



PM Modi greets medics, CAs on Doctors' Day, Chartered Accountants' Day

On Doctors' Day and Chartered Accountants' Day, PM Modi lauded doctors for their unwavering dedication to healthcare and chartered accountants for their contribution to the country's economic growth.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday greeted doctors and chartered accountants on Doctors' Day and Chartered Accountants' Day, saying their work has earned the trust and gratitude of countless people.

In separate messages, PM Modi said doctors are central to India's healthcare system and will continue to play a key role as the government works towards a 'Viksit Bharat'. He also said chartered accountants are trusted partners in India's economic journey and help create conditions in which businesses can grow and opportunities can widen.

"On Doctors' Day, greetings to our dedicated doctors, whose hard work, compassion and commitment form the backbone of India's healthcare system. Their tireless efforts, often in the most challenging circumstances, have earned the trust and gratitude of countless people," PM Modi said in a post on X.



He said that over the last decade, India has made significant strides in strengthening the healthcare ecosystem. The number of medical colleges has more than doubled, while undergraduate and postgraduate medical seats have expanded substantially, he said.

"This unprecedented growth is creating greater opportunities for aspiring doctors, building a stronger healthcare workforce and ensuring that quality medical care reaches every corner

of the country," PM Modi said.

He added that doctors will continue to play a pivotal role in promoting preventive healthcare, advancing medical research, embracing innovation, and delivering affordable and accessible healthcare for all.

Greeting the CA fraternity, PM Modi said chartered accountants have long been trusted partners in India's economic journey. He said that through their commitment to transparency and professional excellence, they strengthen the country's financial systems, support businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, and inspire confidence among investors.

"Their expertise contributes significantly to economic growth and nation-building," PM Modi said in a post. He added that as India moves towards becoming a developed nation, the efforts of chartered accountants help create an environment where enterprises can flourish and opportunities can expand for all.

BJP rule in Bengal won't be different, will be equally aggressive: KC Venugopal

KC Venugopal says a BJP government in West Bengal would mirror the aggressive governance seen in other BJP-ruled states, while asserting that the INDIA bloc remains united against the BJP and the RSS despite state-level political rivalries.

Kolkata .(Agency)

Congress leader KC Venugopal on Tuesday said a BJP government in West Bengal would be no different from BJP-ruled states elsewhere and would be equally "aggressive". Speaking after a two-day organisational review meeting in Kolkata, he said the party had reviewed its preparedness in the state after the Assembly elections and was also discussing plans for the upcoming bypolls and civic body elections.

He also defended the INDIA bloc amid criticism over its functioning, saying the alliance remained united against the BJP and the RSS despite political differences among its constituent parties. Decisions on possible electoral alliances in West Bengal would be taken after assessing the political situation, he said. At the press conference, Venugopal alleged that the BJP did not believe in the Constitution and was targeting the livelihoods of ordinary people.



"They do not believe in the Constitution. They want to destroy the livelihood of the common people. That is why they have started evicting hawkers. The Congress will stand with the poor and continue its fight against the BJP," he said.

Venugopal was in Kolkata to assess the party's organisational preparedness in West Bengal following the Assembly elections. On Monday, he met district Congress presidents and AICC members from the state.

Vijayan slams UDF over tax cut, accuses govt of favouring liquor company

Thiruvananthapuram.(Agency)

Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala Assembly, Pinarayi Vijayan, has accused the UDF government of using its first budget to favour a liquor company by proposing a sharp cut in taxes on low-alcohol, spirit-based beverages.

He alleged that the move would cost the state hundreds of crores of rupees while benefiting private liquor companies. In a newspaper article on Wednesday, Vijayan said the proposal was a "planned move" and not a routine administrative decision.

He claimed the tax on low-alcohol liquor had been reduced from more than 251 per cent to 120 per cent, and said this would lower prices and increase alcohol consumption instead of protecting public health.



Vijayan claimed the government revived a file that had been pending since 2023 under the previous LDF administration. He alleged that the file moved through the Secretariat at an unusually fast pace, reached the Chief Minister's Office within hours and was cleared in record time. He further alleged that the concession was meant to benefit liquor companies from neighbouring Karnataka rather than farmers or consumers in Kerala. He also questioned why the government announced a tax concession before deciding whether such products would be allowed for sale in the state, saying even the Excise Department had indicated that a final decision would be taken only under the proposed new liquor policy. Vijayan said the LDF had earlier considered encouraging low-alcohol beverages made from fruits such as jackfruit and cashew apples to support farmers and small-scale industries.

