



Is increasing Bangladesh-Pakistan closeness a concern for India?

Bangladesh's ties with Pakistan have come up more often after recent political developments in Dhaka. India is adjusting its approach as regional equations change.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Nearly four months after taking office, Bangladesh Prime Minister Tariq Rahman has returned home after completing his first foreign visit. His tour began in Malaysia and later took him to China, where he met President Xi Jinping. Before the visit, he was expected to choose between India, China and Saudi Arabia for his first overseas trip. He did not include India in his itinerary. Around the same time, Dinesh Trivedi took charge in Dhaka as India's new high commissioner to Bangladesh. He is the first politician to be appointed India's envoy to Bangladesh since the two countries established diplomatic relations 55 years ago. After assuming office, he quoted a popular Bhupen Hazarika song and said that the two countries share the same sky and the same air. The comment triggered strong reactions in Bangladesh, where sections of opinion saw it as politically loaded.

Tensions in India-Bangladesh relations

Tensions between the two neighbours have been building over several issues. One of the



most disputed is the allegation from Dhaka that India is pushing people across the border as part of "push-back" or "push-in". A recent high-level meeting between border forces of the two countries in Delhi did not produce any outcome.

Hopes of better ties after the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) came to power have faded. "Following Foreign Minister Khalilur

Rahman's visit to Delhi, relations between the two countries were getting back to normal. But that hope has almost ended now. Relations are falling and the gains made over years are being undone one by one," said a senior diplomat.

He said controversial statements by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and West Bengal leader Suvendu Adhikari on alleged Bangladeshi nationals being pushed back across the border have added to the tensions. Dhaka described the remarks as provocative.

Pakistan factor and changing alignments Indian officials accept that ties have worsened, but they blame part of it on Bangladesh moving closer to Pakistan. According to them, Bangladesh is working on a "strategic relationship" with Islamabad.

Since the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government on August 5, 2024, Bangladesh has moved closer to Pakistan, especially under the interim administration led by Professor Muhammad Yunus. Pakistani military officials have visited Dhaka multiple times, while both sides are exploring trade and education ties.

Massive fire breaks out in naphtha pipeline at Bengal refinery, 10 injured

A massive fire erupted at West Bengal's Haldia Refinery after a naphtha pipeline caught fire early Tuesday morning. Visuals from the scene showed thick black smoke billowing into the sky as firefighters battled the blaze.

Kolkata .(Agency)

At least 10 workers were injured after a major fire broke out in a naphtha pipeline at the Haldia Refinery in West Bengal's Purba Medinipur district on Tuesday, officials said. The blaze erupted between 4 am and 4.30 am and 12 fire tenders were pressed into service. Firefighting operations are still underway.

Visuals from the spot showed thick black smoke rising into the sky as firefighters and emergency teams battled to bring the flames under control. Local residents and refinery officials rushed to the spot and rescued the injured, who were shifted to Haldia Sub-Divisional Hospital for treatment.



Some of the injured are reported to be in critical condition.

The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained. Refinery authorities have not officially commented on the incident and further details on the extent of the

damage are awaited.

Naphtha, a highly flammable petroleum product derived from crude oil, is widely used in the production of fuels such as petrol and kerosene.

Haldia Refinery is the fourth refinery owned by Indian Oil Corporation Ltd and is situated in West Bengal's Purba Medinipur district where the Haldi and Hooghly rivers meet. The refinery was commissioned in 1975 and is located about 136 km from Kolkata. According to the company, the Haldia Refinery has an installed capacity of 2.5 million metric tons per annum (MMTPA) and is spread over an area of about 612 acres.

4 killed, 19 injured as sleeper bus crashes into trailer on Yamuna Expressway

Mathura.(Agency)

At least four people were killed and 19 others injured after a double-decker sleeper bus collided with a trailer on the Yamuna Expressway in Uttar Pradesh's Mathura district early Monday, police said. The accident took place near milestone 112 under the Raya police station limits.

According to officials, the bus, carrying around 65 passengers, was travelling from Lucknow to Noida when it rammed into the trailer. The impact left four passengers dead on the spot and injured 19 others. The injured were rushed to the district hospital, where they are undergoing treatment.

Police said efforts are underway to identify the deceased. The exact cause of the accident is yet to be ascertained, and further investigation is in progress.



5 DIE AS STORM-TOPPLED NEEM TREE CRUSHES E-RICKSHAW

In a separate incident, five people were killed, and three others injured after a roadside neem tree collapsed on an e-rickshaw during a powerful storm in Uttar Pradesh's Firozabad district on Monday evening, police said.

According to District Magistrate Santosh Kumar Sharma, the e-rickshaw was travelling from Awagarh in Etah district towards Fariha when a sudden storm uprooted a large neem tree, which fell directly onto the vehicle. The impact crushed the e-rickshaw, trapping all eight passengers inside.

Police, fire brigade personnel and local villagers launched a rescue operation, using a JCB machine to remove the tree and pull out the victims. The injured were rushed to the government trauma centre by ambulance, but five of them died before reaching the hospital.

Hell of Addiction Under Khaki's Shield

Jail-Return 'Hanu Kamadiya' Emerges as the Undisputed King of Karjan in ₹23-Lakh Liquor Scam!

Fueled by PI Patel's patronage, the controversial 'Vahivatdar' accumulates millions in extortion; colludes with bootleggers for illicit 'cutting'.

Mahanagar Metro Desk Pawan Makan

Vadodara / Karjan: Flouting the Gujarat government's 'Zero Tolerance' policy, a sensational and shocking case of systemic corruption has surfaced from the Karjan taluka of Vadodara district. Despite tall claims of liquor prohibition on paper, an empire of English liquor, toxic chemical-laced country liquor, gambling, and narcotics like charas and ganja thrives brazenly across Karjan's villages—allegedly under the direct patronage of the local police.

At the center of this illicit network is a notorious 'Vahivatdar' (system manager) from the Karjan Police Station's D-Staff, who operates with absolute impunity. Kurali (Near the Water Tank): Openly operating Varli Matka gambling rackets, rapidly de-

stroying the local youth.Sapa Village (New Vasahat): Transformed into a 'safe haven' for gamblers commuting from Vadodara city, while local police remain mute spectators.Kandari Village: Country liquor outlets have mushroomed in every nook and corner, showing zero fear of the law.Karamdi Village: A round-the-clock hub for toxic country liquor distilleries. The production of chemical-laced spurious liquor raises a grim question: Is the corrupt administration waiting for another hooch tragedy (Latthakand) and innocent deaths before taking action?

The alleged mastermind behind this widespread illegal network is Karjan Police's controversial constable, Hanubha alias Hanu Kamadiya. Kamadiya was previously caught red-handed in a ₹23-lakh illicit foreign liquor scam in direct collusion with

વડોદરામાં પ્રથમવાર પોલીસ કર્મચારી સામે પ્રોહિબિશન એક્ટની કાર્યવાહી રૂ.23 લાખના દારૂની હેરાફેરીમાં કરજણના કોન્સ્ટેબલની ધરપકડ બૂટલેગરો સાથે 100 થી વધુ વખત મોબાઇલ પર વાતચીત થઈ હતી



bootleggers, serving jail time, followed by suspension and externment from the district. However, questions mount over which political patron orchestrated the lucrative re-posting of this tainted constable back to Karjan Police Station immediately after his release. For Karjan's Police

ઇન્સ્પેક્ટર (પી) પટેલ, હાનુબ્હા નામનો ડમ્પી મોબાઇલ નંબર ઉપયોગ કરતો હતો

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Inspector (PI) Patel, Hanubha has reportedly turned into a 'goose that lays golden eggs.' Under PI Patel's protective shield, Hanubha is once again actively managing the 'cutting' (distribution) of illicit foreign liquor in partnership with bootleggers, amassing dis-

7 banks, 5 years, 8 accused: Cops piece together money trail in Ram Temple theft

Police have sought five years of bank records from seven banks linked to the Ayodhya Ram Temple donation theft case. The scrutiny has intensified after SBI's alleged earlier warning and the resignations of two trust officials.

Uttar Pradesh.(Agency) The investigation into the Ayodhya Ram Temple donation theft case has moved into a detailed financial scrutiny phase, with police seeking five years of banking records from seven banks linked to the eight arrested accused and the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust.

Investigators have sought account statements, transaction histories, KYC details, deposit records and other banking documents to reconstruct the movement of funds and identify any suspicious transactions connected to the alleged diversion of devotees' offerings, police sources said.

The probe is focused on examining whether there were unusual cash deposits, withdrawals or transfers between accounts during the period when the accused were

involved in handling donation-related activities at the temple. According to the sources, the police are attempting to



establish whether the money deposited into the Trust's accounts matches the donations collected and recorded through the temple's official systems.

As part of the exercise, a police team visited the State Bank of India's (SBI) Ayodhya Dham branch, where the Trust's main donation account is maintained, to collect banking records and related procedural documents. Teams also visited six other banks to obtain details of accounts allegedly linked to the accused.

Investigators are examining records from accounts where the accused are believed to have maintained personal or salary accounts.

The aim is to compare transactions across multiple accounts and determine whether any amount allegedly taken from temple donations moved through the banking network, sources said. The police are also expected to match the

financial data with other evidence, including CCTV footage, digital records, attendance details, cash deposit registers and documents collected during the investigation.

SBI BRANCH UNDER SCANNER

The Ayodhya SBI branch has emerged as a key point in the investigation. It holds accounts of the temple Trust as well as seven of the eight accused. Police questioned bank officials for around four hours on Monday as part of the probe.

According to SBI sources, the bank had allegedly flagged concerns over possible irregularities to the Trust and police around three months ago. The warning, however, was allegedly not acted upon. Sources said the bank had proposed changing the cash-counting staff handling the donation collection process, but some Trust officials allegedly did not approve the move.

The Trust has not publicly responded to the claim. On Monday, the bank also provided details of accounts linked to the accused to the police, sources said.

News box

Auto passenger dies after divider crash; police suspect hit-and-run

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 52-year-old Delhi resident died after the auto-rickshaw he was travelling in crashed into a divider near the New Colony cut on Old Railway Road on Sunday morning. Police suspect the auto was hit by an unidentified vehicle before the crash. The deceased, William, a resident of Palam, worked at a shop in Sadar Bazaar, Gurgaon. According to police, the accident took place around 9 am when an unknown vehicle allegedly hit the auto-rickshaw, causing the driver to lose control and ram into the divider. Police said William was found lying injured near the spot by passers-by, who alerted the authorities. By then, the auto-rickshaw driver was no longer at the scene. An emergency response vehicle (ERV) reached the spot and rushed William to hospital, where doctors declared him dead. Police said he suffered multiple injuries, including a serious head injury on the left side of his forehead. An FIR has been registered at city police station against the unidentified vehicle under Sections 106 (death by negligence) and 281 (rash driving) of BNS. An investigating officer said police are examining CCTV footage to identify the vehicle and reconstruct the sequence of events. "One camera near the spot was found non-functional, while footage from other cameras did not capture the exact angle of the crash," the officer said.

Noida's Deer Park to be ready in December

Noida.(Agency)

Noida is set to get its first Deer Park by Dec, with the Noida Authority developing a 30-acre facility within the 75-acre Biodiversity Park in Sector 91. The project, estimated at Rs 40 crore, is being developed as a mini-zoo in accordance with Central Zoo Authority norms. The facility is being planned under the guidance of two retired Indian Forest Service officers appointed as wildlife planning experts, and approval was obtained from the CZA. The new park will expand urban green space, offer recreational attractions and support scientific research on deer behaviour, ecology and conservation strategies. It will also drive wildlife conservation and environmental awareness through guided tours, interactive exhibits, workshops and interpretative signage. The Biodiversity Park in Sector 91 is known for its natural landscape zones, and the park is home to more than 100 species of native plants, more than 120 species of medicinal herbs and several other varieties of vegetation. The Noida Authority board approved the Deer Park project in June 2024. Following this, the Authority prepared a Detailed Project Report (DPR). IIT Jammu vetted the report before the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) granted approval in April 2025. Construction commenced in December 2025 with an initial completion deadline of June 2026. However, officials stated that Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) restrictions disrupted construction activities and delayed the timeline. The Authority now aims to complete the project by Dec 2026. The deer enclosures are already being set up, and a boundary wall to separate them from the biodiversity park is in place. "A pathway, along with facilities like ticket counters, a veterinary clinic and a keepers' room, will be constructed. The project will be ready in 4-5 months," said Anand Mohan Singh, deputy director (horticulture) of the Noida Authority. The park will house nine species of deer in enclosures, along with a variety of bird species. The species include mouse deer, hog deer, swamp deer, Indian antelopes, African antelopes, spotted deer, sambar deer and barking deer.

Suit-boot heist: 7-year-old slips away with wedding bag stuffed with cash, gold

Noida.(Agency)

A seven-year-old boy dressed in a black suit and boots was allegedly used to steal a bag carrying cash, jewellery and mobile phones worth over Rs 5 lakh from a wedding function in Indirapuram. CCTV footage showed him quietly lifting the bag and walking away while the family



was busy greeting guests. Police said the theft took place during the "jai mala" ceremony at a banquet hall in Indirapuram on Saturday, when the crowd and commotion gave the accused the perfect cover. The child had entered the venue with a man, aged around 35. According to CCTV footage, the bag had been placed on a table beside the complainant's mother while the family was occupied attending to guests. The child approached the table, removed his black blazer, wrapped the bag inside it and left without drawing attention. By the time the family realised the bag was missing, both had disappeared. Complainant Gaurav Mishra, a resident of Geeta Colony in Delhi, told police the bag contained gold jewellery worth Rs 5 lakh, an iPhone 13, Rs 20,000 in cash and additional money received as wedding gifts. The function was being held at Royal Ambience Lawn-2 on CISF Road for his younger brother's wedding. ACP (Indirapuram) Abhishek Srivastava said the child and the man were later seen leaving through the rear side of the banquet hall before fleeing on a motorcycle.

"The family was busy during the garlanding ceremony. The bag was kept beside the complainant's mother. The child lifted it and left with the accomplice," Srivastava said. Police have registered an FIR against unidentified persons under Section 303(2) (theft) of BNS. Teams are examining CCTV footage from nearby areas to identify the suspects. Police suspect the child may have been deliberately used because he could move around the crowded venue without raising suspicion. The theft drew parallels with a similar incident in Kavi Nagar in Feb 2023, when two men fled with a bag carrying Rs 1.3 lakh in cash during a wedding ceremony.

