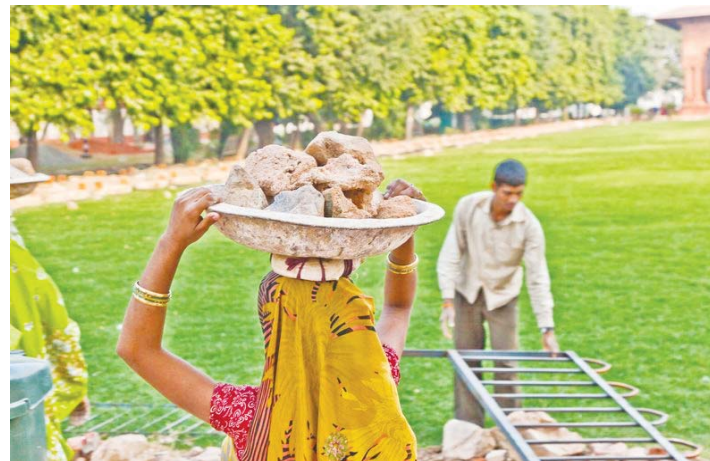
on Rights of Indigenous People states that 'Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture'. The moot question is how far does the government's denial to allot a separate religion code to Adivasis align with the provisions of the UN Declaration? Members of several tribal bodies from Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Chattisgarh, Bihar and Assam took part in the Maharally under the banner of the Rashtriya Adivasi Samaj Sarna Dharma Raksha Abhiyan. More than a hundred people from neighbouring Nepal joined it to extend their support. A resolution was passed in the West Bengal Assembly in 2023 and sent for the Centre's approval. Odisha, Chattisgarh, Bihar and Assam are also preparing to send similar proposals to the Centre. What about those tribals who would not like to categorise

themselves under the Sarna Dharma? For example, the Gond tribe has its own Gondi religion and its deity is Bada Dev. Similarly, South Indian tribes have their own religion. A serious question may arise for the Census Commissioner of India about whether to categorise the tribals demanding the Sarna religion under the 'Sarna' title and give them a separate code or bring the entire tribal community under the ambit of Sarna Dharma. If the former is agreed upon, it will give rise to the demand for varied tribal religion codes as per the beliefs of the communities in different states. If the latter is accepted, then tribals from some states might refuse to categorise themselves under the Sarna Dharma code. One of the solutions that could be thought over is to reinstall the religious category or separate code that was given to the tribals in the census 1951 as 'Tribe'.

Debt bondage : Those freed must be rehabilitated, supported

Unless employers who profit from bonded labour face meaningful consequences, the practice will continue in new forms

THE rescue of 28 Soliga tribals, including children, from a brick-kiln in Mysuru is grim evidence that bonded labour remains a reality in India despite being outlawed nearly five decades ago. Families were trapped by small advances, years of underpaid labour and a cycle of debt that effectively robbed them of their freedom. What makes the episode particularly troubling is that it involved a vulnerable tribal community. Poverty, illiteracy, landlessness and lack of access to formal credit often leave such groups at the mercy of labour contractors. A modest advance meant to tide a family over difficult times can quickly become an instrument of coercion. The Mysuru case is not isolated. Similar rescues have been reported from Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and other states in recent months. Brick-kilns, construction sites and small factories rely on informal labour



arrangements that frequently evade scrutiny. The persistence of such practices exposes a serious gap

between legal protections and their implementation on the ground. India has a robust legal framework to combat bonded labour. Rescue operations are essential. But the deeper challenge lies in ensuring rehabilitation, livelihood support and access to social security so that vulnerable families are not forced back into the same conditions.

Equally important is stricter monitoring of high-risk industries and swift prosecution of offenders. Unless employers who profit from bonded labour face meaningful consequences, the practice will continue in new forms. The freedom of rescued workers must not end with their release. For a nation committed to Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and aspiring to become Viksit Bharat, the continued existence of debt bondage is a stark contradiction. Inclusive development must be judged by how effectively the most vulnerable citizens are protected from exploitation.

Let walkers have their way

Creation and maintenance of pedestrian infrastructure should receive top priority

Sukirat

IN a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court (SC) has declared that the right to walk on demarcated footpaths is a fundamental right of citizens. It is covered under the right to life and the right to free movement. The SC has observed, "If a road exists, there must then be a duty to ensure that a footpath is maintained for walkers."

It is the duty of urban development agencies, municipalities and panchayats to demarcate, construct, maintain and safeguard footpaths for pedestrians, according to the apex court. This is perhaps the most unequivocal ruling on the rights of walkers delivered by an Indian court. The ruling is timely and welcome as it comes at a time when public policies are geared to the development of urban infrastructure - city roads and highways, flyovers, subways and so on. The infrastructure designed for motorised transport is projected as a symbol of development. On the other hand, creating or improving pedestrian infrastructure is not considered headline-grabbing work. Existing footpaths in Indian cities are hardly walkable. They are broken and obstructed, ill-designed and unfriendly to the elderly and generally unsafe for walkers, as shown by several walkability surveys done in cities and towns by government agencies and civil society groups.

Faulty public policies are to blame for the sorry state of footpaths in Indian cities. The National Urban Transport Policy adopted in 2006 had made a grand declaration that "people occupy centre stage in our cities and all plans would be for their common benefit and well-being." However, the actions, urban programmes and investments that followed this policy have done the opposite - giving primacy to motorised transport. The policies continue to address the demand for more and better road space for personal transport vehicles, parking spaces for cars and two-wheelers by encroaching upon space meant for

walking, and forcing more people to prefer motor vehicles even to access public transport.

The key reason for the apathy and neglect towards walkers is the lack of dedicated policies to promote walking at the national, state and city levels.

Hardly any Indian city has a walkability plan or a pedestrian policy. Since there are no specific policies, there are no agencies specifically in charge of footpaths or budgetary allocation for pedestrian infrastructure. State agencies like the Roads and Bridges Department, which construct roads, regard developing and maintaining footpaths as the responsibility of the city corporation, and vice versa. In any case, urban transport involves multiple agencies working at cross-purposes or blaming each other. There are no policy and programmatic linkages between transport planning and walkability. Long-term city master plans often overlook walkability requirements while suggesting high capital-intensive transport plans. Even when funds are allocated, they are used for the construction of badly designed and fancy-looking overhead crossings or foot overbridges.

Wherever pedestrian infrastructure is developed, it is designed with the mindset of car or two-wheeler users. Pedestrians need not traverse the same linear path or take the long routes taken by motor vehicles. This would mean that pedestrian pathways need not be only along roads. For instance, a short pedestrian pathway can be designed to connect two adjoining localities instead of forcing walkers to take the same route as motor vehicles.

Walking is not just a fundamental right of citizens, as defined by the Supreme Court, but also good for human and planetary health. For several years now, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has advocated the health benefits of walking. Physical inactivity and a sedentary

lifestyle have been recognised among the key risk factors for a range of non-communicable diseases like diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke and cancer. The WHO prescribes 20-30 minutes of brisk walking, along with cycling, as the best way to remain physically active. Investing in policies to promote walking can also contribute directly to achieving many of the 2030



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For this, the health agency has recommended policy actions to enable and promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport, based on the principles of safe, universal and equitable access by people of all ages and abilities.

Walking is also a form of climate action. A study by the Institute for Transport and Development Policy has shown that improved footpaths and walking infrastructure are a cost-effective means to mitigate

greenhouse gas emissions, besides improving public health and saving money for residents.

Anyone using public transport walks at least four times a day, provided safe and adequate walking infrastructure is available. The study, done in Chennai, found that 4,200-12,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide-equivalent greenhouse gas emissions were prevented annually due to improvements in footpaths. This was equivalent to taking 1,000-2,900 cars off the road for one year.

In every discussion on footpaths, the question of encroachment by vendors invariably crops up. The SC as well as the government have dealt with this question in the past. The Court had observed that pedestrians and vendors can co-exist if vending is properly regulated. After all, vendors make available vegetables, fruits and other items of daily use which people can buy while they walk to work or home.

The 2004 National Policy on Urban Street Vendors (amended in 2009) proposed the creation of three zones - restriction-free vending, restricted vending and no-vending on footpaths - taking into consideration factors such as traffic congestion and demand patterns. In addition to street vendors, footpaths are also encroached upon by shopkeepers as an extension of their shops and homeowners for parking and developing gardens on public spaces in residential colonies.

The SC ruling has provided an opportunity to review policies and programmes concerning footpaths and plug the gaps to ensure fair use of road space. The creation and maintenance of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure should receive top priority in Indian cities and towns as well as villages along national highways. It is a matter of public safety, public health, climate and equity.



Not all home decorating ideas require a heavy investment of time and money. If you're looking for a few affordable home interior decorating ideas to freshen up a room over a weekend, Make your home distinct with these little accent



Ideas for perfect home Decoration

- **Lay an area rug** : An area rug is a wonderful way of defining a conversation area. Try one that complements the room. Lay it at an angle beneath your coffee table.
- **Group figurines** : Pull out your favourite collectibles. Show off your personality. Find a display area and group related objects together, in sets of three or five. Try and vary the shapes.
- **Add a throw or Afghan** : Similar to decorative pillows, throws and Afghans add texture to your furniture. They come in all kinds of natural and man made fabrics. Find a pattern and style that you like.
- **Replace lamps** : Lamps are probably the one thing in your home that will give others a clue that your room is outdated. Seek out new and fresh lamps that make a statement.
- **Add decorative pillows** : The good news about decorative pillows is that they are an easy way to add textures and patterns to a room. Still better, they can be changed to jazz up a sofa or chair before your room is ready for a major makeover.
- **Add candles/candle holders** : This is

- always a winner. If you have some intriguing candle holders, try those. Use at least two candle holders for balance.
- **Display a figurine or sculpture** : Any eye-catching sculpture or figurine will make a wonderful statement as well as a conversation piece.
- **Display books** : Display a few hardcover books that are interesting and have covers which tie into your decor colour scheme. Preferably, the books should be the larger versions, but should not be too thick.
- **Display pottery** : Earthy and warm, pottery makes a great addition to your interior decor.
- **Display straw baskets** : Similar to pottery, straw baskets add charm and warmth to your home.
- **Use a decorative screen** : A decorative screen makes an excellent backdrop in any room. It adds dimension and texture. If your room is decoratively challenged, try some of these ideas to add life to your interiors.



Rearrange the furniture: Pull your furniture away from the walls. Try positioning it at intriguing angles. Arranging the sofa diagonally across the narrow living room will make the room look wider and provide a warm, inviting layout.

- **Paint, paint, and clean:** You will be surprised by what a coat of new paint or cleaning your existing mouldings and doors will do to any room, or to your entire house. Don't forget baseboards, mouldings and doors. Find new colours and useful utensils at your local home improvement store.

- **Paint a wall:** Paint one wall with your

favourite colour and make it the focal point. Hang interesting art on that wall and move a nice piece of furniture there.

- **Bring in plants** : Greenery always adds a breath of fresh air to a room. If you don't have a green thumb, try silk plants and trees. The quality is so good that it's hard to distinguish them from the real thing.

- **Toss in colour** : Bright colours and good lighting work together produces instant cheerfulness.

- **Ladle on the light** : One of the most important things is to have all the natural light you possibly can. People respond very well to

light.

- **Dress up** : Creative use of mouldings, fabrics, even paint will do magic around your doors and windows. You will find them in wood or synthetic at your home improvement store.
- **Hang pictures or a mirror** : Hang pictures that reflect your personality. Try frames that are more ornate. When hanging a mirror, try and position it so that it reflects and nice view or an interesting architectural element.
- **Do not clutter** : Clutter always works against you. Keep it simple. Add vertical space with shelves or bookcases in closets or other areas to minimise cluttering as much as possible.

Use old scrap for chic Interiors

There's more you can do with your interiors; use old scrap to make pretty home decor items.
ashok kumar mudetiya tells you how...

We have moved into an era where all people can think is about going green. Recycling is passe. The trend that has made a buzz now is upcycling, that is, reusing vintage products such that you can make it into something of a higher value.

Basically, it is about using products for a little more time before there is place in the landfill so it can be discarded. Though greentailing is not all that hyped up in India as it is abroad, it sure has grabbed many an eyeball. Gone are the days, when all that youth could think of is draining their brains. A lot of our youngsters are making a business out of recycling and well, what's better when you can both make money and tell mother nature that you care.