MCG among 5 corporations to revamp 684km of ageing sewer network in Haryana

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Haryana urban local bodies (ULB) department has directed five municipal corporations to upgrade 684 km of decades-old sewer lines on priority during a meeting chaired by ULB minister Vipul Goel. Officials from municipal corporations of Gurgaon, Faridabad, Karnal, Panipat and Sonapat said they have started surveying old parts of the city to ascertain whether these ageing lines will require replacement or restoring the existing pipeline to a serviceable condition. "Estimates will be prepared post-survey and it will then be sent for administrative approval before we begin work on the ageing sewerage lines of the city," said MCG chief engineer Vijay Dhaka. City residents have repeatedly raised concerns over sewer overflows, ageing pipelines and heavy waterlogging during monsoon, attributing the problems to the city's unplanned construction. "All urban villages have an age-old infrastructure. There is uncontrolled

growth in these villages, with multi-storied buildings coming up with the same sewer lines that were laid two to three decades ago. There are illegal connections too, which puts pressure on the main sewer lines of the city, causing sewer overflows that seem beyond repair. These old sewer lines will have to be replaced across the city and not just in certain parts of the city to augment sewer infrastructure," said Rajesh Gera, a resident of Surya Vihar. Another resident from Sector 40, Abhimanyu Yadav, said the sewer lines in the sector were laid around 20 to 25 years ago. "The sewage is opposite to a slope, which causes recurrent overflow in our area. We have been dealing with this problem for years now. We have complained to MCG a number of times, to no avail." It was also discussed in that meeting that sewerage and water supply services currently handled by the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) and Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran (HSVP) in certain municipal corporations



of the state should eventually be transferred to the respective municipal corporations. In Gurgaon, while the bulk water supply is provided by the GMDA, MCG's role is distribution and maintenance and operations of the internal water infrastructure network. The objective, officials of the ULB said, is to establish a single-agency mechanism for

service delivery, reducing coordination issues and improving accountability. However, it was also discussed that the proposal is contingent on strengthening municipal manpower. It was observed that municipal corporations presently lack adequate staff to efficiently manage water supply and sewerage services. It was decided that a proposal for augmenting manpower in municipal corporations would first be prepared and submitted. Only after that would the proposal to transfer these services be placed before the govt for approval. While the existing and ageing sewer lines are under distress, several parts of the city still lack authorised sewer connections. TOI reported on Feb 17 that nearly two-thirds of the city households are not connected to legal sewer lines. Municipal figures revealed a stark contradiction beneath the surface — out of 5.5 lakh households in the city, only 1.8 lakh had authorised sewer connections. With 3.7 lakh homes — a whopping 66.6% — outside the formal sanitation system,

Massive Crackdown on Mineral Mafias

Police Seize Illegal Sand Transport While Corrupt Officials Enjoy 'AC Comforts'

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Pawan Makan

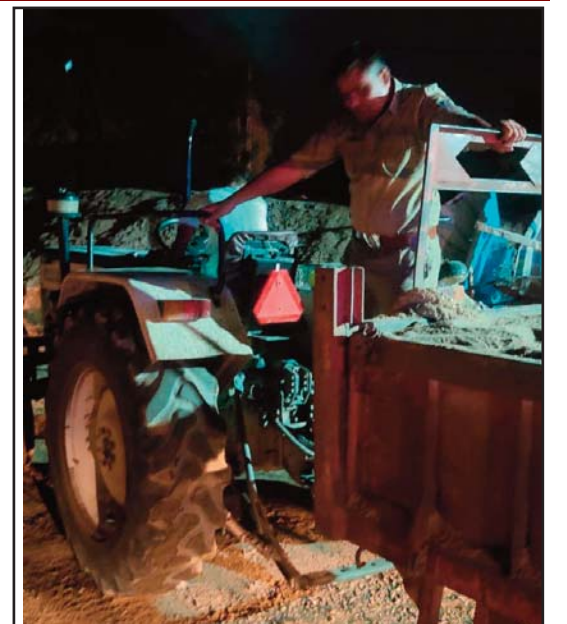
Chhota Udepur.

Under the direct guidance of the District Collector and strict instructions from the Superintendent of Police (SP), a special drive against illegal sand mining has been intensified in Chhota Udepur, striking fear into local mineral mafias who are ecosystemically damaging the district's lifeline rivers. During a late-night routine patrol, the District Traffic Police intercepted and seized an overloaded tractor-trolley transporting illegal sand without a valid royalty pass near Suskal village, subsequently handing the vehicle over to the Mines and Minerals Department for strict punitive action. However, this commendable enforcement by the police has sparked severe public criticism through "Mahanagar Metro" against the district's Mines and Minerals Department, with direct allegations that while ground cops risk their lives on night patrols, mining officials remain deep in slumber, allegedly content with collecting protection money from their air-conditioned offices while turning a blind eye to daytime riverbed plundering. Despite the mineral department's systemic inertia, the district administration and police have issued a fierce ultimatum, promising even harsher, unyielding joint operations in the coming days to completely dismantle the politically shielded mining syndicates before they inflict irreversible environmental ruins on the region.

The spotlight now rests firmly on the state government's next move. Mahanagar Metro vows to relentlessly track this issue and ex-



pose the white-collared patrons who have turned a blind eye to this ecological massacre. If the Mines and Minerals Department fails to awaken from its corrupt slumber and take decisive action, we will not hesitate to publicly unmask the faces shielding these mafias. The countdown has begun—the administration must now prove to the public whether this special drive is a genuine clean-up operation or just a temporary pause in a multi-million-rupee black market. The silence of the higher authorities is not just complicity; it is a blatant betrayal of the people they are sworn to protect. The citizens of Chhota Udepur are no longer willing to remain silent victims of this environmental terrorism. Every stolen grain of sand is a direct



theft from the state's treasury, deliberately engineered to fill the deep pockets of a corrupt syndicate. Our investigative team is already tracking the financial trails and benami assets of these allegedly 'untouchable' officers and mining barons. The administration must now choose: either enforce the law with an iron fist, or prepare for a merciless public exposure.

Mahanagar Metro will not let this systemic plunder continue in the dark. We challenge the dormant Mines and Minerals Department to act immediately or face our relentless investigative wrath. We will keep fighting for Chhota Udepur's rivers until every mineral mafia and corrupt official is brought to absolute legal justice.

Woman plots to kill boyfriend with sister to protect her teen daughter

Noida.(Agency)

A woman from Tronica City who realised the man she was seeing for nine months was a sexual predator and wanted to protect her 13-year-old daughter from him plotted his murder along with her sister. On June 23, Kiran (32) and Kashish (21) knocked Zakir out with a wooden stick and dressed the crime scene to pass it off as suicide. They wrapped a towel around Zakir's neck and tied him to the ceiling fan before raising an alarm before neighbours that he died by suicide. Kiran, police said, was in a live-in relationship with Zakir for the past nine months. Things turned testy when Zakir, a mason, expressed his desire to have sexual relations with Kiran's 13-year-old daughter from her previous marriage. Kiran repeatedly tried to stop him from going anywhere near her daughter, but he rebuffed her. She then decided to kill Zakir and brought her younger sister into a plan to stage the killing as suicide. Siddharth Gautam, ACP (Loni), said the case came under their scanner after Zakir's brother, Sameer Khan, filed a written complaint on Monday, alleging that Kiran and Kashish had killed him at their rented accommodation. "Kiran told the complainant that Zakir had died by suicide after hanging from the ceiling fan. She took



him to a nearby hospital, where he was declared dead on arrival. Later, police sent the body for autopsy," he added. It was the autopsy report that strengthened suspicion among cops. The report suggested blunt injury marks on his body and the cause of death as strangulation. Kiran was called for questioning, but her account did not hold up. "She kept changing her statement continuously. Moreover, what she said did not match the statement given by her younger sister. It was only after sustained questioning that she confessed to have killed Zakir along

with her sister," the ACP said. Kiran told police she had been raising three children even while seeing Zakir — a daughter (13) and two sons (9 and 11). "Two months ago, Zakir told Kiran that he wanted to have a sexual relationship with her daughter, which led to a fight between them. He would also inappropriately touch her. Kiran had repeatedly tried to stop him, but to no avail," Gautam said. Around 20 days ago, Kiran called her younger sister and told her about Zakir's sexual advances towards her daughter. "Together, they hatched the murder plan and watched

several crime scenes of movies on YouTube. They chose June 23 to commit the crime and escape to their village," the ACP said. According to police, the sisters created a moment when the children would be away. "They booked a cab using Zakir's phone to go out. When the cab arrived, they sent all the children outside and asked them to sit inside the car. While they were away, Kiran struck Zakir on the head with a stick. He slumped to the ground and fell unconscious. The two then tied a noose around his neck with a gamchha and pulled it tight, strangling him to death," Gautam said. They attempted to erase every sign of murder and build a suicide narrative. "They first hid the stick behind a water tank on the roof. And then, the sisters tied the towel to the fan and hung him from there. They also bent all three blades of the fan so that no one would suspect they had committed the murder," Gautam said. The sisters then raised an alarm. When a tenant living below and neighbours rushed in, they created a scene and claimed Zakir had died by suicide. "To make it appear more authentic, they booked an auto-rickshaw and took him to Jagmohan Hospital, where his family members arrived. Kiran told them the same thing, that he had committed suicide," the ACP said.

UP Congress chief Ajay Rai alleges house arrest ahead of Ram Mandir visit

The Uttar Pradesh Congress alleged that its state chief was placed under house arrest at a hotel in Ayodhya ahead of the party's Ram Temple visit, with Ajay Rai terming it a "cowardly attempt" by the BJP to prevent party leaders from offering prayers and accusing that the government's "dictatorship has reached its peak."

Ayodhya. (Agency)

The Uttar Pradesh Congress on Tuesday alleged that its state president, Ajay Rai, was placed under house arrest in Ayodhya ahead of a proposed visit by a party delegation to the Ram Mandir, calling the move a "cowardly attempt" by the BJP-led government to prevent Congress leaders from offering prayers amid an ongoing row over misappropriation of devotees' donations.

In a post on X, Ajay Rai accused the government of acting in a "dictatorial" manner, claiming he was detained shortly after arriving in Ayodhya. He further alleged that those involved in the purported donation and land scams in the temple town were "afraid of devotees of Lord Ram."

"We will neither stop nor bow down," he added in his post. Speaking to Aaj Tak, Rai said he was "forcibly" taken late Monday night to the guest house of Acharya Narendra Dev University. "I was made to sit in a vehicle and brought to the guest house, where I have been kept," he alleged, adding that security personnel had been deployed outside.

He also claimed, "We have not been given breakfast or food," and said their mobile phones had been taken away four days earlier. Rai further stated that other members of the Congress delegation had also been placed under house arrest and insisted, "We will not leave without offering prayers." He also alleged unequal treatment, saying, "Arvind Kejriwal is allowed to visit the temple, but when we came earlier, we were told to offer prayers from outside." In a separate statement, the party said Rai was confined to Hotel Padam Shri Palace in Ayodhya after arriving to lead the delegation, adding that the visit, already informed to local authorities, was scheduled for Tuesday.

The Congress also claimed that Pratapgarh district Congress president Neeraj Tripathi was detained by the police without any justification. "Lord Shri Ram does not belong to any one political party or ideology, but is a symbol of the faith and culture of the entire country. Stopping devotees from going to Ayodhya is

unconstitutional," the party said. The delegation, led by Rai, includes MPs Kishori Lal Sharma (Amethi), Rakesh Rathor (Sitapur), Ujjwal Raman Singh



(Prayagraj) and Tanuj Punia (Barabanki). Former Barabanki MP S P Gautam, former MLC Deepak Singh, former Maharajganj MLA Virendra Chaudhary and former Barabanki MLA Mita Gautam are also expected to be part of the visit. The visit comes against the backdrop of the

Ram Temple donation theft case, in which eight people have been arrested following a Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the embezzlement of donations offered by devotees at the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi

Temple. The accused were part of the team responsible for counting and managing cash and valuables donated by devotees at the Ram Temple. Opposition parties have alleged that the arrests target only lower-level functionaries, while the "main culprits" remain untouched.

Meanwhile, sources in the State Bank of India (SBI) claimed the bank had recommended replacing the temple's cash-counting staff nearly three months ago after suspecting irregularities in the handling of donations. However, members of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust allegedly did not approve the move. The Trust has not yet responded to the claim. The controversy has intensified in recent

days, with Opposition parties accusing the BJP of shielding those responsible for the misappropriation of temple donations. The BJP has rejected the allegations, asserting that the state government is ensuring a fair investigation and that strict action will be taken against those found guilty.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav urged "true Sanatanis" not to vote for the BJP or seek election tickets from the party, alleging that it had "betrayed Lord Ram". He also claimed that the alleged theft had links extending to Karnataka and accused those involved of being part of "election-related conspiracies".

Congress leader Pawan Khera intensified the Opposition's attack, saying the alleged donation theft at the Ram Temple was "just the tip of the iceberg" and that more such cases would emerge. Responding to the criticism, Uttar Pradesh minister Dayashankar Singh accused Opposition leaders of not believing in Lord Ram, saying they had neither visited the Ayodhya temple nor contributed to its construction, yet continued to question those who had "given up family life to serve the nation."

Short news

Temple visit turns tragic as two friends die in Jalna truck-car collision

Agartala. (Agency)

What began as a spiritual journey for three friends turned into a tragedy after their car collided head-on with a truck in Maharashtra's Jalna district, killing two of them and leaving the third seriously injured. The accident occurred late at night on the Ambad-Jalna Road near a Reliance petrol pump on the outskirts of Ambad town.

According to police, Vikas Dagdoba Chavan (26), Sagar Deepak Barde (20) and Shubham Ganesh Bahule, residents of Kumbhahari village in Jalna taluka, had set out for Madhi for darshan at a temple. Vikas had borrowed a WagonR car belonging to his maternal uncle, Sanjay Damodar Shinde, for the trip. The three friends left Kumbhahari at around 5 p.m. and were on their way to the shrine when their vehicle collided head-on with a truck near Ambad. The impact of the crash was severe, leaving the car mangled beyond recognition.

Vikas Chavan died on the spot, while Sagar Barde, who sustained critical injuries, succumbed during treatment. Shubham Bahule was seriously injured and was initially admitted to the Sub-District Hospital in Ambad before being referred to a hospital in Jalna for advanced treatment.

Ambad police rushed to the scene after receiving information about the accident. Officers helped shift the victims to hospital and conducted a preliminary investigation before registering a case.

PSI arrested for forcing minors into obscene acts

BENGALURU.(Agency)

A Police Sub-Inspector attached to the Amruthahalli police station was arrested after being accused of assaulting minors under the pretext of interrogation and forcing them into obscene acts.

The alleged incident took place a year ago, when the PSI had arrested the accused in a murder case, but came to light only after a video of the abuse went viral. A source said that the accused, PSI Praveen, had brought the minors to a lodge for questioning in connection with the case, where he allegedly beat them with a belt, used vulgar language, and coerced them into perverted sexual acts. The source added that Praveen had recorded the alleged incident on his phone. His wife



transferred the videos to her phone following a marital dispute between the couple. It is believed that his wife released the videos on social media. The videos went viral on social media. Following this, Amruthahalli police registered a suo motu case against Praveen and others under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Juvenile Justice Act. The investigation was later transferred to the Kothanur police station.

A senior police officer confirmed that Praveen was arrested and produced before the court, which remanded him to police custody. Constable Raghavendra, who allegedly assisted in the act, has been also suspended.

DMK leader's husband threatens TVK MLA opposing illegal sand mining; case filed

The incident happened after, following repeated complaints from residents over alleged nighttime sand mining near Mamsapuram in his Srivilliputhur constituency, MLA A Karthik visited the site to verify the allegations.

Chennai. (Agency)

A case has been registered against the husband of a DMK functionary and two others for allegedly threatening and intimidating TVK MLA A Karthik after he intervened to stop suspected illegal sand mining activity in Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar district.

The incident was reported near Mamsapuram in the Srivilliputhur constituency held by Karthik as its MLA, where local residents had repeatedly raised concerns over alleged sand extraction taking place during night hours. Acting on complaints from the public, MLA Karthik visited the location to assess the situation and verify the allegations.

According to the complaint, the MLA reached the site while sand mining activity was allegedly underway and attempted to

halt the operation.

During the intervention, Thangamangani — identified as the husband of Mamsapuram Town Panchayat President Sujitha Mary,



who is also associated with the DMK, allegedly arrived at the spot along with two others. Police said the group allegedly confronted the MLA, leading to a heated exchange. The complaint further alleged

that the accused obstructed the legislator while he was carrying out his public duties, used abusive language, and issued threats during the confrontation. The altercation was reportedly captured on video.

Based on Karthik's complaint, police registered a case against the three individuals and launched an inquiry into the allegations. Authorities are expected to examine video evidence and record statements as part of the investigation. The episode has renewed attention on allegations of illegal sand mining in the region, with residents expressing concern over the influence of those involved and questioning the challenges faced in curbing such activities. Police said further investigation is underway and additional action will depend on the findings.

Jamui pre-wedding attack: Woman dies, family injured, jewellery looted

Itanagar. (Agency)

A wedding-bound family's celebrations turned into tragedy in Bihar's Jamui district after armed assailants allegedly stormed their home, assaulted family members, opened fire and looted jewellery purchased for an upcoming marriage ceremony. A woman injured in the attack later died during treatment, while six others were left wounded. The incident took place late Sunday night in Dadpur village under Jhajha police station limits, just a day before the family was set to host a wedding on July 1. According to police and family members, masked attackers entered the house while preparations for the wedding were underway. The assailants allegedly assaulted residents with sharp weapons, fired gunshots and fled with jewellery and

valuables that had been purchased for the marriage. Among those injured was 35-year-old Baby Devi, who succumbed to



her injuries while being taken to Patna for advanced treatment. Six other family members were also injured in the attack. Police personnel from the Dial-112 emergency response unit rushed to the

scene after receiving information about the incident and shifted the injured to a hospital in Jhajha. After initial treatment, Baby Devi, Suhaga Devi, Kajal Kumari, Komal Kumari and Subodh Kumar were referred to Jamui Sadar Hospital and later shifted to Patna for specialised treatment.