Upcycling, like mentioned earlier, is quite a rage in the West, especially when it comes to home decor. But fret not! For all of you who like trying out and customising goods at home, here are some fun ideas for you to try out



yourself at home:

1. Bind your old hard cover books together (side by side), such that it looks like a plank. You can use this as a book shelf and place them on your wall. This is a funky way of upcycling.
2. To get that rustic look, you can use cane sieves (the ones with which your moms and mom-in-laws sieve rice in) to make it into a photo-frame. How? Well, just paint them in funky ways, give them different strokes with different hues and you can paste your photographs on them before placing them on the wall. You could also make a photo wall, by placing many sieves in different angles (like if you place one horizontally, place the other vertically and otherwise).
3. Use your old coasters as a wall hanging. Use colourful ribbons or threads to tie up the coasters after they're painted in your style, and then place them on your wall. You could do the same with your tea sieves, by painting them up and hanging them on the wall.
4. Radhika Khaitan, who is an upcycler herself, says you can use old baked beans tins, or beer bottle tins in many ways. Clean the tins up and paint it to use it as a flower vase. She also says that you can stack many a newspaper together, glue them up together and cut them such that they make pretty coaster.
5. Take small boxes, glue up your favourite magazine articles on them, and also sequence the edges to use it as a showpiece for your desk.
6. Another upcycler, Suren Vikhash U says, "You can use tetra pack containers to make pen stands by cutting them partially in the middle. This is a good and easy way to upcycle." 7. Use your old cartons and boxes, paint them or cover them up with colourful paper, place sequins on them, and use the end-product as a magazine or newspaper holder. These are just some simple methods you can use to make your home decor look both classy and eco-friendly. Well, there are a lot more ways to do the same and customise your home decor according to your personal style. After all, your home should reflect your personality and what better way to do up your interiors your way.



How to style your old lampshade

You love your lampshade but it's been in your room for too long. You don't want to part with it or replace it. But you also want something new. What do you do? Change the colour of the shade into striking neon. Print your favourite quote or song lyrics on a cloth and make it into a shade. Reinventing the lampshade is the quickest way to preserve the old, yet get a new look. Be it shape, colour, texture - lamps can add aesthetics to any room. These days, people are joining lampshade-making classes, where they are encouraged to create pieces of artwork on paper, and then convert it into a shade. Making a lampshade requires a suitable fabric, a wire frame and panels. Says lamp designer Natasha Wadhwa, "Look for unusual Japanese or Chinese silk patterns, paisleys, funky tassels, new material to give your shades your signature style. I use buttons, vintage zari, and floral pins on my lamps. If you want to be eco-friendly, go for paper lanterns, or edgy bamboo lamps."



Smart storage under Staircase

The space below the staircase can be utilised for storage or as a display area maximising space with smart ideas that are innovative and useful is what homemakers are looking for these days.

However, finding a solution that is utilitarian and attractive becomes an interesting challenge. Most furniture these days is modular, incorporating some storage facility to maximise utility. Beds and sofas come with storage. Wood chests, apart from being decorative, allow you to store trinkets. Study tables come with cubbyholes and shelves for added

storage. Another alternative to maximise storage that will not bring in new furniture is the creation of storage in an odd space in the home, such as the area below the staircase.

ALCOVE

Many home owners are efficiently utilising the space below the staircase and some of the space abutting the staircase to create an alcove. The area beneath the staircase is quite valuable when space is at a premium. There are many ideas on how to make the most of this otherwise lost space.

TV CABINET

We could all use some extra storage space and the space under the stairs could be ideal for a variety of storage needs. This space can be used for concealed storage or for housing a TV cabinet if

need be. Both are extremely practical and good options that are seen in most homes.

BUILT-IN SHELVES

If the staircase has a high intermediate landing, then the space below can be considered for shelving. Built-in storage with shelves and drawers that will take care of the

oddest cranny is the most basic way to utilise the space. For convenience, two cupboards can be built and the one with the highest point can be used to store unwieldy long coats or sports equipment such as golf clubs and cricket bats. All other knickknacks can be stored in the various drawers and shelves in the remaining space. This idea works well when the stairwell runs behind a door or if the staircase is in a small area.

NOOK TO RELAX IN

Having bookcases under the staircase are a good way to use space that would otherwise be wasted. Besides, you can also consider creating a niche activity space under the stairs. If your staircase faces the living room, you could have a music area or a bar. It can be a small home office, or even a small hobby or craft room.

If your staircase is located close to the utility area, it could serve as a convenient location for a small laundry room. If your staircase runs down into the front hallway, the area beneath could house a shoe rack. If it goes up to the

bedroom, you could have a mini cabinet or a wardrobe under the stairs.

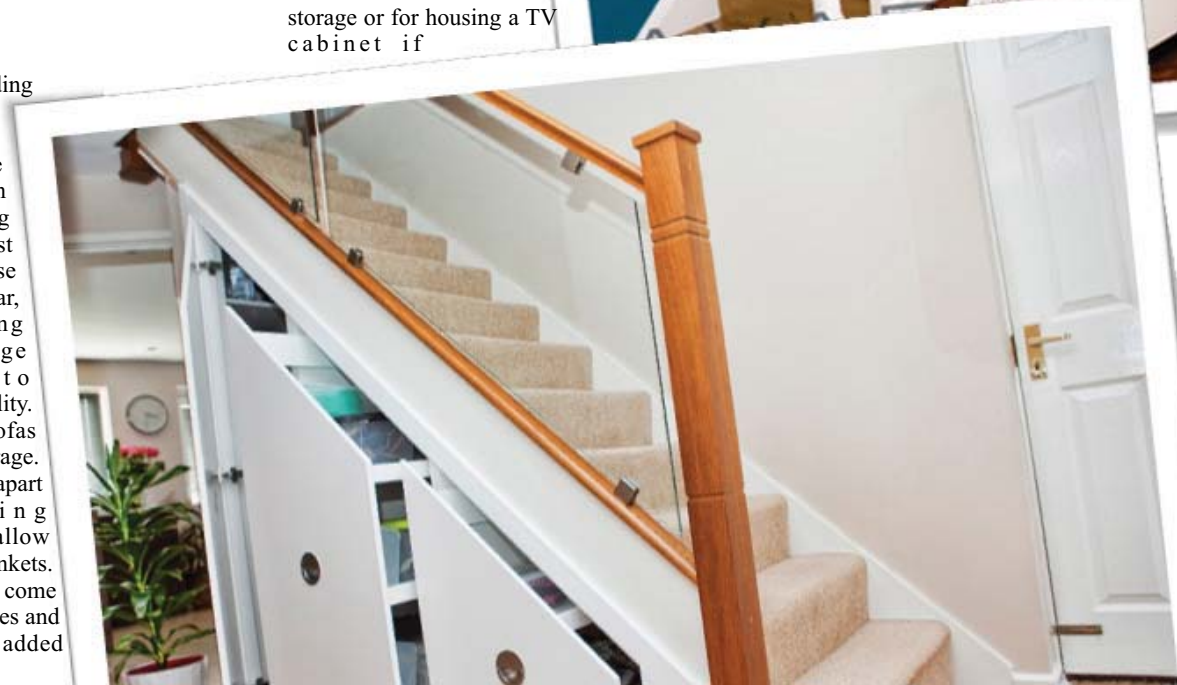
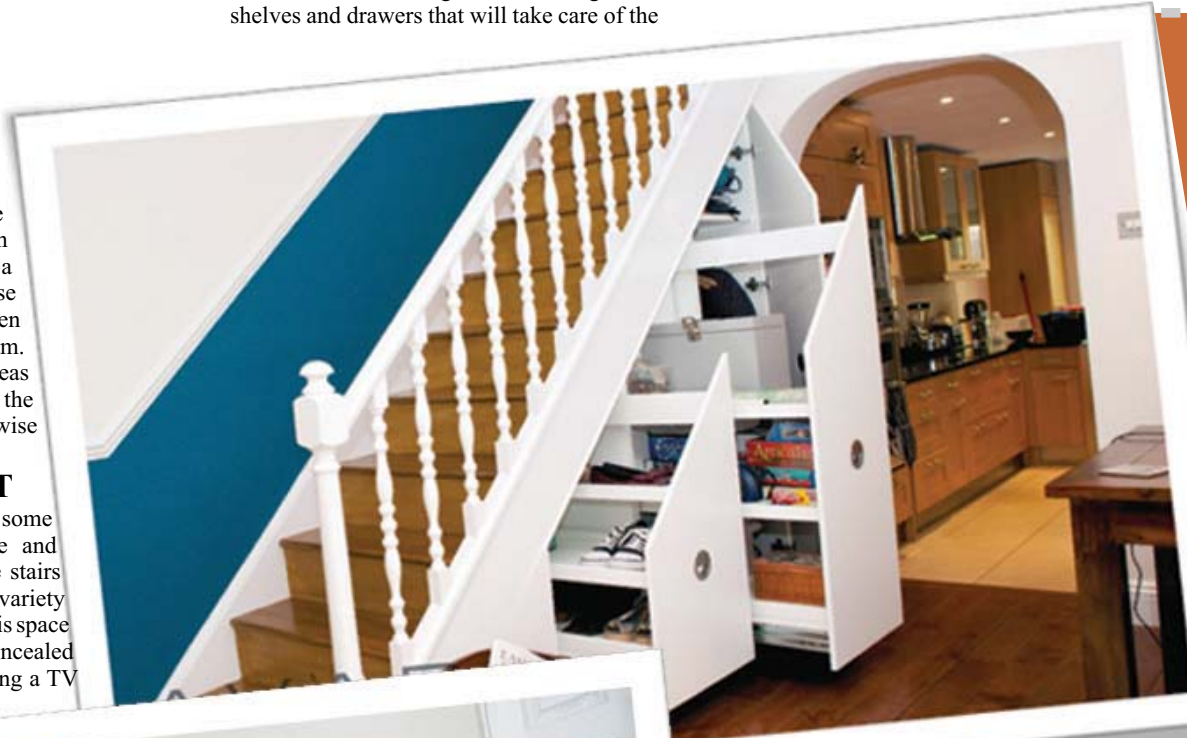
STORAGE FOR TOYS

It could also serve as an efficient toy storage area for your children. For a toy storage area, find baskets, plastic tubs or bins of different sizes and then design shelving of different heights and widths to accommodate them.

Ensure that these storage spaces are both attractive and easy to access. It can be simply shelved out and left open, or covered as a cabinet, or covered as a complete cupboard.

KITCHEN CABINETRY

If the staircase is in the dining room, consider having a superior quality wine storage cabinet below the stairs. Neat wood racks meant for wine bottles along with a temperature control mechanism will occupy little space as opposed to making a separate wine cellar. Smart shutters with glass can let you have a good view of your wine collection.



Choosing the best kitchen

connected to the dining area; some may build a beautiful temple, some may have just an idol; some may like it centrally air conditioned, whereas others may decide how to place it manually.

WOMEN DECIDE

Gone are the times where everything was accepted. The women, today, customise their bedrooms, their verandah, and the kitchen. The kitchen truly is the heart of the home and social gatherings.

THE TEMPLE OF FOOD

Kitchen designs are of various types. The one wall style, which is generally opted in for service or studio apartments, offers to save as much space as possible. The galley style, which is a walk-through kitchen, is designed with two walls opposite to each other utilising every inch of space. The L-shaped kitchen, which

The present-day women choose their kitchens according to their own likes and conveniences, rather than picking what is trending in the market spaces. Interior design is the wishful thinking for a beautiful living.

People spend more than half of our lives indoors. It is said 'home is where heart is'. It definitely is a very true saying. Indoors refer to a house, which can be a bedroom kitchen flat, a studio apartment or a bungalow. The place where we stay is a major asset for us. It provides us security, a sound sleep, area to cook food, and most importantly, peace of mind.

PERCEPTION MATTERS

For every individual, the way of living is distinct, they may be living alone, in a nuclear family or a joint family. The more the number of people in the house, the more diversified is the way and need of living, some may want to apportion the drawing and living rooms, some may want to keep it as an elementary seating. Some may like their kitchens to be closed and walled well, some may like it open and

is designed basically for medium-sized kitchens, offers as much as workspace as possible. Likewise, the horseshoe or the U-shaped kitchen has three walls and the island (platform) in a similar shape, so that more than one person can work comfortably in the kitchen at the same time.