Family member Umesh Yadav said he had gone to Jhajha market to purchase items for his daughter Kajal Kumari's wedding. Several family members were asleep on the rooftop when the attack occurred. According to the family, a group of around a dozen masked men, dressed in black and armed with swords, axes and other weapons, entered the house and launched the assault. The attackers had allegedly parked their motorcycles about 200 metres away from the residence.

5 killed, 3 injured as tree falls onto e-rickshaw during storm in UP's Firozabad



Firozabad. (Agency)

Five people were killed and three were injured after a neem tree fell on an e-rickshaw during a storm in Uttar Pradesh's Firozabad district on Monday evening, police said.

The e-rickshaw was on its way from Awagarh in Etah district to Fariha when the tree collapsed on it, crushing the vehicle and trapping all eight passengers inside, officials said. The accident took place at around 8:30 pm near Chidrai village in Jastrana tehsil, under the Fariha police station area. Police said the e-rickshaw was completely crushed after the large roadside tree fell on it during the storm.

District Magistrate Santosh Kumar Sharma said the vehicle had reached the Prithvipur-Chidrai village area when the sudden storm caused the neem tree to collapse. After receiving information, police and fire brigade teams reached the spot and, with the help of villagers, arranged a JCB machine to remove the tree. The injured were taken by ambulance to the government trauma centre. However, five of them died before reaching the hospital, police said. The three injured are being treated at the district hospital. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem.

The dead were identified as Gajendra, 28, a resident of Batolar in Fariha; Haresh Pal, 59, a resident of Nagla Fateh in Fariha; Vishnu, 20, a resident of Ikhu in Fariha; Aman, 17, a resident of Nagla Manda in Sakrauli, Etah; and Ganga Singh, 65, a resident of Anandpur in Awagarh, Etah. The accident also led to a massive traffic jam on the road as rescue work was carried out after the storm-hit e-rickshaw was crushed under the fallen tree.

BJP vs BJP: Karnataka leaders lock horns over Kempegowda row

Former Karnataka Chief Minister DV Sadananda Gowda launched a blistering attack on BJP MLA SR Vishwanath, accusing him of land grabbing, links to late don Muthappa Rai and insulting Kempegowda's legacy, exposing fresh internal divisions within the Karnataka BJP.

Bengaluru.(Agency)

A fresh round of infighting has erupted within the Karnataka BJP after senior party leader and former Chief Minister DV Sadananda Gowda launched a sharp attack on BJP MLA SR Vishwanath, accusing him of amassing wealth through the patronage of late underworld don Muthappa Rai, grabbing land and insulting the legacy of Nadaprabhu Kempegowda.

Addressing reporters, Sadananda Gowda alleged that Vishwanath rose from humble beginnings to positions of power with Rai's support, grabbed land, misused his authority and later portrayed himself as an honest politician. He also accused Vishwanath of damaging the Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) during his public life. The former Chief Minister said no political party could claim exclusive ownership over Kempegowda's legacy and defended his decision to attend



a programme held in the 16th-century ruler's name. He claimed Vishwanath had

asked him not to attend the event, but he refused. Drawing a comparison to

underline his point, Sadananda Gowda said, "If Pakistan were to organise an event on Kempegowda and invite me, would I go there? That is not my mindset." He said his attendance at the event was guided by respect for Kempegowda, who, he argued, belongs to the people and not to any political party.

Sadananda Gowda further alleged that some leaders had invoked Kempegowda's name to secure Vokkaliga votes before neglecting his legacy and grabbing lands associated with him. He described the remarks made against him as an insult to Kempegowda and said Vokkaligas across Karnataka, including those in Dakshina Kannada, had begun protesting against Vishwanath's comments.

The public exchange has exposed deep divisions within the Karnataka BJP, turning the controversy into a fresh BJP-versus-BJP political battle.

Universe: Djinns amongst us

Devdutt Pattanaik

For many people, the word 'djinn' evokes the magical world of 'The Arabian Nights': genies emerging from lamps, granting wishes, carrying princes across deserts, and performing impossible feats. Thanks to stories such as Aladdin, the djinn entered global popular culture as a magical being ready to serve human desires. Yet the djinn of Islamic scripture is very different. In the Quran, jinns are not wish-granting spirits but a distinct creation of God, living alongside humanity in an unseen realm. The Quran describes jinn as beings created from a "smokeless flame of fire", while humans were created from clay and angels from light. The Arabic word 'jinn' comes from a root meaning "hidden" or "concealed". They inhabit a parallel dimension that humans generally cannot perceive. Unlike angels, they possess free will. They can choose faith or disbelief, obedience or rebellion. Because they have free will, jinn are morally accountable. The Quran states that both humans and jinn were created to worship God and will face judgment after death. Some are righteous believers while others are wicked. An entire chapter of the Quran, Surah Al-Jinn, describes a group of jinn hearing Prophet Muhammad recite the Quran. Moved by its message, they embraced Islam and returned to their communities to spread the faith. One of the most important jinn in Islamic tradition is Iblis, often identified with Satan. The Quran explains that he was not a fallen angel but a jinn who became arrogant and refused God's command to bow before Adam. His story illustrates the dangers of pride and disobedience.



The Quran also rejects several popular beliefs about the jinn. It denies that they possess knowledge of the future. In one famous story, the jinn serving Prophet Solomon continued their work after his death because they did not know he had died. Only when his staff decayed and his body fell did they discover the truth. The Quran also discourages people from seeking help, protection, or supernatural power from the jinn. As Islam spread beyond Arabia, local traditions transformed the image of the djinn. In India, Islamic ideas merged with older beliefs about ghosts, nature spirits, bhoots, and pretas. Djinn came to be associated with abandoned ruins, graveyards, wells, rivers, and ancient trees. They were believed to shape-shift into animals or humans and to retaliate if disturbed. Djinn are said to be attracted to perfume and long hair. Parents frighten children with stories of jinn and ghosts. Protective amulets bearing sacred names are worn to ward off their influence. Large old trees decorated with threads or coins are often regarded as dwelling places of spirits and djinn. The most famous centre of djinn devotion in India is the 14th-century Firoz Shah Kotla fort in Delhi. Every Thursday, people of different faiths gather there carrying letters addressed to invisible djinn-saints known as Peer Babas. These letters describe financial troubles, court cases, illnesses, and family disputes. Devotees light candles, offer sweets, and seek help from the unseen residents of the ruins. When wishes are fulfilled, they often return with offerings of sweet rice or biryani.

Political churn in Punjab, glad tidings in education sector

The state has shown measurable improvement across several academic indicators

Chandni S Chandel Tribune News Service

The political landscape in Punjab is heating up with each passing day in the run-up to the upcoming Assembly polls, which are slated for next year. With the recent video controversy raising its ugly head every day with new revelations and counter-charges, will Bhagwant Mann be able to weather the storm and prove his innocence. The coming days will define the character of the election campaign ahead, writes Editor-in-Chief Jyoti Malhotra in her weekly column The Great Game (As the ground shifts in Punjab). Under-fire CM is fighting back, while the BJP is looking to make inroads in the state. SAD's big challenge is whether Punjab has been able to forgive it for not taking strong action against those accused of "beadbi" or sacrilege. As the ground shifts in Punjab, where does Waris Punjab De (WPD) fall in the new narrative, she asks. If Punjab has to be saved, an exhaustive action plan must have everyone, both the ruling party and the Opposition, on board. Meanwhile, the appointment of a three-member committee by the Congress high command to assess the ground reality of the party's functioning, eliminate factionalism and gauge the voters' pulse shows that the Congress is serious about fighting the Punjab Assembly elections. The big question is whether the Congress leadership will be able to take the electorate into confidence on different issues and how it will tackle indiscipline within the party that led to its poor performance when it was in power in 2017-2022, writes former GNDU Professor Jagrup Singh Sekhon in his Op-Ed piece The challenge for Congress in Punjab.

In good news for the AAP government in Punjab and for the people of the state, Punjab has shown measurable improvements across several educational indicators. Punjab emerged as a leading state in the National Achievement Survey (NAS) and the Performance Grading Index (PGI), highlighting improvements in learning outcomes, governance and institutional effectiveness. Punjab invested simultaneously in school infrastructure, digital access, governance reforms, teacher accountability, community participation and student support systems. Punjab's reforms also challenge a deeply entrenched assumption in India that government schools are inherently incapable of delivering quality education, write Aarushi Jain and Nikhat Khalid from the Bharti Institute of Public Policy, Indian School of Business, in the Op-Ed article Punjab school turnaround has lessons for India. Political parties must answer difficult questions. They must explain their choices, justify their alliances, and demonstrate coherence in their political conduct. The problem arises when this scrutiny

becomes selective. The Opposition, particularly the INDIA forum, often attracts greater scrutiny than the ruling establishment, writes RJD MP Manoj Kumar Jha in his Op-Ed article The politics of selective scrutiny. The tendency to examine the Opposition in isolation is itself a form of intellectual dishonesty. When accountability is demanded only of the Opposition and not of those who govern, democracy risks shifting from a system of checks and balances towards something that ranges from managed consent to coercion and violence, he writes. The challenge before INDIA is not simply organisational but also philosophical. It must convince citizens that democracy is not merely a mechanism for choosing rulers but a framework through which power remains



accountable, institutions remain autonomous and citizens remain free to disagree, he adds. It is an open secret that candidates from larger parties spend Rs 80-100 crore on an Assembly election. If this is how much it costs to contest an Assembly poll, a candidate will have to spend Rs 150-200 crore on a Lok Sabha seat to put up a strong fight. The Congress will need at least Rs 50,000 crore to win the 2029 General Election. The funding hurdle is something that Rahul Gandhi has to address immediately, writes Senior Economic Analyst Anunindyo Chakravarty in his Op-Ed article How much does it take to win an election. And for that, he will either have to mend bridges with India Inc, or empower party leaders who already have more business-friendly images than he does. Without winning the trust of India's richest, Rahul Gandhi has very little chance of putting up a fight in 2029, he writes. The Ministry of External Affairs recently clarified that a passport is primarily a travel document and not a conclusive proof of citizenship. The confusion arises because we often conflate three distinct concepts — identity, residence and citizenship, writes former

Chief Election Commissioner of India SY Quraishi in his Op-Ed article What document makes me an Indian citizen. The Aadhaar experience is instructive. It was designed as a unique identity instrument for residents to improve welfare delivery and eliminate duplication. However, it was deliberately kept separate from citizenship, he writes. The Assam experience regarding National Register of Citizens (NRC) raises a larger question: if such difficulties arose in one state with a population of 3.3 crore, can a nationwide exercise involving 145 crore people be undertaken without causing widespread hardship? The burden should not fall on ordinary citizens to prove their citizenship; it should rest on the State to establish, on credible grounds, that a person's status is genuinely in doubt, he suggests.

Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran has said that old automatic premium attached to software degrees and MBAs is vanishing. The CEA's warning is well taken. But the policy message must be not to bury the degree but to redesign it, writes noted economist Ajit Ranade in his Edit article Job guarantee is dead, not the degree. Instead of producing generic MBAs who chase the same corporate jobs, we could create district development analysts, municipal finance associates, procurement specialists, health systems managers, education data officers and climate adaptation officers. In a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court (SC) has declared that the right to walk on demarcated footpaths is a fundamental right of citizens. The apex court ruling has provided an opportunity to review policies & programmes concerning footpaths and plug the gaps to ensure fair use of road space, writes science commentator Dinesh C Sharma in his Edit article Let walkers have their way. The infrastructure designed for motorised transport is projected as a symbol of development, while improving pedestrian infrastructure is not considered headline-grabbing work. Creation and maintenance of pedestrian infrastructure should receive top priority, he avers.

The 16th BRICS National Security Advisers' (NSA) Meeting, which brought together 11 member nations, was hosted by New Delhi. This was a preparatory meeting in the run-up to the BRICS summit to be held in India in September. The underlying message emerging from the BRICS forum was that Delhi would highlight security issues relevant to the Global South, writes C Uday Bhaskar, Director, Society for Policy Studies, in his Edit piece India holds its ground on BRICS turf. The global forum is becoming India's preferred platform to highlight issues relevant to the Global South without being seen as anti-West.

Soldiers-cops clash : Impartial probe is the way forward

The gravity of the allegations must not overshadow the principle of due process

THE alleged assault on police personnel inside a police station in Jammu and Kashmir by Army personnel, now the subject of a criminal FIR, is an extraordinary development that demands an impartial inquiry rather than a rush to judgment. The charges are serious: forcible entry into a police station, assault on public servants and damage to government property. Equally significant is the fact that they involve institutions that have long worked shoulder to shoulder in one of the country's most challenging security environments. The Army and the Jammu and Kashmir Police have jointly confronted terrorism for decades. Their coordination has been central to intelligence-gathering, counter-insurgency operations and maintaining public order. Any public breakdown in that relationship risks weakening operational effectiveness and creating avoidable confusion. Also, it can erode public confidence in the very institutions entrusted with ensuring security. At the same



time, the gravity of the allegations must not overshadow the principle of due process. An FIR is the beginning of an investigation, not a determination of guilt. The police

must investigate fairly, while the Army's internal inquiry should proceed with equal seriousness. Accountability cannot depend on the uniform one wears; nor should accusations alone be allowed to tarnish institutions that have earned public trust through years of service. The episode also exposes the need for stronger mechanisms to resolve disagreements between security agencies.

In high-pressure settings, disputes can arise, but they must be addressed through established channels rather than confrontation. Clear protocols on custody, jurisdiction and inter-agency coordination are essential to prevent such incidents from escalating. The rule of law is the foundation of every democratic institution. If wrongdoing occurred, it must invite appropriate action. If the allegations are disproved, that too must be established transparently.

The Importance of Being DK Shivakumar in Rahul Calculus

Shivakumar is yet to acquire national status, but definitely has national recall. He has emerged as a serious national trouble-shooter for his party. No thanks to Rahul, who detests mass leaders who will not kowtow to him

Ravi Shankar

It seems the Congress has a credible national face at last. A trouble shooter who has negotiated the complexities of Opposition politics, which it badly needs, especially after it couldn't get its Rajya Sabha nominee in Jharkhand through. Last week, a masterclass in the difference between rhetoric and reality happened in Karnataka: the Congress won all five Legislative Council seats it contested—plus an additional seat by persuading cross voting by the BJP. It was the kind of outcome old Congress managers once considered routine, but which the Rahul Congress has no idea, or interest, on how to achieve. The architect of the win is DK Shivakumar; probably the reason Uddhav Thackeray—whose party rapidly imploded after six MPs crossed over to the Shinde-BJP camp—invited him to Mumbai to confabulate. Whether DKS, with all his political management skill, can pull off a miracle in Maharashtra to save an INDIA ally is questionable. It was left to him to soothe MK Stalin, whom Rahul treated churlishly in public during the Tamil Nadu elections and dumped unceremoniously. Shivakumar is yet to acquire national status, but definitely has national recall. He has emerged as a serious national trouble shooter for his party. No thanks to Rahul, who detests mass leaders who will not kowtow to him. Yet, political kinetics keeps pulling DKS's name into the national conversation. But for today's Congress, such interlocutors and enforcers are suspect. The party historically marginalises leaders of the DKS type. In the 1970s, Devaraj Urs built the most sophisticated social coalition the Congress had ever achieved in Karnataka by forging OBCs, Dalits, and minorities into an unprecedented electoral force. Discarded by Indira Gandhi, he died politically

diminished. Sharad Pawar built Congress into a dominant force in Maharashtra, cultivating the cooperative sector and managing the competing interests of the Maratha peasantry, Mumbai's working class, and Pune's commercial communities. Expelled in 1999, he formed the NCP, and sank the Congress's political future. Sachin Pilot resuscitated the Rajasthan Congress from its post-2013 coma, delivered in 2018, and was then subjected to deliberate humiliation, denied the chief ministership, and was pushed to the point of open rebellion in 2020 after he was denied the chief ministership like DKS initially was. The party has neither earned nor acknowledged such a restraint and loyalty. While Sachin has faded from the national radar, for now, DKS occupies the alternative position. In a party where giant leaders like Ahmed Patel, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Kamal Nath, and Pranab Mukherjee could forge inter-party consensus, apart from Bhupesh Baghel and Mukul Wasnik, now, the Rahul coterie comprises Kaushal Vidyarthee, Alankar Sawai, KB Byju, Praveen Chakravarty et al. Chakravarty who? Exactly.

Kharge, in spite of all the respect he commands, cannot influence a single voter in UP. Rahul's pernicious puppeteer KC Venugopal wouldn't know the name of a single party worker in Bihar. CWC members like geriatric



AK Antony, Anand Sharma, Deepa Dasmuni, Channi, etc. can't get 10 voters between them in Madhya Pradesh. Himanta Sarma humiliated Gaurav Gogoi. To call Jairam Ramesh a mass leader is like calling a Tiffin box a buffet—all are has-beens or will-never-beens. The Congress's last bastion is the South. It has three Congress CMs, and is an alliance partner in Tamil Nadu.

Hence, the national choice is limited. DKS speaks Hindi without the self-consciousness that afflicts many southern politicians, and English without the affectation of someone mimicking cosmopolitanism. He is a Vokkaliga from the dominant Karnataka community, but he has consistently reached beyond community arithmetic to keep his party afloat. In UP, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Haryana, the BJP has built a ruthless victory machine over decades of patient work. The Opposition's only effective response will be to build a counter-machine with equal patience and seriousness. That requires someone who understands the construction of party infrastructure at the district and booth level, financial savvy seduction, soothing of local egos, and the management of factional disputes before they become the internal wars that cost the party winnable seats. The only Congress alternative to the BJP is DK Shivakumar; and it knows this, too. With such powerful adversaries like Modi and the RSS, it won't be smooth sailing for him.

The distinction between what Rahul and Karnataka's DK Shivakumar offers is not what is better or worse. DKS commands a rare combination which cannot be earned with genetic entitlement: charisma and calculation. He understands not just how elections are won, but also how they are fought. In politics, ideological, cadre-driven machines defeat movements. The man who can build the Congress such a machine is waiting. Will his own party, and Rahul Gandhi, allow him to do that?



Pickle your Taste buds

The ancient art of preserving food has piqued the interest of foodies worldwide. As kimchis, chutneys and kombucha go mainstream, we find out why the buzz around fermented food -the hottest culinary trend of 2019 -is getting louder.

You probably have fond childhood memories of relishing your granny's homemade achaar and chutneys. Remember the lengths you'd go to, to steal a palmful of murabba? Food, as they say, is the best nostalgia. The world over, food enthusiasts and connoisseurs have realised that a winning dish is one through which people relive their memories. Thus, fermented ingredients have gone high up on a chef's list.

Sandor Katz, fermentation revivalist and author of *The Art of Fermentation and Wild Fermentation*, whose endorsement of fermented ingredients has played a major role in its entry into gourmet restaurant menus, describes these foods as 'the flavourful space between fresh and rotten'. "Though the process has been around for centuries, it is only now that it is being tapped for its full potential. Chefs, home cooks and even supermarkets shelves are looking beyond fermented staples like wine, cheese, bread and yogurt." Its popularity is on the rise also because fermentation increases the shelf life of food, its flavour, causes minimum wastage, is cost-effective and can be easily done at home.

THE INDIAN PICTURE

Touted as the hottest food trend of 2015, cultured foods such as the hugely popular Korean kimchi (made from vegetables), the many varieties of Indian chutney, the German delicacy sauerkraut (sour cabbage), Thai fish sauce nam pla, Jaapanese miso paste (fermented soybeans), Russian kombucha (a fermented drink made with tea) and its milky counterpart kefir, are some traditional dishes that have become



mainstream ingredients in sandwiches, rolls, soups, salads and beverages across the globe. Even in India, where dosa, chaas, dhokla, appam and chutney are popular dishes, chefs are experimenting with alternative fermented foods in their menus.

Says nutrition consultant and food blogger Sangeeta Khanna, "Fine dining establishments across India have opened their kitchens to traditional fermented recipes like kanji (a drink prepared from the juice of black carrots), curries made from kachampuli (a fruit vinegar from Kerala), jau ki ghaat (a ragi drink from Rajasthan), iromba (a spicy Manipuri chutney made from fresh vegetables and fish) etc." The distinct flavour that

fermentation imparts to a dish is also one of the major reasons why chefs are using this technique. "The process adds layers of complexity to the food. For example, you can see a world of difference between milk and cheese or grape juice and wine, the latter being fermented. Fermented foods taste strong, acidic, sometimes pungent and matured. The taste profile of consumers is very evolved today. People are acquiring a taste for it," says Mumbai-based Chef Akhil Multani.

A GOOD KICK IN THE GUT

With people focussing more on holistic well-being, cultured food with its inherent probiotic health benefits, has caught the fancy of consumers. Says macrobiotic nutritionist Tarika Ahuja, "At any time, our gut has good and bad bacteria. Eating healthy fermented foods increases the good bacteria and helps digestion. It also improves immunity and purifies the blood, as the bacteria flushes out all the toxins." Snacking on these foods also means you don't need to pop probiotic pills, as the former contain triple the amount of bacteria. And above all, you can go back to your childhood memories by just 'pickling' your tongue!

FERMENTATION FESTIVALS AROUND THE WORLD

Every year, to celebrate the benefits of fermented foods, world-class fermenting artisans and enthusiasts come together to set up festivals. Boston Ferments in New England, Santa Barbara Fermentation Festival in California, Fermentation Fest in Wisconsin, Ganggyeong Fermented Seafood Festival in Korea, are among the dozen festivals that were held in 2014. From holding workshops on how to master fermentation to having a market that sells homemade samples of cultured foods and drinks, these festivals give you a low-down on everything fermented.

BOTTLE-FERMENTED COCKTAILS

Bartenders and mixologists are using everything from champagne yeast to koji, a fungus used to make miso and sake, to ferment cocktail ingredients and make bottle-fermented drinks.

A tricky process, this technique involves adding yeast to mixed cocktails, then bottling them and letting them sit for a spell. The resulting cocktails carry a unique carbonation with a breadly flavour!

EAT CULTURED FOODS, BE SMART

According to a study published in the journal *Nutrition in Clinical Practice*, apart from being good for the health, probiotic foods actually make you smarter! If you find yourself struggling with brain fog or depression, the problem may lie in your gut. If you lead a stressful life and have a diet high in sugary and processed food, the beneficial microbiome in your gut becomes imbalanced - which cause unclear thinking and excessive worrying. This can be corrected by consuming foods like buttermilk, unpasteurised sauerkraut, kimchi etc.

How many portions should I eat?

"Eat homemade fermented food thrice a day, along with your meals. Include curd, pickled vegetables and fermented drinks as accompaniments. Items made of fermented rice and pulses can also be consumed," says health expert Neeraj Mehta.aa

Restaurant review: Cafe Immigrants

The restaurant, which started off last November, is located in the heart of the city's most hustling and bustling Connaught Place central business district.

The moment I entered, I was drawn towards a large collection of photographs mounted on the walls beside the stairs that lead to the restaurant.

"We all are immigrants to this world, people keep travelling and the name of the restaurant is inspired from the idea of travelling," its general manager, Pankaj Badola, told us.

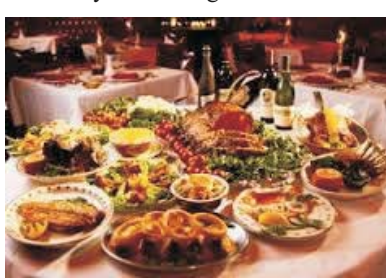
The interior presents an incomplete rustic look with beautiful posters and photographs - the effect enhanced by huge chandeliers, dim lighting and soft music. There is also an open area for those who would like to dine in fresh air. "There is competition no doubt, but we are sure that we will be a trendsetter in CP with our in-house fusion dishes," Badola asserted.

The restaurant is the brainchild of Chef Umesh, who has been in the industry for more than a decade now, is known for his out-of-the-box ideas and who has drawn up the restaurant's menu.

"For us, both quality and quantity matter. The menu has been drawn up keeping in mind

the different demands of our customers", Badola said, adding that the restaurant also has a Wi-Fi facility. I took a table beside the window that gave a panoramic view of the crowded Connaught Place and a host of sky-scrapers.

The menu appeared never-ending, with a wide range of dishes from Ukraine to Vietnam - and crossing all over India. Interestingly, ghee (clarified butter) cans served as cutlery holders to give a traditional



touch. As I sat, I was welcomed with a paan (betel leaf)-flavoured cocktail - a drink with a strong taste of paan, mixed with dry red chillies and gulkand (rose petal jam) that left a sweet-tangy taste in mouth. Next came in Laksa - a traditional Vietnamese spicy noodle soup accompanied by a green mango chutney.

Next, there was grilled chicken with aam papad, an amalgamation of a sticky Indian savoury with chicken cooked in the western style. However, it was the starters menu that amazed me with its

variety. From New Orleans southern fried chicken to mutton gulouti kebab, from a Vietnamese fish delicacy to Maharashtrian Koliwada fish fingers - the spectrum will leave you spoilt for choices.

I was served Koliwada fish fingers as Badola suggested. Made from authentic Koliwada spices from Maharashtra, the fish was well marinated with the dominating taste being of the Koliwada masala.

Taking care of my craving for more starters, I was presented with butter pepper garlic prawn. The prawn pieces, deeply coated with butter with a hint of black pepper, melted in the mouth the moment I gulped them. With a heavy heart, I had to stop eating the prawn dish to make way for the main course. The menu left me bewildered about what to choose from the main course. I ended up with the Cafe Immigrants speciality - khichdi served with bacon and Chicken A la Kiev, a Ukrainian dish made of fried chicken stuffed with loads of butter and garlic. The khichdi, a traditional Indian delicacy, was cooked with a lot of spices that left a rich flavour in the mouth.

For dessert came the Chawanprash smoothie - a 'hatke' preparation made of the Chawanprash health supplement and mint, along with a cookie and vanilla ice-cream.

Veggies won't be disappointed as the menu offers a long list of dishes like matar aur khajoor ka shammii kebab, charmoula mushrooms in white garlic sauce and methi cottage cheese with parantha to choose from. Timings: 12 noon to 11.30 pm Meal for two: Rs.2,500

Location: B block, Connaught Place

The classic vinaigrette:

Take two tablespoons of balsamic vinegar and whisk in two teaspoons of mustard. Add a pinch of kosher salt and pepper to taste. Mix half a cup of olive oil and pour all over your salad!

Garlic vinaigrette:

Peel half a bulb of garlic and drizzle it with olive oil on a tray. Wrap it with an aluminum foil and roast it in the oven till it is tender. Let it cool down and then gently crush them. Blend it with the vinaigrette (above mentioned) you made and add some parmesan to finish it off.

Spicy honey-mustard:

Mix two teaspoons of honey with two teaspoons of mustard. Add two tablespoons of lime juice and a pinch of lemon zest and kosher salt to taste. Add some olive oil and finish it off with chopped thyme. If you want it to be spicier, you can add chili flakes or chopped jalapeno.

Creamy Italian:

Mix a little less than half a cup of mayonnaise with two tablespoons of balsamic vinegar. Add two tablespoons of olive oil and sour cream. Add a clove of garlic (crushed), kosher salt and oregano to taste and mix it all in a blender. Add a spoon of finely chopped parsley.

Mediterranean:

Make a Mediterranean salad dressing with half a cup of feta cheese (crumbled). Mix this with the classic vinaigrette (shown above). Add chopped parsley, dried oregano and one diced tomato (as much as you want).

Classic Salad dressings recipe



4 popular bedtime beverages

Peppermint tea: This herbal tea has properties that will help your body de-stress, relax and eventually sleep better. It is a great option to calm jittery nerves, reduce nausea and relieve anxiety.

Cocoa: The most popular bedtime drink in the world, this is a winter favourite because of its delicious taste. Even the ancient Mayans consumed it by roasting the cocoa beans and adding some spice to it.

Chamomile Tea: Like peppermint tea, it is also another non-milk tea that has soothing qualities. For best results, drink this tea around 30 minutes before your bedtime.

Hot toddy: This traditional alcoholic beverage involves pouring hot boiling water in a little whiskey and adding a twist of honey, lemon and cinnamon stick for flavour. It is good to prevent cold and flu during winter and is very delicious.



SUV with fake MP sticker triggers security scare in Delhi, police seize vehicle

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New Delhi.(Agency)

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police reached a residence in Lado Sarai linked to Pramod Chaudhary, where the SUV was found parked outside. Police said the same 'Parliament of India' parking label and MP flag were affixed to the vehicle.

During questioning, Chaudhary told police that the SUV was being used by his son, Dev Chaudhary. However, neither the family nor the person using the vehicle could produce any document to show a connection with any MP or authorisation to use the sticker and flag. Police have seized the vehicle and registered a case under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Investigators are now trying to find out where the fake Parliament sticker and flag came from and whether they were used in any other case of impersonation or misuse of privileges.

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She had almost forgotten about the two men until April 2013 when two Supreme Court advocates knocked on her door. They said she had allegedly taken a loan of Rs 70 lakh against her flats from the Punjab and Sind Bank and hadn't paid her dues. Usha approached the police who later found loans worth a total of Rs 18 crore were availed, using her documents bearing her name, in the name of different companies for running businesses. The money was then routed through 11 shell companies and then cashed out. "They claimed that she had transferred the sale deed (ownership) of the property to accused Sachin. He had, however, produced documents bearing Usha's name to avail loans. She saw the documents and found there was a copy of a PAN card bearing her name, but with a different picture. The signatures were not hers either," said a police officer. When police officers visited the Sub-Registrar's office, they were told that a woman, who identified herself as Usha, had visited the office in February and submitted the documents. Officers, however, learned that it was not the woman whose photo was on the PAN card.

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But DDA is set to miss yet another deadline for the completion of the housing complex. The project's original completion date was 2020 and after repeatedly missing deadlines, it is expected to take one more year to complete, The Indian Express has learnt.

"The delay is from the contractor's side who is claiming to have liquidity issues. However, the DDA is constantly talking to them to expeditiously complete the project," a senior DDA official said, adding: "The project has made 65-70% physical and financial progress. 1,400 flats are ready, while the remaining 1,400 are under different stages of construction."

The project was conceived way back in 2008 and approved in 2009. Residents of the slum moved in batches to makeshift camps in Anand Parbat and Outer Delhi's Narela between 2014 and 2017, when all the slums were finally demolished and the land was cleared. Construction for the housing project eventually started in 2018.

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A senior Health Department officer, Aggarwal became DGHS last August as she succeeded Dr Rati Makkar, who had retired.

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interim charge of the Delhi Medical Council (DMC) to her last August, nearly two months after the council was dissolved over alleged irregularities. Earlier, Aggarwal was the Director of the Delhi State Cancer Institute (DSCI) between 2023 and 2025, where she looked after the functioning of the cancer hospital.

However, in 2024, the Delhi government's Department of Vigilance started an inquiry into alleged irregularities in changes to recruitment rules and appointments at DSCI. However, no criminal case was registered against her at that time. Her tenure as the health services chief came under scrutiny in May this year after the Department of Vigilance conducted raids at the CPA officers over alleged irregularities in the purchase of medicines and medical equipment. Soon after the raids, she was transferred.

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Volunteers lining the streets to distribute water, food and medicine to exhausted mourners during Ashura in Muharram are seen as embodying charity and compassion. But on the streets of South Mumbai, police allege there was an attempt to turn that tradition into something deadly. A 39-year-old businessman from Pune allegedly tried to hand out rat poison disguised as painkillers to mourners attending one of Mumbai's largest Muharram processions.