Few housewives who either have redone and renovated their kitchen, or have designed it the way they want it in a newly-bought house, have many common and related ideologies of designing a kitchen as a bright and a well-lit space, have proper ventilation, lots of room for storage. Some of them had Indian conventional style of cooking.

Narendra Kaur Bagga, a housewife, says, "I have seen how trends change, but in my kitchen, I feel connected to the house, talking to my husband becomes easier while I cook and I can serve easily. Also, I can attend guests simultaneously, take a peek on what is going on the television, I do not have a door to my kitchen, it is open."

How to maximize your Space at home

When there is no room to spare, maximizing the potential of every inch becomes critical. Ajit Chellapan, of Gimi, India, shares some tips...



elements are taken into consideration for people whose main focus is the functioning of their home. Apart from that, the clean look of modern interiors make homeowners love this type of concept which is clutter free and stress free. Untapped accommodation space under the staircase, wall mounted cabinets, can also help in storing most of the items which helps in saving space. Using of compact home utility products also provides a perfect solution for making your homes look clutter and stress free.

Role of Technology: Innovation and technology plays a major role. Most of the products available in the market today are driven by innovation and backed with technology. For example, with the advent of Nitrogen technology (originated in Italy) uses Nitrogen that is blown into the pipes/handles of the product at a very low temperature (-20 degrees) during the injection phase to empty the closed cavities from the inside making them exceptionally resistance to bending and twisting making the products long lasting. This type of technology is used in products such as balcony cloth dryer, ironing boards etc. This

Small spaces can be quite cozy, but squeezing-in is often challenging. When you're pressed for space, the "pile" can be your worst enemy. When there is no room to spare, maximizing the potential of every inch becomes critical. This is typically seen in a family setting where it is challenging to find space in a small house or an apartment thus being a major cause of concern. Due to this constraint a lot of things are usually

dropped. The only solution to save space is being 'Creative'.

Most Essential: Since storage space is at a premium in smaller homes, being creative is an important part which will help in designing the minimum space at your home. You can opt for minimalism concept as well. Minimalistic design is softer, more personal and easier to live with. Generally in a minimalist design, only the most essential

makes the product not only strong but also makes the product sturdy.

Latest Advances: Technology has come a long way over the last several years. Keeping updated with the latest advances is a great way to save space. Today we have table top ironing boards which are portable to carry even when you're on a vacation! It's light and compact and can be kept inside your suitcase as well. This type of ironing board helps you to re-iron you're already ironed clothes sitting anywhere in your home or even your hotel rooms. Balcony cloth dryers have also become a popular choice today among homemakers for its compact user friendly design that helps in drying your cloths outside/inside your

balcony with ease. To save space, use stackable appliances where possible. New designs for home appliances, such as washers, dryers and iron boards and take up less room in your home.

Avoid Clutter: Once all the initial arrangements in a house are made, it does become difficult after some time to accommodate more items with time. Hence sleek, elegant and compact home utility products are in more demand for their innovative design module. Look for pieces that are multi-functional or adjustable, such as a dining room table with expanding leaves or for two in-one sofa cum bed sets to avoid clutter inside the house.



Former Delhi health services chief arrested in Rs 350-crore medical procurement case

With the arrest of Dr Vatsala Agarwal, the total number of arrests made by the Anti-Corruption Branch in connection with this case has risen to three.

New Delhi.(Agency)
The Delhi government's Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) Thursday arrested former Director General of Health Services (DGHS) Dr Vatsala Agarwal in connection with an alleged procurement scam involving Rs 350 crore worth of medicines, surgical supplies, and medical equipment. Agarwal was taken into custody as part of the ACB's ongoing investigation into alleged financial irregularities in government procurement.
On June 19, the ACB arrested Dr Vijay Kumar Ranga in the same case. Following his arrest, investigators took him into custody for questioning to probe the alleged irregularities and the roles of officials involved.
According to ACB officials, the alleged

scam is linked to the procurement of medicines, surgical items, and medical equipment worth several hundred crore



rupees through the Central Procurement Agency (CPA), which functions under the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).
The ACB is examining financial transactions, procurement procedures,

and officials' involvement in the alleged irregularities.

With the arrest of Dr Vatsala Agarwal, the total number of arrests made by the ACB in connection with the case has risen to three. The investigation is ongoing.

The officials said the Directorate of Vigilance, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD), had submitted a complaint alleging large-scale irregularities in the procurement of medicines, surgical items, consumables and medical equipment by the CPA under the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

It was alleged that certain public servants and private individuals entered into a criminal conspiracy and manipulated procurement processes, tender conditions

and technical specifications to provide undue advantage to selected firms and suppliers, causing wrongful loss to the government exchequer and corresponding gain to private parties.

On Friday, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) also sought documents related to the alleged scam from the DGHS. The agency has sought records and documents pertaining to CPA and the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002. It has also sought details on the procurement of portable X-ray machines, C-Arm radiological equipment, anaesthesia workstations, oral rehydration solution (ORS), bed sheet covers, surgical items, including dressings, sutures, cannulas, and gloves, and medicines.

'We are left helpless': Demolitions continue along Yamuna's O-Zone

New Delhi.(Agency)
Weeks after the Delhi government clarified that no demolition will be carried out in the Yamuna floodplain's O-Zone area, several houses along the floodplains were still razed on Thursday, with authorities claiming that the demolished structures were not protected from punitive action. The drive had left the displaced families to grapple with an uncertain future.

Only 91 unauthorised colonies have been exempted from demolitions, as per the Delhi High Court order on May 23. On Thursday, around 30 houses at the Yamuna Bazaar were razed by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). Earlier this month, demolitions were also carried out along Pusta Road, Pradhan Garden, Khadda Colony and Jaitpur Part-II.

Zone 'O' is an ecologically sensitive floodplain area where permanent construction is prohibited as per several National Green Tribunal (NGT) and High Court orders.

Ruby, 25, one among the many residents whose house was razed as part of the drive, was forced to move to a rented room nearby for her family of five. "I have two daughters. The younger one is only two years old. When they were demolishing our homes, she was crying 'Mumma andhar jaana hein.. (I want to go inside my home)'. She is now forced to pay a rent of Rs 5,000 a month for the room. "Everybody here is looking for a place to live and food to eat. We don't know what to do. We are left helpless."

Another resident, Rajiv Pandit, who had been living along the floodplains for decades, said, "Those who had some money could find a place to stay in rented rooms. But the majority here are labourers. Where will we go?"

Meanwhile, DDA in a response to The Indian Express said, "The actions being undertaken at Yamuna Bazaar form part of the larger floodplain restoration programme aimed at protecting the ecological integrity of the river corridor and restoring the historic ghats and floodplain areas."

Delhi CM suspends 7 officials over irregularities in procurement, storage of medicines

New Delhi.(Agency)
The Delhi government on Saturday suspended seven officials, including five pharmacists, after an investigation uncovered alleged irregularities in the procurement, storage and management of medicines at various stores of the Central Procurement Agency (CPA).

The action comes after a report was published by The Indian Express on Saturday, flagging alleged lack of storage space for life-saving medicines, including anti-rabies vaccines, at a CPA warehouse in West Delhi's Janakpuri.

The Indian Express report highlighted that a consignment of over 1.27 lakh vials of anti-rabies vaccine meant for the city's public healthcare facilities has remained undelivered because the designated government warehouse lacks adequate cold storage capacity, according to a letter sent by the Serum Institute of India to the CPA. Anti-rabies vaccine is important for the city as Delhi has witnessed a surge in stray dog attacks and rabies risks, with the Supreme Court last year expressing concern about such incidents.

The Delhi government on Saturday initiated an inquiry into the functioning of CPA stores and serious irregularities in the procurement, storage and management of medicines were revealed during the probe, according to the Chief Minister's Office.

CM Rekha Gupta said the government has adopted a "zero-tolerance" approach towards corruption and administrative negligence. "The Delhi government follows a zero-tolerance policy against corruption. Corruption, negligence or irregularities at any level of the administration will not be tolerated," Gupta said in a statement. She said strict action would continue against any officer or employee found guilty of misconduct. According to the government, the inquiry uncovered serious lapses in the functioning of multiple CPA stores, leading to the suspension of the seven officials pending further proceedings.

Phase I of CUET-based DU undergrad admissions begins across 67 colleges

Candidates who appeared for CUET-UG 2026 can register through the Common Seat Allocation System, with the second phase expected to begin next week.

New Delhi.(Agency)
The University of Delhi has begun its first phase of registrations for the 2026-27 academic session. More than 71,000 students had applied for the undergraduate seats.

The university has commenced Phase I of admission—registrations under the Common Seat Allocation System (CSAS) for candidates who appeared in the Common University Entrance Test (CUET-UG) 2026 and are seeking admission to its undergraduate programmes.

"The registrations have been opened in the first phase. The second phase will definitely be opened by next week," Dean of Admissions Haneeet Gandhi

said. Admissions to 73 undergraduate programmes and more than 100 BA programme combinations offered



across 67 colleges will be based solely on CUET-UG 2026 scores, subject to programme-specific eligibility criteria.

Candidates can register on the CSAS

portal using only their CUET-UG 2026 application number.

The university said candidates' essential details, including name, date of birth, photograph and signature, have been auto-integrated through Centre's API Setu to minimise data-entry errors and enhance security.

After completing Phase I, candidates will have to participate in Phase II, during which they will map their CUET test papers with the subjects studied in Class 12 and submit their preferences for programmes and college combinations. The university will determine candidates' eligibility based on this subject mapping before preparing allocations.

Rajasthan horror: Girl, 13, sold to hotel owner, raped by 30 men over 5 days

New Delhi.(Agency)
A 13-year-old girl was allegedly raped by more than 30 men over five days in Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagar. The purported instances of sexual assault are said to have taken place in several hotels.

According to the FIR filed by the police, the survivor's ordeal began after she went missing from her home and was subsequently sold to a hotel owner by a rickshaw puller.

Several other hotel operators are also accused of being involved in the alleged sexual exploitation of the minor. An attempt was allegedly made to suppress the criminal episode.

A number of hotel owners and managers have been arrested in



connection with the case. The teenage girl was forced to consume alcohol whenever she experienced pain from the repeated instances of rape, she has claimed in the FIR. The alleged incident has sparked a wave of outrage across the district. Even though it is not a popular tourist destination, there are more than 150 illegal hotels operating in Sri Ganganagar. The incident has

resulted in demands to shut down such establishments.

The Congress staged a protest, demanding strict action against all the accused, including the rickshaw puller and the hotel operators.

Congress MLA from Karanpur, Rupinder Singh Kunnar, participated in the demonstration, saying that the culprits should be given capital punishment. The opposition party has warned the administration that a broader agitation will be launched to ensure justice if immediate action is not taken in the case. It has also demanded the suspension of officials of the concerned police station. Kunnar said that the alleged incident exposed the failure of the local police.

No delay in honouring Operation Sindoor heroes: Defence Ministry

The Defence Ministry has rejected claims that six Operation Sindoor personnel were acknowledged only recently. It said official tributes, gallantry awards and memorial honours had already recognised their sacrifice.

New Delhi.(Agency)
Amid a political row over the six personnel killed during Operation Sindoor, the Defence Ministry said on Saturday that the nation had paid homage to them at the "earliest opportunity" and that their memory would always be honoured with dignity, gratitude and reverence. It said the fallen personnel had already been formally recognised through tributes, gallantry awards and ceremonial honours.

The statement came after the Congress accused the government of concealing the sacrifice of the six bravehearts for a year by not recognising their martyrdom. The ministry rejected that charge, saying reports and social media

posts suggesting that their sacrifice had been acknowledged only recently were incorrect. Without naming anyone, the ministry said "certain reports circulating in sections of the media and on social media platforms have incorrectly suggested that the supreme sacrifice of six bravehearts during Operation Sindoor have been acknowledged or brought to public notice for the first time only recently". It added, "It is clarified that the nation paid homage to these fallen heroes at the earliest opportunity, well before the reports in question."



The ministry said that during an official press conference on May 11, 2025, the then director general of military operations had paid solemn tribute to the soldiers and specifically acknowledged their sacrifice in the line of duty during

Operation Sindoor. It also said the six personnel were "conferred with gallantry awards" and that this was published in a press release on August 14, 2025, constituting "a formal and national recognition of their valour and supreme sacrifice".