According to Mumbai Police, the accused, Faiyaz Premjee, allegedly prepared over 14,000 capsules laced with zinc phosphide, a highly toxic rodenticide, intending to distribute them



among members of the Shia community during Ashura. Investigators say the capsules were designed to resemble common painkillers that are routinely distributed to mourners walking long distances in the annual procession.

Police also said the accused had planned to prepare nearly 30,000 capsules, reported India Today's Dipesh D Tripathi. According to the ongoing investigation, Premjee had also travelled to Iran and Iraq multiple times between 2019 and 2025. Police said that within the past year alone, he had travelled to Iran and Iraq 19 times. Investigators are now examining the purpose of those visits, whether the case has links to a larger network, and Premjee's motive. Premjee's public life over the past few years offers a glimpse into his ideological evolution, and his comments on Islam and the Shia community have now triggered widespread debate.

Long before Premjee's arrest, he had appeared in several interviews, podcasts and YouTube discussions where he spoke at length about his journey from being a practising Shia Muslim to quitting Islam and becoming an outspoken critic of the religion.

Coast Guard's daring op in rough seas, rescue 6 fishermen from sinking boat

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the crew of ICGS Sachet, which was operating in the area, immediately altered course and reached the



distressed vessel within about 90 minutes. The rescue operation was carried out amid rough seas, strong winds, poor visibility and fading

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Announcing the initiative, Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi said the dedicated units are intended to create a specialist cadre of personnel trained to operate, manage and sustain a rapidly expanding ecosystem of unmanned systems. "The Army will require continuous induction, upgrades and replenishment of drones on a large scale. To maintain pace with this requirement, one of the most important initiatives is raising Baaz Battalions," General Dwivedi said. The proposed battalions will build on the existing Remotely Piloted Aircraft Flights functioning

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The initiative reflects the Army's broader push to institutionalise unmanned technologies as part of its evolving operational doctrine at a time when modern conflicts are increasingly shaped by the use of drones.

Recent global conflicts, particularly the Russia-Ukraine war, have demonstrated the growing role of unmanned platforms in reconnaissance, battlefield

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Based on current operational requirements and future projections, the inventory is expected to grow further

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Addressing concerns over Pakistan's investments in drone technologies, General Dwivedi said the Army continuously monitors developments and assesses emerging threats.

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Filed your ITR? Complete this step within 30 days of filing or it may be rejected

New Delhi.(Agency)

Filing your Income Tax Return (ITR) is a big milestone during the tax season, but it is not the finish line. Many taxpayers believe that once they click the 'Submit' button, the job is done. In reality, there is one more important step that cannot be ignored, i.e., verifying your return. If you do not verify your ITR within the prescribed time, the Income Tax Department can treat your return as if it was never filed. The good news is that verification is quick, completely online in most cases, and can be completed in just a few minutes.

WHY ITR VERIFICATION IS SO IMPORTANT

Think of e-verification as your digital signature. It confirms that the return filed on the Income Tax e-filing portal genuinely belongs to you and that you have authorised its submission. Once you file your return, you must verify it within 30 days. Missing this deadline can create unnecessary complications, as the department may consider your return invalid. Although taxpayers who miss the deadline can file a condonation of delay request explaining the reason for the delay, the verification becomes valid only if the Income Tax Department accepts the request. That is why it is always better to complete the verification immediately after filing your return.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO VERIFY YOUR ITR

The Income Tax Department allows taxpayers to verify their returns through several digital methods, making the process convenient for different types of users. One of the easiest options is Aadhaar OTP, where an OTP is sent to the mobile number linked with your Aadhaar. You can also verify your return through net banking by logging into your bank account and accessing the Income Tax e-filing portal from there.

Another option is using an Electronic Verification Code (EVC) generated through a pre-validated bank account. Similarly, taxpayers with a pre-validated demat account can generate an EVC for verification.

Stock markets decline in early trade amid uncertainty over US-Iran negotiations

New Delhi.(Agency)

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty drifted lower in early trade on Tuesday amid uncertainty over the next round of US-Iran negotiations in Doha.

Fresh foreign fund outflows and decline in blue-chip IT stock also weighed on the sentiments.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 103.95 points to 76,624.42 in early trade, paring its opening gains. The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 40.10 points to 23,908.80. From the Sensex pack, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, Tata Steel, HCL Tech, Hindustan Unilever and Eternal were among the major laggards. Maruti, Axis Bank, Power Grid and Bharti Airtel were among the gainers. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,350.10 crore on Monday, according to exchange data. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 0.56 per cent lower at USD 72.74 per barrel. "Indian equity markets are expected to trade with a cautious bias as investors closely monitor renewed geopolitical tensions ahead of the next round of US-Iran negotiations. Investor attention is now firmly focused on the upcoming negotiations in Doha, with hopes that diplomatic progress will help ease regional tensions," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth-tech firm, said.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Shanghai's SSE Composite index quoted higher, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng index traded lower. US markets ended higher on Monday, with the Nasdaq Composite surging 2.07 per cent and S&P 500 climbing 1.18 per cent.

Rupee falls 7 paise to 94.58 against US dollar in early trade

MUMBAI.(Agency)

The rupee fell 7 paise to 94.58 against the American currency in early trade on Tuesday, as month-end demand for dollars from importers and corporates added pressure on the domestic unit.

Forex traders said the losses for the rupee were partly cushioned by relatively stable crude oil prices globally. However, concerns about potential supply disruptions in the Gulf and continued uncertainty around the Strait of Hormuz weighed on investor sentiments.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee touched 94.58 against the US dollar, registering a loss of 7 paise from its previous close. On Monday, the rupee pared initial gains and settled lower by 6 paise at 94.51 against the dollar. "As June draws to a close, month-end and quarter-end dollar demand has started showing up once again. Importers, corporates, and banks typically use this period to square positions and meet payment obligations, creating additional demand for dollars," CR Forex Advisors MD Amit Pabari said. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 101.31, up 0.21 per cent. Meanwhile, Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading lower by 0.44 per cent at USD 72.83 per barrel in futures trade.

"The sharp geopolitical risk premium that had pushed oil higher earlier has largely faded, with traders now focusing on the resumption of US-Iran discussions. However, mixed signals from both sides mean that energy markets are not yet ready to declare the situation resolved," Pabari said. On the domestic macroeconomic front, industrial production expanded by 5.1 per cent in May, exceeding market expectations and improving from the previous month's reading. The IIP data suggest that despite global uncertainty, domestic economic activity continues to show resilience. Stronger growth ultimately strengthens the foundation on which the rupee stands, Pabari added.

"Technically, 94.00-94.30 remains a strong support zone for USDINR. The pair has repeatedly tested this area over the past week but has been unable to break lower, indicating strong dollar demand and possible RBI buying interest," he added.

Gold prices fall: Biggest monthly drop since 2008. Is this the best time to buy?

New Delhi.(Agency)

Gold's glitter has faded sharply over the past few months, leaving investors with a key question: Is this correction the buying opportunity they have been waiting for?

After hitting an all-time intraday high of Rs 1,92,991 per 10 grams on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) earlier this year, gold has slipped to around Rs 1,42,413, down nearly Rs 50,600, or over 26%, from its peak. The latest decline comes as international gold prices head for their biggest monthly fall since October 2008, weighed down by expectations of higher US interest rates and a stronger dollar.

WHY ARE GOLD PRICES FALLING?

Spot gold fell more than 1% on Tuesday and is set to end June with a decline of nearly 13%, marking its fourth consecutive monthly loss, according to Reuters. The precious metal is also headed for its biggest quarterly decline since 2013 as investors moved away from safe-haven assets and focused instead on the likelihood of higher

interest rates in the US. "You have high inflation, high interest rate expectations, and a strong dollar, and that's overriding all other bullish factors that are typically associated with a gold rally," Edward Meir, an analyst at Marex, told Reuters. Gold typically performs well during periods of uncertainty and inflation. However, it loses some of its appeal when interest rates rise because, unlike bonds or fixed deposits, it does not generate any regular income. Markets are currently pricing in three US Federal Reserve rate hikes this year, with about a 64% chance of a September hike, according to the CME FedWatch Tool, Reuters reported.

WHAT ARE EXPERTS SAYING?

Dr. Renisha Chainani, Head of Research at Augmont, said gold has now declined for four consecutive weeks and is down nearly 30% from its January 2026 international peak as investors continue to grapple with a hawkish US Federal Reserve, elevated inflation and a stronger dollar. She noted that while the recent US-Iran conflict



briefly revived demand for safe-haven assets, the rebound did not last as rising crude oil prices shifted attention back to inflation and the possibility of further interest-rate hikes. According to Dr. Chainani, markets are now closely watching this week's US non-farm payrolls report and ISM Manufacturing PMI, which could determine the Federal Reserve's next policy move.

IS THIS THE RIGHT TIME TO BUY GOLD?

The sharp correction has prompted many investors to consider whether this is the

right time to accumulate gold. Dr. Chainani believes the answer depends largely on upcoming US economic data. According to her, if labour market data weakens or inflation eases, gold could recover towards the \$4,100-\$4,150 range. However, if the US jobs report remains strong, prices could once again test the crucial \$4,000 support level. She added that COMEX gold currently has strong support between \$3,950 and \$4,000. A decisive break below that range could trigger another leg of selling towards \$3,600, while resistance is expected around \$4,250.

SHOULD INVESTORS START BUYING NOW?

While the nearly Rs 50,000 correction from the peak has made gold more attractive than it was a few months ago, experts suggest investors avoid rushing in all at once. Instead of trying to time the bottom, staggered purchases through systematic investment plans (SIPs) in gold ETFs, sovereign alternatives or digital gold can help reduce the impact.

Microsoft loses \$570 billion in a month. Is Wall Street losing faith in the AI boom?

Microsoft has lost more than \$570 billion in market value this month, marking its worst monthly performance since the dot-com era. Investors are increasingly questioning whether the software giant's massive AI investments will generate enough profits to justify the spending.



New Delhi.(Agency)

Microsoft is having its worst month in nearly 25 years. The software giant has lost more than \$570 billion in market value in June, with its shares falling 17%—their biggest monthly decline since December 2000 during the dot-com era, reported Bloomberg. The selloff comes despite Microsoft remaining one of the biggest names in artificial intelligence (AI), raising an obvious question: Why are investors suddenly dumping one of the world's most valuable companies? The answer lies in

growing concerns over whether Microsoft's massive AI spending will generate enough profits to justify the cost.

WHY ARE INVESTORS SELLING?

Microsoft has emerged as one of the biggest spenders in the AI race.

The company has poured billions of dollars into data centres, AI chips and cloud infrastructure while rapidly rolling out AI-powered products across Windows, Microsoft 365, Azure and Copilot. But investors are beginning to question whether those investments are translating into earnings quickly enough. According to Bloomberg,

concerns intensified after Microsoft's latest quarterly results showed weaker-than-expected growth in its Azure cloud business. The company also projected capital expenditure of about \$190 billion through the end of December—far higher than Wall Street had expected.

AI IS BOTH AN OPPORTUNITY AND A RISK

Ironically, the technology Microsoft is betting on has also become one of investors' biggest concerns. Some analysts worry AI could eventually reduce demand for traditional software products such as Microsoft Office, while forcing the company to continue spending heavily to stay ahead of rivals.

"Microsoft is getting hit on two sides with worries about both AI spending and AI disruption," Jack Ablin, Chief Investment Strategist at Cresset Wealth Advisors, told Bloomberg.

He said investors appear to be "shooting first and asking questions later" as uncertainty around AI continues to weigh on sentiment.

Sri Lanka reduces fuel prices after Middle East ceasefire

Sri Lanka on Tuesday cut fuel prices by up to six percent, the first such move since the Middle East war triggered a surge in energy prices in the import-dependent nation.

United States and Iran agreed to hold talks to bring an end to their conflict.



COLOMBO.(Agency)

Sri Lanka on Tuesday cut fuel prices by up to six percent, the first such move since the Middle East war triggered a surge in energy prices in the import-dependent nation. The state-run Petroleum Corporation said it will lower diesel by 25 rupees a litre to 382 rupees (\$1.15), while petrol was lowered by 20 rupees to 414 rupees.

The cuts follow a sharp fall in international energy prices after the

Sri Lanka had raised petrol and diesel prices by almost 50 percent after the US and Israel launched attacks on Iran on February 28. Electricity tariffs were also increased by one-third as authorities sought to pass on higher import costs.

Sri Lanka, which buys in all of its oil and also relies on imported coal for power generation, has warned that any prolonged conflict in the Middle East could threaten a fragile economic recovery. The government told the International Monetary Fund, which granted a \$2.9 billion bailout loan to the island in March 2023, that sustained high energy prices could undermine efforts to emerge from the country's worst economic crisis. Under the IMF-backed reform programme, Sri Lanka is required to ensure cost recovery in fuel and electricity pricing and limit subsidies that strain public finances.

Sri Lanka defaulted on its \$46 billion foreign debt in 2022 after running out of foreign exchange. Since then, Colombo has been drawing down the IMF bailout loan to stabilise the country.



macroeconomic outlook. The rupee also opened marginally weaker at 94.57 against the US dollar compared to the previous close of 94.54.

IT STOCKS LEAD DECLINE

IT stocks emerged as the biggest drag on the market, with the Nifty IT index falling 2.08%. Most sectoral indices traded in the red. Nifty Auto declined 0.60%, Nifty FMCG fell 0.69%, while Nifty Metal slipped 0.54%. Banking indices were relatively resilient, with Nifty Financial Services down just 0.21%. Among the broader markets, the Nifty Smallcap 100 managed to rise 0.27%, outperforming the benchmark indices, while the Nifty Midcap 100 slipped 0.15%.

EARNINGS SEASON TAKES CENTRE STAGE

Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments Limited, said the market currently lacks strong near-term triggers, with Brent crude, US bond yields and the rupee remaining broadly stable. He said investor attention will gradually shift towards June-quarter earnings in July.

Guaranteed returns, zero risk: How a \$60 million investment scam fooled 300 people

ANAROCK said housing sales across the top seven cities fell in Q2 2026 even as new launches rose. The data showed a more balanced market as war-linked uncertainty and IT sector concerns weighed on buyers.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Imagine being told you could earn 10% to 15% returns every year without worrying about losing your money. No risk. Guaranteed returns. Your principal protected. Even government approval. For more than 300 investors in the US, that promise sounded too good to ignore. Instead, prosecutors say it turned out to be a \$60 million Ponzi scheme that preyed on trust, emotion and the fear of missing out. According to a Wall Street Journal investigation, the alleged mastermind, Paul Regan, didn't rely on complicated financial jargon or sophisticated investment strategies. He sold something far more powerful — reassurance. Regan, 49, has pleaded guilty to three felony fraud charges

after authorities accused him of orchestrating a Ponzi scheme through firms called Next Level Holdings and Yield Wealth that raised more than \$60 million from over 300 investors. Much of the money, prosecutors say, was never invested as promised. IT WASN'T JUST ABOUT RETURNS The Wall Street Journal report reveals that Regan's biggest weapon wasn't the promise of 15% annual returns. It was his ability to make people trust him.

According to prosecutors, Regan secretly recorded conversations with prospective investors—not for compliance purposes, but as training material for his sales team. The recordings were allegedly used to teach agents how to persuade hesitant clients into investing by appealing to their emotions rather than presenting financial facts. Instead of beginning conversations with charts, performance data or investment strategies, he often started by praising investors, understanding their concerns and assuring them their life's savings would now "work harder" for them. The report suggests the strategy worked because people weren't simply buying an

investment product—they were buying peace of mind.

RETIRES WERE THE BIGGEST TARGET

Many of those approached were retirees or



people nearing retirement. The Wall Street Journal report describes one conversation with a 71-year-old woman who said she had spent most of her life working two jobs. Rather than launching into a sales pitch, Regan praised her hard work before telling her that her savings would now "work twice as hard" for her. In another conversation, he reportedly joked that losing money in the investment was about as likely as being

attacked by a saber-toothed tiger or stepped on by a dinosaur. The humour helped lower people's guard.

According to the report, emotional reassurance became one of the scheme's most effective sales tools.