According to the ministry, the Indian Army's official social media platforms also carried tributes to the personnel "without delay". It added that during the Army Day Parade in Jaipur on January 15 this year, the Chief of the Army Staff presented the Sena Medal (Gallantry) to the families of three of the soldiers, while the Chief of the Air Staff did the same on October 8, 2025.

Kratikal Tech's ₹39.7-Cr SME IPO to Open on Tuesday

New Delhi.(Agency)

AI-driven cybersecurity firm Kratikal Tech Ltd will launch the ₹39.7-crore initial public offering (IPO) for public subscription on June 30. The three-day issue, which will close on July 2, is entirely a fresh issue of up to 29.4 lakh equity shares. The anchor portion will open for a day on June 29, the company said in a statement.

The company has fixed a price band at ₹128-135 per share. Its shares will be listed on the BSE SME with a tentative listing date fixed as July 7, it added. The IPO proceeds will be used for investments in its subsidiaries - Threatcop FZ LLC, UAE, and Threatcop AI Inc, USA - towards sales and marketing activities and workforce expansion, besides funding product development and meeting general corporate requirements. The proceeds from the issue will enable us to accelerate our global expansion, strengthen our product portfolio, invest in innovation, and further enhance our sales, marketing, and talent capabilities across key markets," Pavan Kumar, Chairman, MD & CEO of Kratikal Tech Ltd, said.

Kratikal Tech operates an AI-driven Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) cybersecurity platform and serves more than 677 clients through its People Security Management platform, Threatcop, and technology and process security solutions under the Kratikal brand. For FY26, the company reported revenue of ₹36.72 crore and profit after tax of ₹6.14 crore.

Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles plans 4 new EVs, over 10 refreshes by FY31

New Delhi.(Agency)

With India's electric vehicle adoption crossing the 'early adopters' phase, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles is turning to majority of customers to drive EV adoption with four new products and over ten refreshes lined up for launch by FY31 to sustain its leadership position. Early Adopters are those consumers who adopt a new idea or technology to gain a competitive edge. The company is preparing for the next phase of growth in its electric vehicles segment, eyeing over 30 per cent EV penetration by FY31, according to an investor presentation.

"Currently, EVs are being considered by the early majority; they will enhance products to drive adoption among early and late majority customers," the company said. Early majority consumers are those who need to see successful case studies before buying, while late majority consumers are skeptical individuals who adopt only after the average person has adopted a new idea or technology. EV adoption in India has crossed "from early adopters into the early majority -- the volume heart of the market", it said.

According to the company, early adopters account for 13.5 per cent of the EV market, while the early majority and late majority make up 34 per cent each, and laggards constitute 16 per cent. Innovators are a minority at 2.5 per cent.

Innovators are risk-takers who love being the very first to try new things, while laggards are traditionalists who resist change and are the last to adopt.

On the company's product plans to drive future growth, it said, "By FY31, we will have a portfolio of 10 EV nameplates. We have a sustained launch cadence for the next phase of growth to strengthen our portfolio comprehensively." Its current nameplates are Xpres-T, Curvv.ev, Harrier.ev, Nexon.ev, Punch.ev and Tiago.ev.

Four new products will be launched by FY31 along with over ten facelifts and refreshes of the existing portfolio, it added. Upcoming products include Sierra.ev, one product based on its Avinya concept and two other models, as per the investor presentation. Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles said it is also working to increase the range of its EVs by two to three times and faster charging by three times, while increasing the energy density of batteries by 20-23 per cent.

ACs lose steam, cold drinks stay in demand: Here's what consumers are buying this summer

New Delhi.(Agency)

Summer is here and the season has brought cheers for some while chills for others. Beverages, dairy and ice cream continued to fly off the shelves during the June quarter, air-conditioner makers saw demand lose steam amid unseasonal weather and higher prices.

Industry executives said that products linked to refreshment, hydration and impulse buying continued to perform well, but cooling appliances, particularly air conditioners, failed to see the usual seasonal demand.

Godrej Enterprises Group Business Head and EVP (Appliances Business) Kamal Nandi told PTI that performance differed across appliance categories. While refrigerators continued to witness robust demand across both premium and mass-market segments, washing machine sales have started improving with the arrival of the monsoon. "Refrigerator is doing very well, and demand is high both for mass and premium segments. Washing machine demand is also picking up as we are entering the monsoon season," Nandi told. Air conditioners, however, are feeling the heat. "June across the country, including north India, AC sales have gone down. At an industry level, sales have declined," he said. Nandi said changing weather patterns, including thunderstorms and cooler evenings across several regions, reduced the need for air conditioning. He also pointed to inflationary pressures, which have led many consumers to postpone discretionary purchases. A senior executive from a leading room air-conditioner brand, who did not wish to be named, also described the season as weaker than expected. "The season was not so good, especially in June. However, on a year-to-date basis, the industry has still reported value growth of around 35 per cent, aided by higher prices and premiumisation," the executive said. While appliance makers saw uneven demand, beverage companies continued to benefit from summer consumption. "Consumers are also down-trading to air coolers and fans because ACs have become quite expensive," Nandi said, adding that prices of air conditioners have increased by 18-20 per cent over the past few years following repeated price hikes.

SCSS, bank FD or RBI floating rate bond: Which generates higher returns for you?

MUMBAI.(Agency)

For any retired individual finding an instrument that serves the twin purpose of marginally higher returns and guaranteeing safety of capital is an eternal quest. All retired individuals need regular income. Therefore, most who have hung up their boots seek instruments that protect the capital and provide periodic interest income. For this reason, the Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS), the bank FD — let's take for example the five-year FD in State Bank of India (SBI) — and the RBI Floating Rate Savings Bond are popular among senior citizens. Now let's see the returns from these instruments is a senior citizen parks ₹10 lakh in each of these instruments.

Highest income from SCSS
The Senior Citizen Savings Scheme or SCSS is rising in popularity due to the reasons of high return. It is specifically designed for the benefit of senior citizens as the name itself indicates. Currently, this scheme offers an interest rate of 8.2% per

annum. Interest is paid quarterly, and a maximum investment amount of ₹30 lakh is allowed. If a senior citizen invests ₹10 lakh in SCSS, he/she will receive about ₹20,500 in interest every quarter. This means the account holder will receive an average monthly income of around ₹6,833. This is considered the best of the three options in terms of providing regular income. However, the interest rate of SCSS comes up for revision once in every three months. The Union finance ministry is entrusted with this job.

SBI 5-year FD

The 5-year Senior Citizen FD is a popular option for investors seeking a fixed interest rate and the security of a bank. Currently, senior citizens are earning 7.05% annual interest on this FD. An investment of ₹10 lakh would generate an interest rate of approximately ₹17,625 per quarter, which would generate an average monthly income of approximately ₹5,875. The key advantage of FDs is that

the interest rate is fixed at the time of investment, so fluctuations in market interest rates do not impact the investor's income.

RBI Floating Rate Bond



RBI Floating Rate Savings Bonds are also considered a good option for investors with a low-risk appetite. They are issued by the government and their interest rate is linked to the interest rate of National Savings Certificate (popularly known as NSC). Therefore, their interest rate can be revised

every six months. Currently, this bond offers an annual interest rate of 8.05%. A senior citizen investing ₹10 lakh in it would earn approximately ₹80,500 in interest annually. However, this interest rate is paid every six months. This means the investor will receive approximately ₹40,250 every six months. On an average this means ₹6,708 per month. The bond has a maturity period of 7 years. However, senior citizens can also consider premature withdrawal.

If the objective of the individual is to generate the regular income and his/her investment is within the range of ₹30 lakh, SCSS emerges as the most attractive option. Meanwhile, for investors who want to take advantage of interest rate fluctuations, RBI Floating Rate Savings Bonds can sometimes appear as a better option. Therefore, before making an investment decision, one has to consider specific needs of the individuals and investment horizon.

EPFO 3.0: Will you be given an ATM card to withdraw EPF funds quickly?

EPFO 3.0 will be rolled out soon. Under this improved service which will enable quick withdrawal of EPF money, EPFO subscribers will be able to withdraw their PF funds through ATM cards and UPI. This is an upgrade that the government has promised last year.

Kolkata.(Agency)

The launch of much-discussed and much-awaited EPFO 3.0 is drawing near. The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is preparing to launch EPFO 3.0 soon. With the implementation of this new digital platform, members will be able to withdraw money from their PF accounts faster than ever before through UPI and ATMs. However, the biggest question is how much can be withdrawn at a time and will a separate ATM card be available for this? EPFO has more than 7 crore active members, and therefore, a

large number of people will be benefitted if the EPFO funds are available in a zippy. Ceiling of withdrawal?

The EPFO ??has not yet announced any specific withdrawal limits for UPI or ATMs. Therefore, it is assumed that the



existing EPF withdrawal rules will remain in effect. Under current rules, eligible members can withdraw up to 75% of their PF balance, depending on their needs and the specified conditions. Several media reports claim that under EPFO 3.0, eligible members will also be able to instantly transfer up to 75% of

their available balance to their linked bank account. However, details regarding withdrawal limits, eligibility, and procedures will only be clear after the EPFO ??comes out with the guidelines.

Will EPFO issue a separate ATM card?

The most significant feature of EPFO 3.0 is the widely-talked about feature of an EPF-linked ATM card. According to media reports, the EPFO ??may provide its members with a special ATM card that will allow them to withdraw eligible funds directly from an ATM. It will look just like a normal debit card. At one stroke, this feature will eliminate the lengthy claim

process and provide members with immediate access to funds when needed. However, the EPFO ??has not yet issued an official notification regarding the issuance of a separate ATM card. Therefore, for now, this is only being considered as a proposed feature.

EU carbon tax: Government to shoulder 90 per cent compliance bill of MSMEs

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Centre is working on a scheme to absorb 90% of the compliance cost borne by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to help soften the disproportionate impact of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) compliance burden imposed by the European Union. The Indian Express has learnt.

India's efforts to secure a concession for its small industries in negotiations with developed countries have not worked, and the industry has been seeking assistance to meet the steep annual compliance costs due to the imposition of the EU's carbon tax since January 1, 2026. The UK too has plans to impose its version of CBAM from 2027. CBAM is an EU policy designed to put a price on the carbon emitted during the production of carbon-intensive goods that are entering the EU. Complying with the regulation is

seen as a major global challenge, as declarants must track the embedded emissions of their goods, including direct emissions and, for certain sectors



such as cement and fertilisers, indirect emissions. Industry sources said that the compliance cost for each MSME unit to meet the requirement under carbon tax alone is ₹15 lakh to 20 lakh and that they do not have the wherewithal to report the number of data points sought under the regulation by the EU.

India is the world's second-largest producer of both crude steel and primary aluminium.

Steeper challenge for MSMEs

An Indian exporter is required to submit CBAM certificates that correspond to the total embedded emissions. The regulation becomes a major challenge for MSMEs as the EU says that if exporters are unable to provide actual data, importers must use "default values" provided by the European Commission. The default values for CBAM goods have to be increased by a proportionately designed percentage 'mark-up' in their value.

"These mark-ups are 10% in 2026, 20% in 2027, and 30% from 2028 onwards. Default values, including mark-up, have been determined to ensure that embedded emissions are not underestimated when applying default values," the regulation said.

Buying a flat or a house? Know the hidden costs in real estate budgeting from this expert

Buying a flat or a house is the dream for many. The real estate market is also a driver for the broader economy since the fortunes of many sectors from steel to paint, electricals to consumer electronics is linked to the sale of residential real estate. But one should be aware of the hidden costs in such transactions. Pakshal Sanghvi, managing director of Sanghvi Realty tells News9 readers.

Kolkata.(Agency)

Buying a flat or a house is the dream for many. But while discussing affordability in a real estate transaction, people tend to limit their conversation to property prices and home loan EMIs. However, there are a lot of hidden costs — and they can be significant ones — in most transactions. One should be aware of the hidden costs in such transactions, Pakshal Sanghvi,

managing director of Sanghvi Realty tells News9 readers. The real estate market happens to be driver of the broader economy since the fortunes of many sectors from steel to paint, electricals to consumer electronics is linked to the sale of residential real estate. Let's have a look at what this expert lists out.

Not only EMIs

The singular focus of most on EMIs of home loans can be erroneous and misleading. "The discussion of affordability in real estate frequently revolves around property prices and home loan EMIs. However a buyer's financial commitment begins before ownership and lasts long after the purchase. As a result, understanding the total cost of ownership is increasingly critical in today's market," says Sanghvi, who has overseen many premium developments in key Mumbai neighborhoods such as Sanghvi Palazzo in Andheri, Sanghvi Crystal in Goregaon and Sanghvi Morya in Shivaji Park.