FAITH, FAMILY AND FALSE PROMISES

The conversations often extended well beyond investing. According to The Wall Street Journal, one disabled Vietnam War veteran told Regan he wanted to invest not only for himself but also for an elderly friend suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Regan reportedly responded by saying that anyone who knowingly exposed such vulnerable people to financial risk deserved "a special kind of hell". The investor eventually put in about \$600,000. In another case, Regan spoke about his Christian faith, described helping investors as his "deliverance" and promised peace of mind. That investor later invested more than \$150,000. According to prosecutors, these emotional appeals were part of a carefully crafted strategy to build confidence before asking for money.

Short news

Maharashtra misses June 30 deadline for farm loan waiver; disbursal to begin July 5

Thiruvananthapuram.(Agency)

The Maharashtra government on Monday admitted it will miss its June 30 deadline for rolling out the Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Shetkari Karjmafi Yojana, with Agriculture Minister Dattatray Bharane announcing in the Legislative Assembly that loan waiver amounts will begin reaching eligible farmers from July 5. The minister also clarified that no eligible farmer will be denied the benefit for not having an Agristack Farmer ID.

Replying to the debate on the supplementary demands for the agriculture department, Bharane said the government had intended to implement the loan waiver before June 30 but the rollout was delayed because the financial provision for the scheme had been made through the supplementary demands.

"The disbursement has been delayed as the financial provision for the scheme has been made through the supplementary demands. After the supplementary demands are approved by the legislature, they will require the Governor's assent. Once the Governor signs them, the loan waiver amount will be credited to farmers' accounts from July 5," Bharane said.

He said that while the Agristack Farmer ID is mandatory for availing agricultural benefits, no eligible farmer would be denied the loan waiver if they do not possess the ID. According to the government's preliminary estimates, around 56 lakh farmers are expected to benefit under the scheme, which will cost the state an estimated Rs 36,585 crore.

Three Nigerians among four held, drugs worth D23 crore seized

BENGALURU.(Agency)

The Anti-Narcotic Wing (ANW) of CCB has arrested four people, including three Nigerian nationals, in two cases of drug peddling in the city. Sleuths of ANW seized 10.27 kg of MDMA crystals and 2.044 kg of hydroponic ganja, worth around Rs 23 crore from the accused. Acting on a tip-off, the sleuths raided a house in Madanayakanahalli police limits and arrested Ambemo Jela Victor, 37, Chime Ndubunsi Moses, 36, and Karikari Ames, 33, from Nigeria. The sleuths seized 10.27 kg of MDMA crystals valued at Rs 21 crore from their possession. The accused had come to India on medical and tourist visas. Preliminary investigations revealed that the accused procured drugs from another Nigerian national based in Delhi. In another operation, the police arrested Mohammed Marel Fecoge (25), a native of Kerala and a private firm employee in the Banaswadi police station limits for allegedly possessing and selling hydroponic ganja. They seized 2.044 kg of hydroponic ganja valued at Rs 2 crore from him. He came to the city four months ago and allegedly procured drugs from a person in Kerala, who in turn sourced the drugs from Thailand.

Meanwhile, the city police have arrested 13 drug peddlers in separate cases and seized narcotic substances worth over Rs 2 crore from them. The operations were carried out under the supervision of LY Rajesh, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Anti-Narcotic Wing, CCB, and led by Police Inspectors Praveen C Tyaligar and Manjappa CA.

Odisha launches Rs 42 crore interest subsidy scheme to boost fertiliser distribution

BHUBANESWAR.(Agency)

In a move to ensure timely availability of fertilisers and curb black marketing, the state government has approved a Rs 42-crore interest subvention scheme for expanding the role of cooperative institutions in fertiliser distribution.

Under the new scheme, the state government will provide 100 per cent interest subvention on cash credit loans availed by primary agriculture cooperative societies (PACS) and large-sized adivasi multi-purpose cooperative societies (LAMPCS) for advance procurement and stocking of fertilisers.

The interest subvention will ease the financial burden on the cooperatives, enabling them to pre-position fertilisers well ahead of peak agricultural season without incurring interest cost.

The scheme carries a total financial outlay of Rs 42 crore over five years, from 2026-27 to 2030-31, with an initial allocation of Rs 5 crore for the current financial year. Around 2,700 grassroots cooperative societies across Odisha will benefit under the programme. Eligible PACS and LAMPCS will receive cash credit limits of up to Rs 10 lakh, depending on their operational capacity and fertiliser handling requirements. To enhance transparency and accountability, the government will also promote QR code-based digital payments for fertiliser sales at cooperative outlets. The government cleared the scheme following the recommendation of the standing finance committee (SFC) chaired by the Cooperation secretary Sachin Ramachandra Yadhav. The government aims to increase the cooperative sector's share in fertiliser distribution from the present 25-30 per cent to 60 per cent beginning with the 2026 kharif season.

5 of gang held for cheating Surat businessman of Rs 2.30 crore

The five arrested accused have been identified as Raj Padsala from Anand and Ashok Yagnik, Laxman Vaghela, Jaydeep Ardesana and Sagar Gokani, all from Rajkot. Padsala holds the mule account in the name of his firm.

Surat.(Agency)

The Cyber Centre of Excellence, CID Crime, has arrested five members of a gang for allegedly duping a Surat-based businessman of Rs 2.30 crore after establishing contact with him through an application and then getting him to invest money by promising big returns.

Investigation in the racket has revealed that the mule account used by the accused in the case is involved in 31 complaints of cyber fraud across the country, running into approximately Rs 15.31 crore.

The five arrested accused have been identified as Raj Padsala from Anand and Ashok Yagnik, Laxman Vaghela, Jaydeep Ardesana and Sagar Gokani, all from Rajkot. Padsala holds the mule account in the name of his firm. Speaking at a press conference on Monday, Superintendent of Police Rajdeepsinh Jhala said that the busting

of the racket is part of Gujarat Police's Operation Mule Hunt 2.0. As per the police, the accused contacted the complainant through an application called 'Dilsafar' from a profile named 'Jigyasha Kapoor'. They got



the complainant to open an account on a webpage going by the name 'RoboForex' by promising him big returns on trading by following their tips. Initially, they won his

trust by showing a profit on an investment of Rs 50,000 and then tricked him into transferring a total of Rs 2.30 crore into various bank accounts and never returned the same.

Jhala said that during the investigation, a bank account of Raj Padsala in the name of his firm, R P Chemicals, came to notice. After Padsala's arrest, it was revealed that he had given his bank account kit to Yagnik Ramani on commission. Ramani provided the kit through other co-accused in the case to one Sarfaraz in Nepal to transfer the money of the complainant in the account of Padsala as part of the fraud.

Police said that when they checked details of Padsala's firm R P Chemical's bank account on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCCRP), a total of 31 complaints of cyber fraud running into total Rs 15.31 crore were discovered.

40 women from a remote UP village had never seen a city. Then their dream came true

Lucknow.(Agency)

In the remote village of Pandi in Uttar Pradesh's Chandauli district, a group of 40 women left for a trip to Varanasi, along with their families. They had never visited any city before. For many, a lifelong dream of praying at the revered Kashi Vishwanath Temple was fulfilled Monday morning with the help of the Uttar Pradesh Police.

The pilgrimage, organised by the UP Police, came after the villagers shared their long-cherished dream of visiting Varanasi during a community outreach programme last week. As part of the Mission Shakti, senior police officers reached out to the women residents during a community outreach programme in Pandi.

The remote village Located near the Uttar Pradesh-Bihar border, Pandi is a remote forest village that has long remained cut-off from the outside world. For many women, their lives are limited to Pandi, without ever travelling beyond the village.

Pandi is about 120 kilometres from Varanasi, yet for many residents the journey had remained beyond their reach because of Pandi's isolated location.

"Our village is located on the Bihar border



and is surrounded by forests. Because of its remoteness, we have remained largely cut off from the outside world," says Prabhavati Kumari, one of the women who joined the trip. "When the police officers asked if we wanted to visit Varanasi, all the women immediately agreed. Most of us had never seen a city before," she said.

Prabhavati travelled with her husband,

America Kharwar, and their two children.

The 40 women — most over the age of 40 — boarded a police-arranged bus, many accompanied by their young children. Five men from the village also joined the pilgrimage. A police escort led by an inspector-rank officer travelled in a separate vehicle to assist the group throughout the journey. The convoy left the village at around 9 am, with the police also arranging meals and other logistical support for the travellers. Pandi, a predominantly Dalit village in Naugarh block of Chandauli district, lies about 80 kilometres from the district headquarters and just three kilometres from the Bihar border. Home to around 80 families, the village depends largely on subsistence farming, daily wage labour and forest produce.

Most households earn barely enough to cover basic necessities such as food and clothing, while only a handful of younger residents have left the village in search of work.

How many years for roads to be completely motorable: Bombay High Court questions BMC

The Bombay High Court on Monday questioned the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) as to how many years it would require to make a statement that all the roads in the city under its purview are completely motorable and are without any potholes or open manholes.

Hyderabad.(Agency)

The Bombay High Court on Monday questioned the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) as to how many years it would require to make a statement that all the roads in the city under its purview are completely motorable and are without any potholes or open manholes. This came after the civic body denied the grievance in a suo motu PIL that it has failed to install protective grills on the manholes and stated that work for the installation of such grills is carried out by the respective Ward Officers.

The BMC, in its affidavit filed through Chief Engineer (Sewerage Operation) Anilkumar Bhoite, stated that of 73,437 manholes in the city, 71,426 have protective grills and such grills could not be installed on 2,011 manholes as they were buried or were non-accessible. A bench of Justices

Aje S Gadkari and Kamal R Khata was hearing an interim application by lawyer Ruju Thakker in the suo motu PIL raising concerns over potholes, non-installation of protective grills on



manholes in Mumbai and its surrounding areas, along with the issue of compensation for pothole-related deaths. The judges orally questioned the civic body, asking that while one can drive at a speed of 100 kmph for a longer distance without

any single pothole, how many years the BMC would take to claim that all its roads are completely motorable and comply with orders issued by the HC for over two decades.

While the BMC claimed that complaints by citizens were being resolved, the judges asked the civic body to produce relevant pictures of the situation before and after the complaint. After Thakker, who appeared in person, referred to the BMC affidavit, which claimed that 957 protective grills were being stolen in the 'A' Ward of the city alone, the HC asked the civic body to inform it about how many FIRs it had lodged in connection with such incidents. As per the affidavit, H-West Ward of the BMC had the highest number of 1,144 cases of protective grills being missing, stolen or tilted.

Ammonia gas leak: Over 60 Assam workers return home

CHENNAI.(Agency)

Nine days after the ammonia gas leak at St Peter & Paul Sea Foods Exports Private Limited in Tiruvallur on June 21 that claimed 16 lives, authorities on Monday sent the second batch of affected migrant workers to their native. All of them are from Assam.

Officials said more than 60 workers from Assam departed by train after travel arrangements were coordinated with the state government. Earlier, 62



migrant workers from Odisha had already returned home. With the second batch of migrant workers leaving on Monday, the government relief camp is left with 41 migrant workers from Jharkhand awaiting travel arrangements. Three workers from Kerala and three from West Bengal continue to undergo treatment at a private hospital in Periyapalayam.

The officials from the Jharkhand Labour Department said delays in securing railway reservations had slowed the repatriation process. Some workers, however, have chosen to remain in TN to care for their hospitalised relatives.

Surat civic chief to Gujarat High Court: No orders were passed to demolish shanties

The demolition cleared over 100 units that had allegedly encroached on a private plot of land in Surat's Ved Darwaja that came to be known as Nasirnagar.

Saran.(Agency)

THE GUJARAT High Court on Monday questioned the role of the police, the Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) and Torrent Power — that supplies electricity to Surat — regarding the controversial demolition drive in Surat, of unauthorised structures, even as the municipal commissioner, in a written reply told the court that neither he nor any one in the corporation had passed orders for the demolition that happened on May 30. The court observed that senior police officers present at the site "should have intervened" if demolitions were being carried out illegally under

the guise of a demarcation exercise. The demolition cleared over 100 units that had allegedly encroached on a private plot of land in Surat's Ved Darwaja that came to be known as Nasirnagar.

Hearing a petition filed by some of the residents whose homes were allegedly razed without authority of law, Justice Nikhil Kariel of the HC, in an oral order on Monday, remarked that the Surat Police Commissioner, "upon knowing of such an activity i.e. a large-scale demolition, which prima facie was without any authority of law, was not required to wait till a formal complaint is filed and ought to have taken

appropriate steps immediately." Government pleader G H Virk submitted that police personnel had been deployed at the spot only to maintain the law and order situation after a requisition from the SMC and were not required to decide whether the corporation's actions were lawful. The court order, however, noted that the requisition dated May 21 had sought police protection "only for demarcation purpose and for nothing else" and observed that "under the garb of demarcation, the corporation's officials had demolished the properties of some of the petitioners and others."



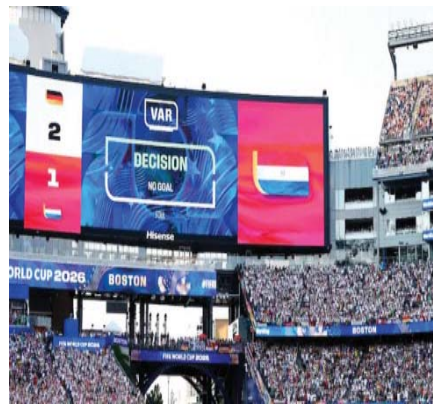
NEWS BOX

Explained: Did VAR call send Germany crashing out of FIFA World Cup?

New Delhi., (Agency)

Germany's historic 4-3 penalty shootout defeat to Paraguay in Boston will forever be remembered for the 103rd-minute intervention that denied Julian Nagelsmann's side a spot in the last 16 of FIFA World Cup 2026.

Germany and Paraguay were locked at 1-1 after Kai Havertz equalised for the four-time champions, cancelling out Julio Enciso's first-half header. When defender Jonathan Tah powered home Nathaniel Brown's looping extra-time corner, the German bench erupted, believing their place in the next round was sealed. However, lead VAR Tatiana Guzman summoned Moroccan referee Jalal Jayed to the pitch-side monitor, leading to the goal being controversially chalked off for a Waldemar Anton foul on Paraguay goalkeeper Orlando Gill. The decision hinged entirely on Anton's positioning. The German defender intentionally stood directly in front of Gill as the corner was being delivered, a standard tactical blocking deployment used by many elite clubs and international teams to restrict a keeper's mobility. While replays indicated minimal physical contact, Gill went to the



ground as the cross came in. Under strict FIFA tournament directives, any intentional impediment or screening that prevents a goalkeeper from contesting a ball in their own six-yard box can be interpreted as a foul. Jayed ruled that Anton's block was an illegal obstruction that opened the corridor for Tah to score. 'I DON'T AGREE WITH THAT DECISION'

The decision triggered immediate fury across television studios, with pundits heavily criticising the lack of standard threshold required for VAR to overturn an on-pitch goal in a match of this magnitude. Speaking on the BBC, former England captain Alan Shearer was scathing about the goalkeeper's actions and the subsequent refereeing review:

FIFA World Cup 2026: Cody Gakpo in tears, scoring days after unborn son's death

New Delhi. (Agency)

In the modern era of hyper-analysed, elite sport, we often mistake athletes for machines. We demand consistency, expect unwavering focus, and treat their public triumphs as routine. But on a sweltering Tuesday evening at the Monterrey Stadium in Mexico, Cody Gakpo reminded the world of the fragile, beating heart beneath the Dutch jersey, even as the Netherlands' World Cup dreams ended in a devastating 3-2 penalty shootout defeat to Morocco. Netherlands vs Morocco Highlights Only three days prior, the Liverpool and Netherlands striker had been plunged into a private hell. On Saturday, his partner, Noa van der Bij, shared the devastating news on social media that the couple had lost their unborn son. While the football world looked on in shock, Gakpo was granted compassionate leave to be with his family at the Dutch team's tournament base in Kansas City.



The tragedy placed football into sharp perspective. Yet, when Ronald Koeman's side walked out for their high-stakes FIFA World Cup Round of 32 clash against Morocco, Gakpo was leading the line. For 71 minutes, the match was a tense, claustrophobic affair. The Netherlands found themselves frustrated by a stubborn Moroccan defence, the weight of expectation hanging heavy in the Mexican air. Then came the 72nd minute. As Crisencio Summerville drew a heavy foul, the winger managed a desperate, final lay-off into the path of Gakpo. The forward made no mistake, blasting a lethal strike past Yassine Bounou to break the deadlock. As the ball hit the back of the net, there were no overly flamboyant celebrations from Gakpo. Instead, the moment was marked by a quiet, visible outpouring of raw emotion. His teammates immediately rallied around him, offering a collective embrace of support and solidarity on the pitch, ensuring their talisman felt the full backing of the squad in front of the watching world.

FIFA World Cup: Penalties haunt Netherlands once again as Dutch crash out in R32

Penalty shootouts haunted Netherlands once again as Ronald Koeman's team were knocked out of the FIFA World Cup 2026. A disastrous spell of spot kicks saw them miss 3 chances, sealing their fate in the tournament.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The ghosts of the past haunted the Netherlands once again as they faltered in a penalty shootout at the FIFA World Cup 2026. The former champions lost to African heavyweights Morocco, marking the fourth time that the Dutch have lost a World Cup match on penalties. A disastrous sequence of five kicks saw them miss three times. Justin Kluivert, Quinten Timber and Crisencio Summerville all failed from the spot as Morocco scraped through to the Round of 16 after battling for nearly two hours. What had been expected to be a free-flowing clash between two quality attacking sides instead turned into a frustrating and ill-tempered contest. Defender Jan Paul van Hecke found himself at the centre of attention after pushing

Morocco striker Ismael Saibari to the ground, sparking anger among the 2022 World Cup semi-finalists. Morocco took a dislike to van Hecke almost immediately, with one challenge resulting in the defender bleeding from his forehead. Netherlands barely got a sniff in the first half as Morocco's defenders put in a series of big tackles to keep them out of the box. Dutch forward Brian Brobbey was well marshalled throughout the game and failed to register a single shot. Most of Netherlands' attacking threat came through Summerville on the right, whose occasional spark of creativity brought life into the game.

MOROCCO ENJOY MAJORITY OF THE CHANCES

Morocco fashioned the better chances before the break, with goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen producing a series of outstanding saves to deny Ayoub Bouaddi's close-range header and Neil El Aynaoui's powerful effort. At the other end, Bounou was finally called into action to parry Micky van de Ven's long-range strike. Hakimi rattled the crossbar and forced another save from Verbruggen as the Dutch struggled to contain the full-back's runs from deep before Ronald Koeman's introduction of

Wout Weghorst gave his side a much-needed focal point in attack. The Atlas Lions enjoyed vocal backing throughout, with many Mexican supporters adopting Morocco for the



night and reviving chants of "No era penal" ("It wasn't a penalty"), recalling the controversial penalty that helped the Netherlands eliminate Mexico at the 2014 World Cup.

CODY GAKPO'S EMOTIONAL MOMENT

The deadlock was broken in the 72nd minute after a frustrated Ronald Koeman reshuffled his attack. He introduced his trusted option, 33-year-old Wout Weghorst, hoping his physical presence would unsettle Morocco.

The substitute's impact was immediate as he won a flick-on that released Summerville, whose persistence created the opening for Cody Gakpo to sweep a first-time finish beyond Bounou. Gakpo looked to the heavens after scoring and was overcome with emotion. Playing days after he and his partner lost their unborn son during pregnancy, the Dutch forward broke down as teammates rushed to embrace him. The Netherlands looked increasingly comfortable after taking the lead, with captain Virgil van Dijk producing several crucial interventions to deny Morocco a clear opening.

MOROCCO'S LAST-DITCH EFFORT

Morocco made late changes around the 80th minute in a bid to inject pace into their attack. The plan initially appeared ineffective as the Dutch defence continued to force Morocco away from dangerous areas. But just as the Netherlands looked set to close out the victory, substitute Chemsidine Talbi delivered a pinpoint cross from the left and found defender Isa Diop, who had pushed forward in stoppage time. Van Dijk tracked the flight of the ball but momentarily lost sight of Diop behind him.

Harmanpreet Kaur to captain India as BCCI announces Asian Games squad

Harmanpreet Kaur will continue to lead India in T20s. The BCCI on Tuesday announced a 15-member squad for women's cricket at Asian Games 2026, scheduled to be held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, in September 2026.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Board of Control of Cricket in India (BCCI) announced a 15-member women's squad for the Asian Games 2026, which will be held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, in September 2026. Harmanpreet Kaur will continue leading the T20I team while star batter Smriti Mandhana will be her deputy as India will look to defend their title in the quadrennial continental event. India's squad for the 2026 Asian Games: Harmanpreet Kaur (Captain), Smriti Mandhana (Vice-Captain), Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh



(WK), G. Kamalini (WK), Bharti Fulmali, Sree Charani, Renuka Thakur, Kranti Gaud, Arundhati Reddy, Shreyanka Patil*, Radha Yadav, Nandni Sharma. Shreyanka Patil has been added, subject to fitness. The all-rounder was ruled out of the T20 World Cup due to a twisted ankle. The announcement

comes a day after the India women's cricket team qualified for the Los Angeles Olympics. It appears the BCCI selection committee is backing 35-year-old Harmanpreet Kaur despite India's early exit in the ongoing Women's T20 World Cup in England. India's women's team crashed out of the Women's T20 World Cup 2026 after defeats to South Africa and Australia in the group stage. Questions were raised over Harmanpreet Kaur's future as captain and whether she would continue leading the side after the disappointing campaign.

The early exit came as a surprise to many, considering India had lifted their maiden ODI World Cup title last year while playing at home. However, fortunes were not as kind in the latest tournament, with tactical and on-field errors piling up and ultimately sending India out at the group stage. The Asian Games is set to begin on September 19 at Aichi-Nagoya in Japan. The tournament will end on October 4.

Paraguay celebrates historic World Cup win vs Germany with public holiday

New Delhi. (Agency)

Paraguay's historic FIFA World Cup victory over Germany has been celebrated with a nationwide public holiday after President Santiago Pena signed a decree marking one of the greatest moments in the country's football history.

Germany vs Paraguay, FIFA World Cup 2026 Round of 32: Highlights | Report The South American nation stunned four-time world champions Germany in the Round of 32, prevailing in a dramatic penalty shootout after the match ended 1-1 following extra time. The victory secured Paraguay's place in the Round of 16 for the first time since the 2010 World Cup and instantly became one of the biggest knockout upsets the tournament has witnessed. Hours after the famous victory, the Paraguayan government announced that Tuesday, June 30, would be observed as a national public holiday.

In an official statement, the Presidency of the Republic said the decision was taken "in recognition of the historic victory of the Paraguayan national football team over

Germany." The statement added that the measure would allow Paraguayans to celebrate together "this important sporting achievement, which fills the entire nation



with pride." The accompanying presidential decree described the result as an "epic victory" over Germany and hailed Paraguay's qualification for the Round of 16 as a landmark achievement for the country. **HISTORIC ACHIEVEMENT**

The decree underlined the significance of the result, describing the performance as one that embodied Paraguay's identity and fighting spirit. It also called the victory an

achievement that transcended football and united the nation. Paraguay entered the knockout clash as overwhelming underdogs against a Germany side that had been among the favourites to win the World Cup. But La Albirroja produced a disciplined defensive display before holding their nerve in the penalty shootout to eliminate the four-time champions. Goalkeeper Orlando Gill emerged as the hero, producing a standout performance before Paraguay converted four of their penalties to complete a famous upset. The victory also ended Paraguay's 16-year wait to reach the World Cup knockout rounds, with the South Americans now set to continue their remarkable campaign in the Round of 16.

For a nation whose greatest World Cup run had previously ended in the quarter-finals in 2010, beating Germany was enough to secure a place in football history. Declaring a nationwide public holiday ensured the achievement would be celebrated far beyond the pitch.

Australia eye another final as West Indies plot Women's T20 World Cup ambush

Australia enter the Women's T20 World Cup semi-final as

overwhelming favourites after an

unbeaten campaign, but a resilient

West Indies side will back its

experienced match-winners to

spring a knockout upset.

LOS ANGELES. (Agency)

Australia have looked every bit the tournament favourites, while West Indies have endured an emotional rollercoaster to reach the last four. Yet, when the two teams meet in the Women's T20 World Cup semi-final at The Oval on Tuesday, recent form and reputation will count for little. Knockout cricket has a habit of rewriting the script, and the Caribbean side will believe it has enough

match-winners to challenge the six-time champions. Australia head into the contest unbeaten and brimming with confidence after producing one of the standout performances of the tournament, chasing down 171 against Harmanpreet Kaur's India at the iconic Lord's Cricket Ground.

West Indies, meanwhile, scraped into the semi-finals despite an inconsistent campaign, relying on results elsewhere after suffering a surprise defeat to Ireland. While Australia start as overwhelming favourites, the West Indies possess enough firepower to spring an upset if their experienced stars rise to the occasion.

AUSTRALIA'S DEPTH VERSUS CARIBBEAN FLAIR

Australia have once again shown why they remain the benchmark in women's cricket. Under captain Sophie Molineux, they swept



through the group stage unbeaten, combining batting depth with a varied and disciplined bowling attack. Their most impressive performance came against India, where Ellyse Perry and Ashleigh Gardner shared a match-winning stand to complete the highest successful run chase in the tournament's history. Earlier, Australia hammered Pakistan

by 113 runs, highlighting their all-round dominance.

The batting line-up has fired collectively. Beth Mooney has provided stability at the top, Phoebe Litchfield has impressed after returning from injury, while Perry has led the scoring charts for Australia with 183 runs at an average of 45.75. Gardner continues to be Australia's biggest X-factor with her all-round abilities, while Georgia Wareham has spearheaded the spin attack. Alana King, who missed the India game following Litchfield's return, is unlikely to feature again.

West Indies have followed a very different path. Hayley Matthews' side has been inconsistent but resilient, reaching the semi-finals despite a shock loss to Ireland after New Zealand's defeat to England secured their qualification. Matthews has embraced the underdog tag, insisting the pressure is firmly on Australia.



Alia Bhatt

And Sharvari Tease Alpha Song Massacre During Mumbai Drive, Fans Demand Full Track

Alia Bhatt and Sharvari have sent fans into a frenzy ahead of the release of Alpha. The two actresses recently surprised audiences by going live on Instagram during an impromptu drive around Mumbai, where they teased Massacre, an upcoming song from the YRF action film.

The brief preview was enough to set social media buzzing, with fans quickly demanding the full track and music video. While Alia and Sharvari only offered a small glimpse of Massacre, the song has already sparked excitement online, with many calling it a potential party anthem.

Alia Bhatt And Sharvari Tease Alpha Song Massacre

During the Instagram Live, Alia and Sharvari were seen enjoying a casual drive through Mumbai. In the middle of the interaction, the two surprised fans by playing a snippet of Massacre, giving audiences a taste of the upcoming song from Alpha.

The moment instantly caught attention, especially among fans who have been eagerly waiting for new promotional material from the film. The short teaser not only highlighted the song's upbeat energy but also gave viewers another glimpse of Alia and Sharvari's easy camaraderie.

Fans Demand Full Massacre Song And Video

Soon after the Live, social media was flooded with reactions from fans asking YRF to release the full version of Massacre. Several users praised the brief preview and described it as an instant party track, while others said they wanted to see Alia and Sharvari in the full music video.

The duo's chemistry also became a major talking point. Fans praised their effortless vibe and said the Live only made them more excited to see the two stars together on the big screen.

Alpha Buzz Grows Ahead Of Release

The Instagram Live comes after the trailer of Alpha generated strong curiosity among audiences. The film has already created buzz for bringing Alia Bhatt and Sharvari together in a high-octane action setup under the YRF banner.

With Massacre now being teased, anticipation around the film's music has also grown. The sneak peek has added another layer to the film's promotional campaign, with fans now waiting for the makers to officially drop the song.



'Akshay Kumar Deserves All The Success': Raveena Tandon Praises His Dedication And Hard Work On Set



Actress Raveena Tandon has shared her experience of reuniting with Akshay Kumar after 22 years in 'Welcome To The Jungle'. She praised his dedication and consistent work ethic. She said it felt great working with him again after such a long gap and added that nothing has changed about him over the years. According to her, Akshay remains extremely hardworking and deeply involved in every project he takes on, with his commitment clearly visible on set. Raveena further added that he truly deserves all the success he receives.

Raveena Tandon Says It Was 'Great' Working With Akshay Kumar After 22 Years

"I think it was great working with him after so many years. Nothing has changed in him. He is so involved in the project, that you can see the hard work. And he deserves all the success that he gets because he really works hard for it. Unko asaani se nahi aajaata hai, he really really works hard. Koi itna dedicated nahi hoga wo set pe jitna who the," she said.

Welcome To The Jungle, starring Akshay Kumar, released in theatres on June 26. This film marks the on-screen reunion of Akshay Kumar and Raveena Tandon after more than two decades.

Ahmed Khan On Raveena And Akshay's Reunion

In a recent chat with Mid-Day, director Ahmed Khan recalled that when he approached Raveena for the film, he said she was completely at ease about working with Akshay again. "She said, 'So what? We are all actors and grown up. We are all friends and we will have a blast on the sets,'" he recalled. Their reunion carries added significance for Bollywood fans, considering the duo's memorable collaborations in films such as Mohra (1994), which featured iconic songs like Tu Cheez Badi Hai Mast Mast and Tip Tip Barsa Paani. Recalling one of the shoot days, Khan shared that the atmosphere on set turned celebratory when Akshay and Raveena filmed a dance sequence together. "There is a sequence of Akshay and Raveena dancing together."

Shraddha Kapoor And Rumoured BF Rahul Mody Watch Welcome To The Jungle In Theatre



Bollywood actress Shraddha Kapoor has long been rumoured to be dating Rahul Mody, and their rare public appearances together never fail to grab attention. Although the two have not officially confirmed their relationship, they are frequently spotted together on various occasions, further fuelling dating rumours. Now, Shraddha was seen enjoying Akshay Kumar starrer Welcome To The Jungle with Rahul Mody at a theatre, and a video of the duo has gone viral on social media.

Shraddha Kapoor Watches Welcome To The Jungle With Rahul Mody

The video appears to have been secretly recorded by a moviegoer inside the theatre. In the clip, Shraddha is seen thoroughly enjoying the comedy entertainer starring Akshay Kumar and an ensemble cast, while Rahul Mody sits beside her as they watch the film together. The actress is seen laughing throughout the screening, clearly enjoying the movie in Rahul's company. Check out the viral video below!

Directed by Ahmed Khan, Welcome To The Jungle hit theatres on June 26 after holding paid previews a day earlier on June 25. The film brings together an ensemble cast featuring Akshay Kumar, Suniel Shetty, Disha Patani, Jacqueline Fernandez, Arshad Warsi, Jackie Shroff, Paresh Rawal, Raveena Tandon, Lara Dutta, Farida Jalal, Johnny Lever, Shreyas Talpade, Tusshar Kapoor, Rajpal Yadav, Krushna Abhishek, Kiku Sharda, among others.

Shraddha Kapoor And Rahul Mody's Dating Rumours

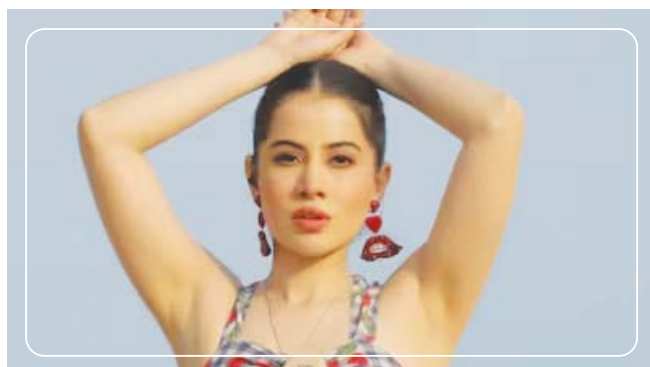
Rumours of Shraddha Kapoor and Rahul Mody's relationship first surfaced in early 2024 after they were spotted leaving a dinner outing together in Mumbai. Since then, the duo has made several public appearances, keeping the dating buzz alive. In June last year, Shraddha gave fans a glimpse of her personal life by sharing a selfie with Rahul on her Instagram Stories. Dressed in matching white outfits, the actress captioned the picture, "Dil rakh le, Neend toh vaapis de de yaar" (Take away my heart, but at least return my sleep), a post that many interpreted as a subtle confirmation of their relationship. Around the same time, she also grabbed attention for wearing a pendant featuring the letter "R," further fuelling speculation.