Numerous ancillary expenses
Sanghvi's advice is simple: know all the nuances and take informed decisions. "One

of the common gaps in financial planning is that buyers tend to focus on the acquisition cost while underestimating the numerous



ancillary expenses attached to homeownership. Stamp duty and registration, legal fees, maintenance deposits, brokerage charges, parking prices, and taxes are all well-known expenses, but their total impact is sometimes underestimated," he says. In other cases these expenses overlap with the down payment phase, putting additional strain on the household budget, he cautions.

Post possession expenditure

According to Sanghvi, there are a lot of expenditure that surfaces after the buyer takes possession. "Post-possession expenditure is another area that deserves greater attention. Interior design, furniture, appliances, utility connections, and moving charges can all total a large investment. In most situations these are not optional expenses, but rather necessary components that turn a purchased property into a livable house," he points out. The outcome: the buyer cannot avoid these expenses to start living in the newly-purchased property.

The ongoing costs that come with owning something are just as important. Charges for things that need to be fixed or maintained over time, insurance premiums and regular improvements can all affect cash flows. "These fees are becoming more important in financial planning than ever before as people's tastes in lifestyle change and their standards for comfort and convenience rise," he emphasizes and these hardly feature in the estimates of most before rushing to buy an apartment.

Short news

23-yr-old held for stealing laptops to clear betting debts

Hyderabad.(Agency)

Raidurgam police have arrested a 23-year-old private worker-turned laptop thief and recovered four stolen laptops from his possession. Police alleged that he turned to theft to clear debts incurred through online betting. The accused, identified as Nagishetty Jashwanth, was a former MNC employee from Rompicherla in Chittoor district, Andhra Pradesh.

While investigating complaints related to three laptop thefts reported from MR Grand Hostel in Khajaguda on June 22, Raidurgam police verified the CCTV footage at different places and arrested the accused from Gachibowli on June 26.

"During interrogation, the accused confessed that he had incurred a debt of ₹2 lakh due to an online betting addiction.

He admitted to committing laptop thefts within the Raidurgam police station limits over the past six months to clear the debt," Raidurgam inspector Ch Venkanna said.

The probe also revealed that Jashwanth had stolen eight laptops over the past five months from hostels in Madhapur and Raidurgam. He sold four of them via the Cashify app, while police recovered the remaining four laptops, worth about ₹2.5 lakh, from his possession.

The accused was produced before a magistrate on June 27 and remanded to judicial custody.

Two cases of Guillain-Barre syndrome prompts water testing in Navi Mumbai

Mumbai.(Agency)

The Panvel City Municipal Corporation (PCMC) has launched an awareness drive across suspected places and collected water samples following reports of two confirmed cases of the rare and serious autoimmune disorder Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS). The two cases were reported in the last fortnight from the Aadhar Multispecialty Hospital, Panvel.

Both the patients stay in the Takka village. The first patient is a 40-year-old male. He came from Vichumble village but is a resident of Chowk, Khalapur taluka. He was released from the hospital after treatment on June 15. The second patient is a 71-year-old female from Konkarni undergoing treatment but had a travel history of Chardham journey.

The disease is triggered by a preceding viral or bacterial infection arising out of consuming contaminated water, eating outside food, among others. Antibodies are developed against the autoimmune system. This affects the brain besides other symptoms, as is observed among the infected persons.

Confirming the same, the PCMC medical officer Dr Anand Gosavi said, "Surveys have been started after learning about the two confirmed GBS cases. Water samples from the suspected areas where the patients stayed have been taken for testing. There is nothing to panic about as the patients were not from our area."

Dr Gosavi advised, "People should take precautions and consume boiled water, avoid eating outside food, eat properly boiled and warm food, among others. Adequate measures are being taken."

UDF plans no-confidence move in corporation; CPM stance to be decided by secretariat

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.(Agency) With the UDF planning to proceed with the no-confidence motion against the ruling council led by the BJP in the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation, all eyes are now on the LDF camp, whether the front will back the motion or not.

Being a crucial decision, CPM sources said that the issue will be discussed by the party secretariat which will take a final decision. Meanwhile, the BJP has already raised criticism, stating that the picture of a triangular contest has already changed in the state - to NDA versus INDI alliance.

"This is an important political decision, which needs to be taken at the state secretariat level," a senior party member told TNIE. Meanwhile, LDF parliamentary party leader S P Deepak has sent a letter to Local Self Government Minister K M Shaji and the department secretary, stating that the corporation and mayor are not functioning in a democratic manner.

"Even the letter signed by 49 councillors to hold a special council was turned down by the mayor. Democratic discussions are not being held in the council. Commoners' issues, which make the ruling front disturbed, never become the topic of discussion," he alleged.

Even while criticising the BJP council, senior CPM leader V Sivankutty said that a decision to support or oppose the no-confidence motion is not an easy one to make. "As of now, we have not made any decision on this.

Two injured in blast at illegal firecracker factory in Kapadwanj, Gujarat

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

Two workers were injured after a major explosion ripped through an illegal firecracker factory in Kapadwanj town on Saturday morning. One of the victims was taken to the civil hospital in Nadiad, while the other was shifted to Ahmedabad Civil Hospital.

The injured persons have not yet been identified. Kheda superintendent of police Vijay Patel said the facility did not have a valid licence to carry out any manufacturing activity. The unit's owner is absconding, and efforts are underway to trace him.

The blaze erupted between 9.30am and 10am. According to the locals, the blast was heard kilometres away. Thick smoke was seen rising from the site.

According to local accounts, the explosion caused extensive damage to the structure, bringing down portions of the unit's walls and shed. Debris was scattered across the surrounding areas.

Witnesses said six people worked in the factory, but two were seriously injured. Two fire tenders were pressed into service to bring the fire under control. Police are investigating



how the fire and subsequent explosion occurred. They are checking if unsafe handling or storage of explosive substances triggered the mishap.

The incident has renewed scrutiny of illegal firecracker units operating in the district. Officials said action would be initiated under relevant laws against those responsible once

the investigation establishes the chain of ownership, operations and any regulatory lapses that allowed the unit to function.

The administration had no information about how long this factory had been running. However, an unconfirmed report suggested that this factory had been operational for 2 years and had an electricity connection.

Cops arrest 4 workers for murder of unidentified person in Mailardevpally

Hyderabad.(Agency)

Four workers have been arrested for allegedly murdering an unidentified person at their company godown in Mailardevpally on June 25.

Around 2 am on June 25, four workers — Balaji, 39, from Bidar in Karnataka, Nayan Mandal, 23, Uttam Bera, 35, from West Bengal, and Prem Parihar, 26, from Bahadurpura, who were accommodated in workers' quarters at Swastik Shiva Decorators tenthouse company godown at Pallicheruvu under Mailardevpally PS limits, spotted a stranger moving on their godown premises.

The unidentified person, who was allegedly under the influence of alcohol, entered the godown. He was moving around in a suspicious manner. The four workers intercepted him and demanded an explanation for his presence at the godown.

"When he failed to give a satisfactory response and turned aggressive, the four accused workers assaulted him and confined him inside the kitchen of the godown. He subsequently died there," deputy commissioner of police (DCP), Rajendranagar, S Srinivas said.

After the incident, the workers informed their employer, who in turn approached the Mailardevpally police on June 25 morning. Police shifted the body for a post-mortem examination and booked a case under Section 103(1) (murder) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against the labourers. On Saturday, the four accused were arrested from the godown and produced before a magistrate. They were remanded in judicial custody.

Muslim youth excluded from Maharashtra govt's 'AMRUT' Institute schemes

Mumbai.(Agency)

Raising the issue of Muslim youth excluded from Govt's AMRUT Institute schemes, Samajwadi Party MLA Rais Shaikh from Bhiwandi East has said that applications for the institute's Drone Pilot Training Programme, run under the state govt's Other Backward Bahujan Welfare Department, are being accepted only from Hindu candidates, while applications from Muslim candidates are not being accepted through the online portal. In his letter to minister Atul Save and the chief executive officer of the Maharashtra Research, Advancement and Training (AMRUT) Institute, Shaikh said that the AMRUT Institute has invited applications until June 30 for Drone Pilot Training aimed at candidates from the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of the Open Category.



"However, when applicants attempt to fill out the online form, they are required to provide information about their religion and caste. The portal offers caste options only for Hindu communities, preventing Muslim applicants from successfully submitting their

applications," Shaikh said. Shaikh stated that he has received numerous complaints regarding this issue. Pointing out that the AMRUT Institute is intended to serve economically weaker sections within the Open Category, he said as an autonomous govt institution, AMRUT's founding Aug 2019 Govt Resolution (GR) does not mention any specific religion. Its objective is to work for various communities within the Open Category. Therefore, restricting applications in this manner is contrary to the rules, he claimed.

The state govt has established several institutions for different social groups, including BARTI, ARTI, SARTHI, Mahajyoti, MARTI and AMRUT. While each institution may focus on a particular target group, they also extend training opportunities and benefits to other communities to some extent.

India issues Kailash Mansarovar Yatra advisory after reports of stranded pilgrims in Nepal

The advisory follows reports of Indian pilgrims being stranded in Nepal after travelling through private tour operators without complete documentation.

Nepal.(Agency)

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has issued an advisory regarding the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra following reports that around 52 Indian pilgrims were stranded in Kathmandu, Nepal, while en route to Kailash Mansarovar. The MEA has urged pilgrims not to undertake the journey through private operators without first obtaining all mandatory documents, including Chinese visas and entry permits.

Why the MEA stepped in The MEA acted after receiving several pleas for help. These came from Indian nationals stranded in Nepal. They had tried to undertake the

pilgrimage without valid entry permits and Chinese visas. The Ministry said many of the affected pilgrims had booked tours run by



private travel operators. The Ministry warned travellers against leaving home in the hope that their papers would be sorted out along the way. "Citizens are advised not to commence their journey from India

until all required travel documents have been obtained for undertaking the complete journey. Commencing travel without confirmed documentation or in anticipation of obtaining the necessary documentation increases the likelihood of being stranded," the MEA said.

Check tour operators before booking

The Ministry also asked prospective pilgrims to check the credentials of private tour operators before booking any travel. "Pilgrims are also strongly advised to verify that their tour operator is duly registered and authorised," the Ministry added. The advisory followed reports that the 52 stranded citizens in Kathmandu need immediate support.

Chennai Corporation plans public plaza near Omandurar estate

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

Over 500 history buffs stepped inside a museum on wheels on Saturday, as two custom-designed exhibition buses rolled into the LD Museum campus.

The travelling exhibition — a decade-old initiative by Citi and Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) — aims to break down gallery walls and take heritage straight to the masses. The current stop features 'Networks of the Past: India and the Ancient World', an exhibition shining a light on the intricate social fabric and artefacts of the Sindhu-Saraswati civilisation.

"This exhibition on Sindhu-Saraswati civilization throws light on different aspects of the society and what we know about them through artefacts. It is part of the exhibition series 'Networks of the Past: India and the Ancient World' where earlier exhibitions also focused on different civilizations," said an official.

"The idea of a museum on wheels is that if you cannot come to the museum, it will come to you. The visitors will be able to see important artefacts and replicas associated with the famed civilisation up close with guided tour and hands-on activities," said an official. The LD Museum had hosted an exhibition on 'Ancient Sculptures: India, Egypt, Assyria, Greece, Rome' in 2025.

**The 'Sky Eye' that mapped battlefield during Operation Sindoor gets final operational clearance**

The DRDO has granted Final Operational Clearance to the indigenous Netra AEW&C system at Bengaluru's Centre for Airborne Systems, marking its full readiness for Indian Air Force deployment.

BENGALURU.(Agency)

Giving the Indian Air Force (IAF) a stronger edge in aerial surveillance and battlefield coordination, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has cleared the Netra Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) system for full operational use. The clearance was announced on Thursday (June 25) at the Centre for Airborne Systems (CABS) in Bengaluru, where the system has been developed over several years.

Often described as the "eye in the sky", Netra is built to track enemy aircraft, drones, missiles and naval movements from long distances. It also monitors electronic signals in the airspace and give commanders real-

time updates that help in planning and directing operations during conflict situations. The system has now received Final Operational Clearance (FOC) after completing a full cycle of development, testing and operational evaluation. With this approval, Netra is no longer in a limited deployment phase and can be used across operational missions without restrictions.

Mounted on the Brazilian Embraer EMB-145 aircraft, it has advanced sensors that detect airborne and surface threats, along with enemy communication signals. It does more than detection. It also helps guide fighter jets during missions by feeding live



information to command centres.

Officials said the system strengthens network-centric warfare capabilities by allowing information gathered in the air to be shared instantly across multiple platforms within the armed forces. The

programme was developed on three EMB-145 aircraft fitted with fully indigenous mission avionics and surveillance systems.

Netra's role during Operation Sindoor The Netra AEW&C system was used during Operation Sindoor last year, where it played an important role in tracking battlefield activity and providing early warning support to the IAF. It helped map enemy movements and gave commanders a clearer picture of the operational area to support decision-making during active deployment.

Its performance during the operation added weight to its operational credibility, according to defence officials familiar with the system's use in the field.

NEWS BOX

Harry Kane rewrites England World Cup history, overtakes Ronaldo in goals tally

New Delhi, (Agency)

Harry Kane became England's highest goalscorer in FIFA World Cup history after scoring his 11th goal in the tournament during the Three Lions' 2-0 win over Panama on Sunday. The England captain headed home in the 67th minute after Jude Bellingham's surging run and precise cross, putting the result beyond Panama and taking sole possession of a record he had shared with Gary Lineker. Lineker scored 10 World Cup goals across the 1986 and 1990 editions, but Kane has now gone one better after featuring in three tournaments. The goal also moved Kane ahead of Cristiano Ronaldo and Gabriel Batistuta on the list of the World Cup's all-time leading scorers. Only six players have scored more goals than the Bayern Munich striker, who is now one shy of Brazil great Pele's tally of 12. Kane's World Cup goals have come across three editions of the tournament. He scored six times to win the Golden Boot in Russia in 2018, added two goals in Qatar four years later and has now taken his tally to 11 with three strikes in the ongoing World Cup. The latest goal capped another remarkable season for the England captain. It was his 70th goal for club and country in 2025-26, taking him past Cristiano Ronaldo's best single-season record



of 69 goals in 69 appearances for Real Madrid and Portugal during the 2011-12 campaign, according to Opta. Kane reached the milestone in just 60 matches. Among the current generation, Erling Haaland's best return stands at 61 goals in 61 games during the 2022-23 season, while Kylian Mbappe's highest tally is 54 in 56 appearances. Only Lionel Messi has produced a better campaign, scoring 82 goals in 69 matches for Barcelona and Argentina in 2011-12. The 32-year-old has enjoyed one of the finest seasons of his career. He helped Bayern Munich complete the domestic double, claimed a third successive Bundesliga Golden Boot and earlier this year overtook Jimmy Greaves to become the highest-scoring English footballer in history.

Thomas Tuchel gets the job done as Jude Bellingham downs stubborn Panama

New Delhi, (Agency)

Jude Bellingham produced the spark England desperately needed as Thomas Tuchel's side laboured to a 2-0 win over Panama to finish top of Group L at the FIFA World Cup on Saturday. Harry Kane also found the net to become England's all-time leading World Cup goalscorer, while Croatia joined the Three Lions in the Round of 32 with a 2-1 win over Ghana. The scoreline flattered England after another frustrating outing in New Jersey, where Tuchel's men controlled possession but struggled to break down a disciplined Panama side for over an hour. It took a moment of persistence from Bellingham to finally open the contest before the midfielder turned provider for Kane just five minutes later. England finished the group stage unbeaten with seven points, one ahead of Croatia, ensuring a more favourable route into the knockout rounds. Ghana, despite the defeat, also progressed as one of the best third-placed teams after finishing on four points, while Panama exited the tournament without a point.

BELLINGHAM DELIVERS



Tuchel responded to England's goalless draw against Ghana by making five changes, but the alterations did little to improve the team's attacking rhythm in the opening hour. Marcus Rashford looked lively from the left and forced Orlando Mosquera into an early save, while Jude Bellingham was England's brightest outlet, constantly looking to drive at Panama's defence. Yet the final ball continued to elude the Europeans. Panama remained compact, disciplined and dangerous on the counter. Jose Rodriguez nearly punished England midway through the first half before Jordan Pickford produced a sharp save to preserve parity.

Argentina march on as Messi makes history, Algeria, Austria progress after epic draw

History, heartbreak and late drama defined the final day in Group J as Lionel Messi broke another World Cup record, Argentina completed a perfect campaign and Austria's last-gasp equaliser sent both themselves and Algeria into the Round of 32 at Iran's expense.

New Delhi, (Agency)

Group J delivered one final twist on Saturday as Lionel Messi made history, Argentina completed a perfect campaign and Austria snatched a stoppage-time equaliser that sent both themselves and Algeria into the Round of 32 while ending Iran's World Cup hopes. When the final whistles blew, Argentina had finished top with three wins from three, Austria had survived thanks to Sasa Kalajdzic's dramatic late equaliser, Algeria had squeezed through as one of the best third-placed teams and Iran were heading home. While the qualification battle raged elsewhere, Messi added another World Cup record to his remarkable career. The Argentina

captain became the first player to score in seven consecutive World Cup matches as the defending champions beat Jordan 3-1 in Dallas to complete a flawless group-stage campaign. With qualification already secured, coach Lionel Scaloni rested several regular starters, making nine changes to the side that defeated Austria. Even with a much-changed XI, Argentina controlled the game from the outset. Giovanni Lo Celso opened the scoring in the 19th minute with a superb free-kick, becoming the first Argentina player other than Messi to score at this World Cup. Lautaro Martinez doubled the lead from the penalty spot after his initial effort had come back off the crossbar. Messi came on just after the hour mark. Twenty minutes later, he was on the scoresheet once again. His composed finish in the 80th minute took his World Cup tally to 19 goals and his tournament total to six. The strike also made him the first player to score in seven consecutive World Cup matches, moving him clear of France's Just Fontaine and Brazil great Jairzinho. Jordan pulled one

back late on, but it did little to spoil Argentina's evening as the defending champions completed a third straight victory. They will now face Cape Verde in the Round of 32 on Friday in Miami.



If Argentina's progress was routine, the battle for the other two qualification places was anything but.

AUSTRIA, ALGERIA PLAY EPIC DRAW Austria and Algeria produced one of the matches of the tournament in a pulsating 3-3 draw that swung repeatedly before delivering

one final twist in stoppage time. Marko Arnautovic gave Austria an early lead before Rafik Belghali equalised before the break. Marcel Sabitzer restored Austria's advantage early in the second half, only for Riyad

Mahrez to level again and keep Algeria in the contest. The closing minutes turned into pure knockout football.

Mahrez looked to have sent Algeria through with a winner in the third minute of stoppage time, a goal that would also have eliminated Austria. But with virtually the last kick of the match, Sasa Kalajdzic headed home in the 96th minute to rescue a point and spark celebrations for both teams. The draw was enough for Austria to finish second in Group J and set up a Round of 32 meeting with Spain. Algeria advanced as one of the best third-placed teams and will face Switzerland.

For Iran, whose hopes rested on Austria dropping points, Kalajdzic's late equaliser ended their World Cup campaign in the cruelest fashion.

Cristiano Ronaldo's quiet night exposes Portugal's biggest World Cup problem

FIFA World Cup 2026: Portugal were held 0-0 by Colombia as Cristiano Ronaldo was left chasing service in Miami. The draw sent Portugal through as runners-up but sharpened concerns over their midfield and identity before the Croatia clash.

New Delhi, (Agency)

Three days ago, Cristiano Ronaldo was screaming "I'm back" into the television cameras after becoming the first footballer to score in six different World Cups. It felt like the perfect reminder that even at 41, football's greatest goalscorer could still bend the sport to his will. Saturday night in Miami told a very different story. There was no goal. No celebration. No iconic moment. Instead, Ronaldo spent much of the evening waving at teammates, pointing towards empty spaces and waiting for Portugal's attack to finally remember he was standing inside the Colombia penalty area. It never really happened. The Group K decider ended 0-0, with Colombia deservedly finishing top of the group after producing the better

football for long spells. Portugal advanced as runners-up and will now face Croatia in the Round of 32, while Colombia earned a meeting with Ghana. Elsewhere, DR Congo completed a remarkable comeback from a goal down to beat Uzbekistan 3-1, claiming one of the best third-placed qualification



spots and booking a last-32 clash with England in their first World Cup appearance since 1974. For Portugal, though, the result almost felt secondary. This was the first time at the tournament they came up against genuine elite opposition, and they looked worryingly ordinary. The scoreline suggests a hard-fought stalemate. The performance suggested something far more

concerning. Portugal survived. And they only did so because Diogo Costa produced one of the finest goalkeeping displays of this World Cup, while Colombia somehow forgot where the goal was. The South Americans fired 24 shots to Portugal's 13, forced Costa into six saves and even thought they had snatched a dramatic stoppage-time winner through Davinson Sanchez before VAR confirmed the defender had drifted offside. If Costa was Portugal's best player by some distance, their biggest disappointment was much further up the pitch. Because the only thing more wasteful than Colombia's finishing was Portugal's midfield. A MIDFIELD WITHOUT A MAP

This Portugal squad is overflowing with technical quality. Bruno Fernandes is one of Europe's finest creators. Vitorino controls matches for Paris Saint-Germain almost effortlessly. Ruben Neves brings composure and experience, while Joao Neves has emerged as one of the brightest young midfielders in world football. Add Joao Felix drifting between the lines and Pedro Neto stretching defences, and Portugal should have one of the most fluid attacking units in the tournament.

World Cup: DR Congo end 52-year wait with historic win, set up England clash in last 32

New Delhi, (Agency)

DR Congo ended a 52-year wait for a World Cup victory by coming from behind to beat Uzbekistan 3-1 in Atlanta on Saturday, sealing a historic place in the knockout stage for the first time and setting up a last-32 meeting with England. ** Playing in the World Cup for only the second time and making their first appearance since competing as Zaire in 1974, the Leopards recovered from an early setback with three second-half goals. Yoane Wissa scored twice, while Fiston Mayele also found the net as Sbastien Desabre's side completed another memorable result after holding Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal to a 1-1 draw earlier in the group stage. Uzbekistan, appearing at the World Cup for the first time, made an enterprising start and took the lead in the 10th minute through captain Eldor Shomurodov.

The striker finished a flowing move with a delicate lob over goalkeeper Lionel Mpsi



after being picked out by Abbosbek Fayzullaev. DR Congo thought they had levelled seven minutes later when Nathanael Mbuku fired into the net, but the goal was ruled out after he was penalised for a foul on Sherzod Nasrullaev in the build-up. The African side

enjoyed more of the ball after the break but found it difficult to break down Uzbekistan's disciplined defence until the contest turned in the 68th minute. Wissa was brought down inside the penalty area by Abdukodir Khusanov and calmly converted the resulting spot-kick, sending goalkeeper Abduvohid Nematov the wrong way to restore parity. With the momentum now firmly in their favour, DR Congo completed the turnaround 10 minutes later. Meschack Elia kept the attack alive before Mayele reacted quickest to steer the ball beyond Nematov from close range.

Wissa wrapped up the victory in stoppage time, curling a superb finish into the bottom corner after Elia once again played a key role in the build-up, sparking jubilant celebrations among the DR Congo players and supporters.

Are India equipped enough to script another World Cup classic against Australia?

South Africa delivered a timely reality check to India in Manchester. The six-wicket defeat exposed glaring shortcomings in Harmanpreet Kaur's side and raised fresh questions about their ability to translate ODI dominance into T20 success as the battle for the semi-finals heats up.

New Delhi, (Agency)

Before the blockbuster clash at Lord's, all the attention is on whether India can recreate their ODI World Cup heroics against Australia, this time on the Women's T20 World Cup stage. Last year, India ended Australia's dream run with a memorable victory in a knockout clash. This year, the two sides are set to lock horns once again, but in what is effectively a virtual knockout, with the race for the semifinals

reaching a thrilling climax. Heading into the final day of the group stage, Australia, India and South Africa are yet to officially seal their places in the semifinals. The Aussies have been in sensational form throughout the tournament, playing like the six-time world champions they are. India, meanwhile, have experienced a mixed campaign with moments of brilliance and inconsistency, but a victory over Australia would put them in a strong position to qualify for the last four.