Uorfi Javed

Rubbishes Rumours Of Changing Her Name And Religion, Slams Troll For Misinformation

Uorfi Javed never leaves a chance to give it back to a troll, and this is exactly what she has done after being called out for wearing certain kinds of clothes. A social media user made an entire video claiming that Uorfi has no other talent besides wearing revealing clothes and that she has changed her name and religion. Now, the social media star has decided to give it back to the troll.

Sharing the video on her Instagram Story, Uorfi



Javed first rubbished the claims that she had changed her religion and then slammed the content creator for making disgraceful comments about her fashion sense.

Uorfi, in her statement, said, "Kaise Kaise chomu log apne aap ko journalist bolte hai! Auntie please thoda homework kar lijiye, I never changed my

name or religion. Also, I don't believe in any religion. Also I'm not just nangi with my clothes, I'm also nangi with my words but aaj mood nahi hai." Referring to the creator saying Uorfi doesn't have work, the social media star said, "Also ek bar Google karlo how many shows I have to my name. Mujhe aapka ganda makeup dekh ke sharam agayi aur aap ki journalism pe."

"Burai kami hai karo bindaas, but don't spread fake news cause I can't do the same to you because no one cares, auntie ji," Uorfi concluded.

Uorfi's unique outfits in recent times

Uorfi Javed stepped out for an event in what looked like a dramatic black strapless gown. At first glance, the outfit appeared heavy and sculpted, with beautiful detailing that instantly grabbed attention. Uorfi kept her styling on point with sleek hair and soft makeup, letting the outfit do all the talking as she confidently posed for the

cameras. But there was a surprising twist. The dress was actually made from cake. In the paparazzi video, Uorfi was seen posing as usual when someone from her team cut a slice straight out of her dress. As the cake was being cut, she told the photographers, "This is India's first wearable cake dress."



NEWS BOX

Buried under rubble for 32 hours, Venezuelan mother clung to hope and her baby

World.(Agency)

Buried under the rubble for 32 hours, Venezuelan mother Dayana Patino never once thought her life had ended. She was determined to hold on. It was her 18-day-old baby, she said, who motivated her to "stay awake and alert" even as hope faded with each passing hour after twin earthquakes struck the Latin American country last Wednesday.

For Venezuela, which has seen its worst earthquake in over a century when at least 1,450 people have been killed, Patino's baby has emerged as a symbol of hope. As tens of thousands are still missing, the chances of their survival are fading by the hour. For Patino, it was simple. It was the love for her newly born more than the love for life that kept her going for even more than a day without food, water and air.

Speaking to the BBC from a clinic in the capital, Caracas, on Sunday, Patino described the 32 hours she spent trapped beneath the rubble, holding her baby close and praying that both would be saved.

"As long as he was alive, I was going to be alive. Every now and then I was touching his nose for proof that he was still breathing," she said.

Patino recalled that she was washing dishes in her eighth-floor apartment in La Guaira, on Venezuela's northern coast, when the earthquakes struck. She said she immediately rushed to hold her son, believing it would be "only a light tremor." Instead, the building collapsed around her. "I felt like I was flying. After that, I felt like I was sinking in water and dirt, and then I fell into the pit where I remained. I don't know how I didn't let go of my baby because I was flying. I got crushed against furniture," she told the BBC.

She said she initially screamed for help but quickly realised no one could hear her. "I said to myself, 'I'm not going to waste my energy. I'm going to scream when it's needed, when I hear voices or footsteps nearby,'" she said.

India backs FATF at UN, says critics fear scrutiny on terror financing

World (Agency)

India on Monday strongly backed the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), saying attempts by some countries to question its credibility show a "fear of scrutiny" rather than genuine concerns about process. It also said states must ensure that their territory, institutions and financial channels are not misused for terrorism, in an apparent reference to Pakistan.

Speaking at a 2026 Counter-Terrorism Week side event at the United Nations, India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Parvathaneni Harish, said new digital tools were making terror financing more complex and that the response must be rooted in FATF standards. At the wider conference, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also warned that terrorist groups were adapting quickly to new technologies and said no country could tackle the threat alone.

Harish was addressing the event titled 'Joining Forces to Counter Terrorism Financing in the Context of Evolving Threats and Emerging Technologies', co-organised by the Permanent Missions of India and France to the UN, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, and the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism. "The FATF remains an indispensable pillar of the global counterterrorism financing and anti-money laundering architecture. Its work is technical, evidence-based and rooted in internationally accepted standards."

Six dead after shooting at family support centre in northern Germany

world.(Agency)

Six people were killed in a shooting at a welfare centre for mothers and children in northern Germany on Monday, in one of the country's deadliest acts of gun violence in recent years. The attack took place in the town of Stade, near Hamburg, at a facility that provides accommodation and support for pregnant women, young mothers and their children. Police said five people died at the scene while a sixth later succumbed to injuries in hospital. Another person was wounded but is in a stable condition. Authorities quickly arrested the suspected gunman and said there was no further danger to the public.

Custody dispute believed to be motive

Investigators said the suspected shooter is a 45-year-old man who had an appointment at the centre to discuss custody arrangements involving his three-month-old daughter. According to police, the child and her mother were present at the facility but were not harmed during the attack. Officials believe the shooting stemmed from a family-related custody dispute.

All six victims were employees of the facility. They included four women and two men who worked at the centre or were affiliated with it. German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said he was deeply shocked by the violence at a place intended to provide protection and support to vulnerable families.

Rare mass shooting shocks Germany

Police cordoned off the area as forensic teams gathered evidence and interviewed witnesses. The suspect allegedly attempted to flee after the attack but was detained following a brief chase. Authorities are also investigating the possible involvement of other individuals who were taken into custody.

Mass shootings are relatively rare in Germany, which has some of Europe's stricter gun laws. However, the country has witnessed several high-profile attacks in recent years, including the 2023 shooting at a Jehovah's Witness hall in Hamburg and the 2016 Munich shooting. The incident in Stade has renewed debate about public safety and access to firearms in Germany.

He's like me, doesn't sleep: US envoy on when Trump said to call PM Modi at 6 am

US Ambassador Sergio Gor said Donald Trump once suggested calling Prime Minister Narendra Modi at 6 am in India during an event. He said the episode reflected a personal rapport that sits apart from formal diplomatic scheduling.

World.(Agency)

US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor has highlighted the strong personal rapport between Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying the President views the latter as a friend with whom communication does not always follow formal schedules. Speaking at the IX USISPF Leadership Summit 2026, Gor shared an anecdote from an interaction with Trump, recalling how the President

unexpectedly suggested calling PM Modi during an event.

"I was at an event with President Trump. And he says suddenly let's call PM Modi. I told him that it was 6 am in India.

But Trump said Modi would be up. 'He is like me. He doesn't sleep,'" the envoy said. "The louder message of that story is that when you are friends with somebody, not everything has to be scheduled. And the President truly considers the Prime Minister a friend. When you're friends with somebody, you pick up the phone and say, 'how are you doing?' Not everything has to be scheduled 6 weeks in advance. And this is how he (Trump) sees India," the top diplomat added.

The US envoy said Trump's equation with Modi was different from his interactions

with several other world leaders. "This is not with all leaders of the world. We do schedule things with leaders, he doesn't consider them at the same level as the PM.



His years with the PM go back to his first term," Gor added.

US WANTS PM BACK AT WHITE HOUSE

On the sidelines of the summit, Gor told news agency ANI that the US would welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi's return visit, adding that Secretary of State

Marco Rubio had extended an invitation on behalf of President Donald Trump. "We would love to have him back here. And I know he's coming in December for the G20," Gor said. The 2026 G20 Summit is scheduled to take place in Miami from December 14-15, marking the first time the United States will host the leaders' summit since 2009.

Asked about the possibility of Trump visiting India, Gor said such a trip was unlikely during the US midterm election period and would likely be considered next year. "It's not any time during the midterms. It has to be somewhere next year... We would love to make that happen sooner rather than later," he added.

Give befitting reply: Bangladesh MP slams Suwendu Adhikari's Gaza remark

Bangladesh. (Agency)

A lawmaker in Bangladesh's Parliament has urged the country's government to issue a "befitting reply" to remarks made by West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, accusing him of making provocative statements about Bangladesh.

Speaking in Parliament on June 28, National Citizen Party (NCP) MP and Opposition Chief Whip Nahid Islam called on Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to respond strongly to Adhikari's reported remarks that Bangladesh owed its creation to India and should be "taught a lesson" similar to Israel's actions in Gaza.

Raising the issue in the House, Nahid alleged that Adhikari had repeatedly made provocative remarks about Bangladesh before and after the elections, claiming the neighbouring

country "was created by us", threatening to send people there as "illegal infiltrators", and suggesting that Bangladesh should be treated the way Israel has treated Gaza.

Describing the remarks as "arrogant",



Nahid urged the government to respond firmly. "During an election rally Suwendu said Bangladesh was created by them and if anyone says anything they shall be sent to Bangladesh like illegal infiltrators. He had earlier said Bangladesh should also be treated the

same way Israel treats Gaza. The Bangladesh government must give a befitting reply to such arrogance! The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should respond," Nahid said.

During his address, Nahid also criticised India's policy towards Bangladesh, saying New Delhi should apologise for supporting the former Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government over the past 16 years.

"The new Indian high commissioner should have begun by offering an apology. For 16 years, the Indian government directly and indirectly helped keep the Awami League in power, and it owes Bangladesh an apology for that," he said.

Nahid also said that India was providing shelter to individuals allegedly responsible for violence in Bangladesh and claimed that the Awami League was continuing acts of sabotage in the country.

Israeli troops face resistance from residents as they push into a town in Syria

ABDIN.(Agency)

As Israeli troops and vehicles entered the town of Abdin in southern Syria, residents blocked the roads with rocks, and some young men and boys threw stones to push back the military patrol.

Tensions in this part of the country created by a buffer zone occupied by Israeli forces have flared into violence in recent days, leaving residents anxious that more escalation is coming. Residents of Abdin, located near a U.N.-patrolled buffer zone now controlled by Israeli troops, tried to resist against a military incursion on Sunday. Residents said Israeli troops fired warnings shots at walls and between the angry protesters, before firing artillery rounds at the village. No one was harmed in the exchange, but most residents fled, and most were still too afraid to return on Monday. Many fear that there will now be more intense incursions and raids following the skirmish.

"They come into the village regularly, every few days," said resident Mohammad al-Hassan, standing not far from a group of children looking at an exploded shell. "They come in armored 4x4 vehicles, they roam around the village and search some houses, they knock on doors and if people don't answer the door they break it down and enter the houses. Women and children start screaming, it's a terrifying thing, them coming here."

Israel says it needs buffer zones to prevent attacks

Israel seized control of a U.N.-patrolled buffer zone in southern Syria in December 2024, following the ouster of former Syrian President Bashar Assad in an insurgent offensive. Israeli officials initially described the move as temporary to protect their borders from militant groups, but more recently top Israeli officials have said they plan to occupy the buffer zone in Syria indefinitely.

The Israeli military presence in southern Syria is part of a shift to a more aggressive strategy by Israel after the deadly October 2023 Hamas-led attacks in southern Israel.

The Israeli military took over large portions of Gaza as part of a broad invasion, and later seized control of chunks of Lebanon — where the Hezbollah militant group has fired missiles and drones across the border — and Syria. Israel calls these areas "buffer zones" and says they are needed to prevent future attacks by militant groups. There have been no cross-border attacks from Syria into Israel since Assad's ouster, except for two rockets from a little-known militant group. But Israel's military incursions into southwestern Syrian towns have sometimes sparked resistance by residents that has spiraled into deadly clashes.

Syrian officials condemn Israeli incursions

Syria's interim president, Ahmad al-Sharaa, has called on Israel to withdraw from the area that the U.N. says is 235 square kilometers (91 square miles). The Syrian government also condemned the Israeli incursion and shelling in Abdin.

Will cut off those hands: Pak minister's warning to India over Indus waters

world.(Agency)

Pakistan issued yet another warning in the escalating water dispute with India, with Climate Change Minister Musadik Malik declaring that Islamabad would "cut off those hands" that sought to claim Islamabad's share under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). His comments land as tensions over the decades-old water-sharing pact continued to deepen following New Delhi's decision to place the treaty in abeyance after the 2025 Pahalgam terror attack. Addressing a joint press conference with Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Climate Change Minister Musadik Malik accused India of trying to control its water supply and warned of consequences if Islamabad's water rights were threatened.

"There is a tap being controlled by the prime minister of a neighbouring



country. He says he will not let even a drop of water flow into Pakistan," Malik said, according to Dawn. He then issued the strongest warning of the press conference. His comments were reported by Pakistani broadcaster 24NewsHD and several other news outlets. Clips of his remarks also surfaced online. However, their authenticity could not be independently verified.

Malik also reiterated Pakistan's

commitment to protecting its share of water under the treaty and said India would not be allowed to obstruct water flows allocated to Pakistan.

PAKISTAN DEFENDS INDUS TREATY

Addressing the press conference, the Pakistani Information Minister insisted that the Indus Waters Treaty remained legally binding and could not be suspended, revoked or amended unilaterally. Tarar said Pakistan's position on the Indus Waters Treaty had received international backing and maintained that India's move to suspend the agreement had found little support globally.

"Indus Treaty is still in force as India's stance has not been accepted at any platform," Tarar said. Tarar said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Pakistan Army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir had repeatedly declared that "water is our lifeline, as well as our red line."

Warren Buffett pauses Gates Foundation donation over Epstein ties, awaits review

Warren Buffett has paused his annual donation to the Gates Foundation while a review

examines past links involving Bill Gates and Jeffrey Epstein. The move interrupts a nearly two-decade giving pattern and leaves the billionaire investor waiting to see what the review uncovers.

world.(Agency)

For the first time in nearly two decades, Warren Buffett has decided to pause his annual donation to the Gates Foundation, as the billionaire investor awaits the outcome of a review examining the organisation and its

co-founder Bill Gates's past links to late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, according to a report by The Wall Street Journal.

Buffett, 95, who remains chairman of Berkshire Hathaway after handing over the CEO role to Greg Abel earlier this year, is expected to revisit the decision later this year, possibly in his traditional Thanksgiving letter, informed sources told the Journal. The move marks a break from Buffett's long-standing practice of donating Berkshire Hathaway stock to the Gates Foundation and four family-run charities around midyear. Last year, his contribution to the Gates Foundation alone was valued at more than \$4.5 billion. Since beginning his philanthropic giving in 2006, Buffett has donated more than \$47 billion worth of Berkshire shares to the foundation, making it the biggest beneficiary of his fortune.

Buffett had signalled earlier this year that he was reconsidering future donations to the foundation following renewed attention on the relationship between Epstein and the



Microsoft co-founder.

In a March interview with CNBC, Buffett said he had not spoken to Bill Gates since the US Department of Justice released documents showing that the Microsoft co-

founder had multiple meetings with Epstein to discuss philanthropy after the disgraced financier's 2008 guilty plea in a Florida prostitution case.

Asked whether he would continue supporting the foundation, Buffett said: "I'll wait and see what unfolds... I'm learning things I didn't know."

The Gates Foundation has said Bill Gates "took responsibility for his actions" and has maintained that Epstein had no role in its grant-making decisions.

The Microsoft co-founder has said his relationship with Epstein was confined to philanthropy, and that it was a mistake to meet him. He has also denied spending time with victims of the financier's sexual abuse.

Despite the controversy, Buffett has said he does not regret his donations to the foundation, though he wished "certain things hadn't happened."