However, while all eyes are on whether India can repeat what they achieved in Navi Mumbai last year, the bigger question remains: are they in good enough form to pull off another famous win? Or have Australia been so dominant throughout the tournament that they will once again prove too strong in one of the biggest matches of the Women's T20 World Cup?

INDIA NEED TO IMPROVE THEIR CATCHING

India's catching has emerged as one of the biggest concerns in the ongoing tournament. The Women in Blue have dropped 11 catches



in four group-stage matches, an alarming statistic heading into their clash against Australia.

Radha Yadav has had a particularly difficult tournament in the field, putting down four catches. Nandni Sharma also endured a poor

to inject much-needed fearlessness into a stilted batting order? The initial omission of Sooryavanshi raised eyebrows, but skipper Iyer defended the decision, citing a desire for continuity and a commitment to backing the established senior core. That continuity, however, brought only chaos. Aside from Abhishek Sharma's explosive 19-ball half-century, the visitors' top and middle orders suffered collective paralysis. Sanju Samson failed to make an impact, Iyer fell cheaply, and vice-captain Tilak Varma looked completely all at sea. It was a failure rooted in an inability to adapt. Accustomed to the flat, true batters of the IPL, the Indian batters looked entirely unprepared for the spongy bounce and holding nature of the Civil Service Cricket Club pitch.

Instead of a teenage prodigy hogging the headlines, the opening night belonged to two entirely different debutants who engineered a historic evening for Irish cricket. Matthew Holland, a 27-year-old seamer raised in Boksburg, South Africa, extracted superb seam movement to claim 3 for 28, dismissing Ishan Kishan with his second international delivery. Partnering him was Jai Moondra, born in Rajasthan's Tonk district, who moved to Dublin on a student visa in 2021.



outings against Bangladesh, dropping two chances as India spilled four catches inside the first five overs alone. While those mistakes did not prove costly against Bangladesh, they exposed a recurring weakness that has followed India throughout the competition. The missed opportunities were even more damaging against South Africa, where Radha dropped Marizanne Kapp, who went on to play a crucial knock. Had those chances been taken, India could have been sitting comfortably on eight points with one foot in the semi-finals. Australia, however, are a completely different proposition. Their batting line-up is packed with experienced match-winners who rarely let reprieves go unpunished. India have created plenty of chances with the ball throughout the tournament, but they must start converting them into wickets. If Harmanpreet Kaur's side are to repeat last year's famous victory over Australia and secure a place in the semi-finals, they simply cannot afford to give the six-time champions any extra lives.

The Kerala Story 2 Actress

Aditi Bhatia

Has A Fan Moment With Reese Witherspoon In New York

Actor Aditi Bhatia recently met Hollywood star Reese Witherspoon at a promotional event for 'Elle,' the upcoming prequel series to the hit film 'Legally Blonde,' in New York. The 'Kerala Story 2' actress shared pictures from the event on her Instagram Stories on Thursday. In the photos, the actors were seen dressed in pink outfits, a colour closely linked with the 'Legally Blonde' franchise. Reese wore an off-shoulder pink dress, while Aditi chose a pastel embellished gown. Another photo showed the two smiling and chatting together during a candid moment at the event. Reese Witherspoon, who played the lead role in the 2001 film 'Legally Blonde,' is the executive producer of 'Elle.' The series stars Lexi Minetree as a young Elle Woods and will premiere on Prime Video on July 1, 2026.



Set in 1995, Elle follows the early life of Elle Woods before she joined Harvard Law School. The series shows her school life, friendships, family relationships and the experiences that helped shape her future. The first season will have eight episodes, and Prime Video has already ordered a second season. Released in 2001, Legally Blonde followed the journey of Elle Woods, a fashionable college student who joins law school and proves that she is much more than what people expect. Aditi Bhatia became a household name after she played Ruhi Bhalla in the television show 'Yeh Hai Mohabbatein.' She was recently seen in 'The Kerala Story 2' alongside Aishwarya Ojha and Ulka Gupta. The film was a sequel to the National Award-winning 'The Kerala Story', which came out in 2023. It follows the lives of three young women who fall into what the film describes as deceptive marriages and face alleged forced religious conversions.



Jacky Bhagnani Spotted On Dating App Months After 'Situationship' Comment? Screenshot Shocks Fans



Jacky Bhagnani has grabbed everyone's attention once again. Alas, for all the wrong reasons. This time, the actor-producer has left netizens wondering if he is on a dating application despite being married to actress Rakul Preet Singh. Recently, a Reddit user shared a screenshot from a YouTuber's video which claimed that Jacky has an account on Raya, an exclusive dating application. The screenshot shows a profile named 'Jacky' with 'Actor/Producer' written in bio. His location was listed as London, United Kingdom. The screenshot left fans shocked but a few also noticed typo in 'producer'. While it remains unclear if Jacky is on Raya, the application has been a topic of discussion for years now. For the unversed, Raya is not a regular dating app. It is an exclusive, membership-based app which is generally used for dating, networking and friendship. Unlike other applications, users have to apply for Raya following which applications are reviewed before getting accepted. It is because of this reason that Raya has become popular among celebrities or high-profile names. **Jacky Bhagnani's Situationship Remark** Meanwhile, Jacky's alleged dating profile has also caught everyone's attention since it comes months after the actor-producer made headlines for his 'situationship' remark. In April this year, he was speaking to a YouTube channel when he said, "Rakul and I are married, but we are like in a situationship. Of course, we are exclusive to each other because that's why we are married. But the most important thing is that I can talk to her about anything." While the remark invited a massive criticism, Rakul later clarified that his comment was taken out of context. "We had a great laugh today about how one line from an hour-long conversation can suddenly become the headline. Funny... until it's not. Context matters. Nuance matters. Conversations deserve better than being reduced to clickbait. Maybe it's time platforms take a little more responsibility for the narratives they create," she wrote on her Instagram stories.

Farah Khan Reacts To Shirish Kunder's Transformation, Says She Gets Confused Between Her Son And Husband



One of the things taking the internet by storm lately is Farah Khan's husband, Shirish Kunder's transformation. Ever since the change, Shirish has been actively making social media content, which has been going viral online. Now, Farah Khan has reacted to the transformation and quipped that she gets confused whether Shirish is her husband or her child. Farah Khan recently appeared on Shekhar Suman's show and said, "Shirish toh ab young aur handsome hogaya. Voh aur mera beta dono same height ke hain. Jab raat ko so rahi hoti hoon ya bedroom mein koi aata hai toh I can't make out Czar aaya hai ya Shirish aaya hai (Shirish has become so young and handsome now. He and my son are both the same height. When I'm asleep at night, or someone walks into the bedroom, I can't tell whether it's Czar who's come in or Shirish). But if the person comes and hugs me, I know it's my son." Farah was asked whether, in a long marriage, love fades away or stays the same. She said that 22 years later, love takes a backseat. She said, "Yeh sabki hi shikayat hai (This is everyone's complaint). When we are dating, we want something very badly, but when we get it, uski value khatam ho jaati hai. Uski value alag cheezon mein hoti hai (Its value gets diminished. Its value lies in different things)." Ace choreographer and director Farah Khan added, "I value Shirish for other things now—as a father and as someone who looks after the whole family. I cannot do without him. Shirish ke bina humara ghar nahi chal sakti (Our home can't function without Shirish)." She lauded Shirish for being a good father and credited him for the triplets' academic prowess. "Main usko wohi bolti hu ki 'Tu baccho ke saath agar chala gaya toh mera WiFi kaun theek karega?' Shirish ke bagair humara ghar nahi chal sakti, he's a wonderful father. Matlab yeh jo mere bacche itni achi achi universities mein gaye hai, it is solely... So everyone asks, 'Oh my god! Sab ko early decision mil gaya, who was your counsellor?' I said, 'No, their father was their counsellor,' she mentioned.

Rashmika Mandanna

To Reunite With Allu Arjun For Raaka; Mumbai Schedule To Begin Soon: Report



Rashmika Mandanna and Allu Arjun, who have been loved by moviegoers for their chemistry in Pushpa, are all set to reunite, but this time not as Pushpa Raj and Srivalli. Rashmika is all set to play a pivotal role in Allu Arjun's upcoming film Raaka and, as per reports, the first schedule of the shoot is set to begin soon in Mumbai. Rashmika Mandanna's appearance in the film is expected to amp up the excitement around Atlee's directorial, as the actress' chemistry with Allu Arjun has been loved by many. With fans eagerly awaiting new updates on the project every day, the news, reported by Variety India, that Rashmika will soon join the Mumbai schedule of the film is sure to excite audiences further. Reports suggest that apart from Rashmika, Mrunal Thakur and Janhvi Kapoor will also be seen playing pivotal characters in the project. Recently, it was also rumoured that Shah Rukh Khan is expected to make a cameo in the film. However, the makers are yet to confirm the development. Meanwhile, speculation had recently surfaced that Shah Rukh Khan would unveil the film's teaser during a virtual event attended by Atlee, Allu Arjun, and Deepika Padukone. **Raaka first poster out** Recently, on the occasion of Allu Arjun's 44th birthday, the makers of Raaka dropped a poster, giving a peek into the world Atlee is building. The poster features Allu Arjun's face partly hidden behind thick fur, with a sharp tusk-like detail

adding a wild touch. His eyes stand out, looking powerful and mysterious. While unveiling the poster and announcing the film's title, the makers wrote, "#AA22xA6 is now #Raaka ✨ Prepare yourself for a vision beyond limits ✨." **More about Raaka**



The film is reportedly being mounted on a massive budget of over ₹700 crore and is being produced by Sun Pictures. The team is expected to begin its next shooting schedule at a studio in Mumbai soon, with production likely continuing through the year. If everything goes as planned, the shooting of the ambitious project may wrap up by the end of 2026. Directed by Atlee, the film is already being touted as one of the biggest Indian releases. According to industry buzz, the makers are reportedly planning to release Raaka in December 2027. However, there has been no official confirmation regarding the release date.



NEWS BOX

Venezuelan footballer Héctor Bello mourns wife who died shielding daughter in Venezuela earthquake

World.(Agency)

In the chaos of Venezuela's deadliest earthquake in more than a century, one family's tragedy has come to embody the extraordinary acts of love and sacrifice witnessed amid the devastation.

Venezuelan footballer Héctor Bello is grieving the loss of his wife, Andrea Bello, who, according to his account and local media reports, used her body to shield their one-year-old daughter as their building collapsed during last week's powerful twin earthquakes. Their daughter survived. Andrea did not. The defender, who plays for second-division side Marítimo de La Guaira, shared the heartbreaking news in a series of emotional Instagram posts after learning of his wife's death. "How do I explain to our daughter that you gave your life to save hers?" he wrote. "You'll always be our favourite heroine. I'll make sure she grows up knowing how much you loved her and how you saved her." According to Venezuelan media reports, Andrea was trapped when a structure collapsed in La Guaira, one of the regions hardest hit by the earthquakes. Rescue workers later recovered her body from the rubble, while the couple's young daughter, Alana, was found alive. In another post, Bello described the overwhelming grief of returning to find his family shattered. "My daughter and her aunt are recovering," he wrote from the hospital. "I need my little girl to help heal a heart that has been broken into pieces." The tragedy has resonated across Venezuela's football community. Clubs, teammates and supporters have flooded social media with messages of condolence, while local football outlet Cumaná de Campeones described Andrea's actions as an act of extraordinary courage that saved the life of her child. The family's loss unfolded against the backdrop of one of Venezuela's worst natural disasters in modern history. Twin earthquakes measuring 7.2 and 7.5 struck within a minute of each other on June 24, causing widespread destruction across Caracas, La Guaira and neighbouring regions. Buildings collapsed, roads were damaged and emergency services struggled to reach those trapped beneath debris.

Trump Taps Former Trooper Lance Schroyer To Lead Immigration Agency

World (Agency)

President Donald Trump on Saturday said he is nominating Lance Schroyer, a former Oklahoma state trooper, as the next director of Immigration and Customs and Enforcement.

Trump said on his Truth Social platform that his new pick for the immigration enforcement agency is a former US Marine and a "PATRIOT with real operational experience." He called Schroyer a "proven leader with DECADES of experience locking up the worst of the worst." Schroyer hails from the same home state as the new Department of Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin, a former congressman. Mullin quickly praised Schroyer in a statement Saturday highlighting the former trooper's 29-year career and his work with federal and state partners on a US immigration enforcement programme. If confirmed, Schroyer will lead ICE at a time when the public mood has soured on Trump's immigration crackdown, which sent surges of federal immigration officers into American cities to round up immigrants. Those raids sent tensions soaring and prompted clashes between protesters and law enforcement, leading to the fatal shootings of two US citizens in Minneapolis earlier this year. Trump returned to the White House on a promise of mass deportations, and ICE has been a central executor of that vision. The agency is undergoing massive growth from a one-time injection of \$75 billion last year, which has allowed for the hiring of 12,000 officers and increased detention capacity.

6.1-magnitude quake hits northern Japan; no casualties reported

World.(Agency)

A magnitude 6.1 earthquake struck off the coast of Iwate Prefecture in northern Japan early Sunday, adding to concerns over continued seismic activity in the region days after a stronger earthquake rattled the country. No casualties have been reported in the new earthquake. According to the Japan Times, which cited Japan's Meteorological Agency (JMA), the quake occurred at 5:21 am local time and measured 5 on Japan's seismic intensity scale of 7 in Hachinohe city in Aomori Prefecture. Authorities said the epicentre was located offshore at a depth of around 40 kilometres. No tsunami warning was issued following the earthquake. The tremor is the latest in a series of earthquakes affecting northern and central Japan in recent days, prompting authorities to maintain alerts over possible aftershocks and related risks.

JMA HAD WARNED OF FURTHER STRONG TREMORS

Sunday's earthquake came just days after a magnitude 7.2 earthquake struck northern Japan, prompting the Japan Meteorological Agency to warn residents to remain alert. Following that stronger quake, the agency had advised the public to stay prepared for additional earthquakes reaching a maximum seismic intensity of around upper 6 for at least a week. Officials have repeatedly urged residents to monitor official updates and remain cautious, especially in areas vulnerable to structural damage and secondary disasters. There were no immediate reports of major damage or injuries following Sunday's earthquake.

ANOTHER EARTHQUAKE STRUCK A DAY EARLIER

The latest tremor also follows another seismic event recorded a day earlier.

Lebanon's deal with Israel requires Hezbollah to disarm; that might be difficult

Hezbollah's leader called the agreement a "humiliation," adding that linking Israel's withdrawal to Hezbollah's disarmament as a "very dangerous suggestion."

BEIRUT.(Agency)

Hezbollah's leader on Saturday criticised a framework agreement that Israel and Lebanon signed a day earlier to end months of conflict between the Iran-backed militant group and Israel, raising concerns about its effectiveness. The agreement signed Friday in Washington links Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon to Hezbollah's disarmament, something the group rejects. Several previous ceasefire agreements that Lebanon has negotiated with Israel since the outbreak of the latest Israel-Hezbollah war were never implemented on the ground. More than 4,000 people in Lebanon have been killed in Israeli strikes since March, when

Hezbollah fired at Israel two days after the Iran war began. In a statement Saturday, Hezbollah leader Naim Kassem said his group will keep fighting until Israel is forced to leave Lebanon. The group's supporters protested in the streets of Beirut following the announcement of the agreement. Despite the deal, the Lebanese state news agency reported an Israeli drone strike near the southern city of Nabatiyeh. It also reported that Israel's military released three Lebanese and three Syrian workers who were taken near the southern village of Ain Arab on Friday. Deal calls on Israel to withdraw but only if Hezbollah disarms. The talks between Israel and Lebanon were separate from the interim deal signed earlier this month by the US and Iran. Details of the deal that the US State Department released Saturday say Lebanon and Israel aim to eventually end the state of war between



them that began when Israel was created in 1948. The deal says Israel will withdraw from Lebanon, provided Hezbollah disarms. It calls for Israel to initially withdraw from two small areas, called pilot zones. It did not say where they will be. The Lebanese army will gradually assume full security responsibility over those areas. The countries will agree to future pilot zones for

Israel's withdrawal in the future, the agreement says. The deal has a security annex that includes details of the deployment of the Lebanese army and redeployments of Israeli troops. The security annex was not made public.

As part of the deal, Israel stresses that Hezbollah's disarmament throughout Lebanon and additional security measures to be agreed upon between the countries will eliminate any future need for the Israeli army's military action or presence in Lebanon. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a statement said Israeli forces will remain in southern Lebanon "until Hezbollah and the rest of the terrorist organizations are disarmed, and until no further threat to Israel is posed from Lebanon." Netanyahu said the two agreed-upon zones will have a "pilot program for disarming Hezbollah and transferring the territory to the control of the Lebanese army."

Desperation mounts in Venezuela as the earthquake death toll rises to 1,430

LA GUAIRA. (Agency)

Tensions flared Saturday as desperation grew among anguished residents of the Venezuelan state of La Guaira, where rescuers and civilians searched for earthquake survivors amid a sharply rising death toll. Venezuela's government said the number of people killed rose to 1,430 Saturday morning and families reported at least 68,900 people missing, three days after the one-two punch of 7.2 and 7.5 magnitude earthquakes that devastated the South American nation. Venezuelans looking for loved ones and neighbors used shovels, heavy equipment, ropes and bare hands atop mounds of toppled concrete throughout La Guaira, one of the country's hardest-hit states.

Most of those digging were civilians who took search efforts into their own hands, and tensions peaked over inadequate response from the Venezuelan government, whose soldiers, firefighters, police and military cadets were evidently underprepared to respond to the tragedy.

Frustration was only amplified by state efforts to project the image of a robust state response. "There's a pile of bodies over there from last night. Newborn



babies. Look what time it is, and they still haven't come to recover them. At 8 p.m. there were people alive down there, and they haven't bothered to rescue them. We've located several bodies, and they haven't helped us recover them either," said Mileidy Romero, who was among those searching the rubble in the seaside town of Caraballeda. "What

are they waiting for?" Aid agencies consider the first 48 to 72 hours as crucial for retrieving people alive, though that can be extended if they have access to food and water. However, a growing number of international rescue teams were joining the effort to save lives nearly 72 hours after the quake.

Acting President Delcy Rodríguez said on state television Saturday that more than 14,000 members of the military and police are patrolling the area, where access is now blocked and special permits are required to enter. More rescue teams sent by governments across the world arrived in Venezuela on Saturday. Simón Bolívar International Airport, which serves Venezuela's capital, Caracas, was badly damaged in the quake. One runway was operational on Saturday as U.S. teams worked to repair the crucial thoroughway, said Jeremy Lewin, a senior State Department official in charge of foreign assistance told reporters.

Hezbollah Slams Israel-Lebanon Deal, Questions Its Effectiveness

World.(Agency)

Hezbollah's leader on Saturday criticized a framework agreement that Israel and Lebanon signed a day earlier to end months of conflict between the Iran-backed militant group and Israel, raising concerns about its effectiveness. The agreement signed Friday in Washington links Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon to Hezbollah's disarmament, something the group rejects. Several previous ceasefire agreements that Lebanon has negotiated with Israel since the outbreak of the latest Israel-Hezbollah war were never implemented on the ground. More than 4,000 people in Lebanon have been killed in Israeli strikes since March, when Hezbollah fired at Israel two days after the Iran war began. In a statement Saturday, Hezbollah leader Naim Kassem said his group will keep fighting until Israel is forced to leave Lebanon. The group's supporters protested in the streets of

Beirut following the announcement of the agreement. Despite the deal, the Lebanese state news agency reported an Israeli drone strike near the southern city of Nabatiyeh. It also reported that Israel's military released three Lebanese and three Syrian workers who were taken near the southern village of Ain Arab on Friday. The talks between Israel and Lebanon were separate from the interim deal signed earlier this month by the U.S. and Iran. Details of the deal that the U.S. State Department released Saturday say Lebanon and Israel aim to eventually end the state of war between them that began when Israel was created in 1948. The deal says Israel will withdraw from Lebanon, provided Hezbollah disarms. It calls for Israel to initially withdraw from two small areas, called pilot zones. It did not say where they will be. The Lebanese army will gradually assume full security responsibility over those areas. The countries will agree to future pilot

zones for Israel's withdrawal in the future, the agreement says. The deal has a security annex that includes details of the deployment of the Lebanese army and redeployments of Israeli troops. The security annex was not made public. As part of the deal, Israel stresses that Hezbollah's disarmament throughout Lebanon and additional security measures to be agreed upon between the countries will eliminate any future need for the Israeli army's military action or presence in Lebanon. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a statement said Israeli forces will remain in southern Lebanon "until Hezbollah and the rest of the terrorist organizations are disarmed, and until no further threat to Israel is posed from Lebanon." Netanyahu said the two agreed-upon zones will have a "pilot program for disarming Hezbollah and transferring the territory to the control of the Lebanese army." He said Israel's military already withdrew from one.



secure his release. Chinese-Canadian journalist and human rights activist Sheng Xue posted on X that Dong was "walking around the neighborhood, so excited that he took a photo with the Canadian flag." Dong was dismissed from his work as a policeman after signing a petition a decade after Beijing's 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown, according to US-based advocacy group Human Rights in China. He later spent about three years in prison from 2001 for "inciting subversion of state power," United Nations experts said, and was detained again in 2014 over Tiananmen-related activities. Dong fled to Thailand with his family, who later resettled in Canada as refugees, but Thai authorities handed him over to Chinese police in 2015 despite his UN-recognized refugee status. In 2019, Dong unsuccessfully tried to swim to the Taiwanese territory of Kinmen. On a 2020 trip to Vietnam, he was detained by local police.

US airstrikes again hit Iran as Tehran strikes Bahrain and Kuwait, further imperiling interim deal

DUBAI.(Agency)

The U.S. military launched a second round of airstrikes Saturday targeting Iran at President Donald Trump's direction as Tehran hit both Bahrain and Kuwait, underscoring rising tensions that threaten the interim deal between the two nations to stop the war. The attack on Kuwait early Sunday was the first since the two sides signed a deal that aimed to halt fighting, and came as a multinational maritime body overseen by the U.S. Navy said Saturday that it would expand a route near Oman in the strait to allow for both inbound and outbound traffic — likely setting up a new flashpoint with Tehran. The U.S. military's Central Command said it struck Iranian military "surveillance infrastructure, communication systems, air defense sites, drone storage facilities and minelayer capabilities" following an attack on a ship at sea early Saturday morning. That ship, the Panamanian-flagged tanker Kiku, carried crude oil for the state-run energy company

of Qatar, a key negotiator between Iran and the U.S. In a social media post, Trump said the U.S. had "struck Iranian missile and drone storage locations, and coastal radar sites, for violating the Cease Fire Agreement, AGAIN!" He warned of a point where the U.S. may no longer be able to be reasonable "and will be forced to militarily complete the job." "If that happens, the Islamic Republic of Iran will no longer exist!" Trump wrote on Truth Social. The incident follows a similar back and forth that occurred just days prior when an Iranian drone struck a merchant vessel off the coast of Oman on Thursday and the U.S. military retaliated with strikes.

US says strikes were a response to Iranian attack on oil tanker

According to ship tracking websites, the Kiku left a Qatari oil field in the middle of the Persian Gulf earlier in the week and was bound for a port in the United Arab Emirates that sits on the Gulf of Oman, just on the other side of the Strait of Hormuz.

It appeared to be attempting to use a route that was established near the coast of Oman that is serving as an alternative to the route



sanctioned by Iran that runs through its own waters. The U.S. military said that "Iran had a chance to honor the ceasefire agreement" but "elected not to" when its forces attacked the Kiku. Iran state TV reported explosions in an area just north of the Strait of Hormuz. After the U.S. strikes early Sunday, Kuwait's military said air defenses intercepted incoming Iranian drones and missiles. It

offered no immediate information on any damage. Kuwait is home to a major U.S. Army base.

Bahrain condemns Iran's drone attack

Earlier on Saturday, a statement from Bahrain's Foreign Ministry said a "number of Iranian drones" targeted the country. It called the attack "a flagrant threat to the security of citizens and residents." There were no immediate reports of damage. Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard earlier issued a statement carried by the state-run IRNA news agency saying it had targeted several locations "of the U.S. terrorist army in the region." It did not name what areas were targeted. Bahrain has been one of the strongest critics of Iran and is home to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet. It just hosted U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio for a meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council's foreign ministers, which ended with a call for an end to Iran's attacks and for the strait to be completely open.