Karjan Police Under Fire Absolute Lawlessness and Toxic Syndicates Thrive Under Official Patronage

The Death of Prohibition: Political Protection Shielding a Million-Rupee Illicit Liquor Network Run Directly From Karjan Police Station

Mahanagar Metro Desk Pawan Makan

Vadodara / Karjan: In a damning indictment of the Gujarat government's hollow 'Zero Tolerance' policy, a catastrophic, institutionalized corruption syndicate has completely hijacked the Karjan taluka of Vadodara district. While prohibition and rule of law exist merely as jokes on paper, a lethal empire of smuggled English liquor, toxic chemical-laced country liquor, rampant gambling, and destructive narcotics like charas and ganja runs brazenly across Karjan's villages—not just ignored, but allegedly actively weaponized by the local police. At the epicenter of this criminal enterprise is a notoriously corrupt 'Vahivatdar' (system manager) embedded deep within the Karjan Police



Station's D-Staff, operating with absolute, terrifying impunity. Kurali (Near the Water Tank): Openly running predatory Varli Matka gambling rackets that are aggressively destroying the futures of local youth while authorities turn a blind eye. Sapa Village (New Vasahat): Systematically transformed into a lawless 'safe haven' for hardcore gamblers flocking from Vadodara city, operating under the silent approval of mute police spectators. Kandari Village: Overrun by a plague of illicit country liquor outlets mushrooming in every single alleyway, mocking the judicial system without a shred of fear. Karamdi Village: A ticking time bomb, serving as a 24/7 manufacturing hub for highly toxic country liquor. The rampant production of chemical-laced spurious alcohol raises a grim, terrifying question: Is this cor-

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



અને નવન સહિત અન્યાર સુધી 17 શાખોની પરચકડ થઈ છે જ્યારે શાખોના કેરેક્ટર અરત જોડાની પરચકડના વકોગતિપાન કર્યા છે. બૂટલેગર નવન ઉર્ફ મોબાઇલ કરજણના દેવાજની સીમમાં દારૂની હેરાફેરી કરતો હોવાની ખાતમી મળતાં આર.આર. સેલની ટીમે બૂટલેગર પરેસ ઉર્ફ યકો સહિત 14 શાખોને ઝડપી પાડી 40.23 લાખનો મુદામાલ જપ્ત કર્યો હતો. હાલ વડોદરા રોત સમાનતપાઈ મેરે શાખેને સાચવણી માટે ભરતસિલ જોડાને રાખ્યા હોઈ તેણે કરજણ ડી સ્ટાકના કોન્સ્ટેબલ હનુ સુભચીર કરખાયા દારૂનું કટિંગ કરવા માટે જખ્યા આપી હોવાનો ઘટકોટ ઘણો થયો હતો. બૂટલેગર પરેસ ઉર્ફ યકો

હનુ કામડિયા મહિલાના નામનો ડમી મોબાઇલ નંબર ઉપયોગ કરતો હતો પોલીસે બૂટલેગર પરેસ ઉર્ફ યકો અને નવન ઉર્ફ મોબાઇલની તપાસ કરતાં એક મોબાઇલ નંબર પર મને સતત વાતચીત કરતા હોવાનું જણાયું હતું. પોલીસે આ નંબર વિશે પુછપાછ કરતાં ડી સ્ટાકના પોલીસ કર્મી હનુ કામડિયાનો હોવાનો ઘટકોટ ઘણો હતો. દારૂ પકડાયા બાદ તેણે આ નંબર શેપ કરી દીધો હતો. આર.આર.સેલે ઓપરેશન પર પાસુ તુરે હનુ રજા પર હતો. આ અને મોબાઇલ એક જ જખ્યાએ એક્ટિવ હોઈ તેની સેરેવણી સ્પષ્ટ થઈ હતી હોવાનું સુત્રોમાંથી જણવા મળ્યું છે. દારૂ કેસમાં વધુ 6 ની ધરપકડ બાકી દારૂના પાચારી કેસમાં પોલીસે અન્યાર સુધી 17 શાખોની પરચકડ કરી છે. આ કેસમાં આજરાવાડીનો બૂટલેગર સાલક રખારી, કરજણનો રહીક, પાલેજનો ઉર્ફ-ન પટેલ, મેથી વાપનો સોમપાઈ અને નવનના 2 માણસો સહિત 6 જખની જાખ પરચકડ બાકી હોઈ શોખનોમો થાચી રહી છે.

rupt administration deliberately waiting for another catastrophic hooch tragedy (Latthakand) and piles of innocent corpses before waking from its slumber? The alleged kingpin orchestrating this widespread, destructive network is Karjan Police's deeply compromised constable, Hanubha alias Hanu Kamadiya. Kamadiya is no ordinary offender; he was previously caught red-handed in a massive ₹23-lakh illicit foreign liquor scam in direct collusion with bootleggers, resulting in jail time, suspension, and strict externment from the district.

General Dhiraj Seth said the Indian Army would undertake modernisation to prepare itself for future conflicts.

General Dhiraj Seth Takes Charge As 31st Indian Army Chief With 'VIJAY' Vision

New Delhi.(Agency) General Dhiraj Seth took charge as the 31st Chief of the Army Staff on Tuesday with an ambitious plan to build a future-ready army, technologically enabled, based on his 'VIJAY' vision comprising five elements.



In his first speech following his appointment at the highest post of the Indian Army, General Seth said the moment was one of "immense pride and humility" and promised adherence to the values of "duty, honour and nation first". "I take up this assignment with an unflinching commitment to the ideals of duty, honour and nation first," he said and thanked the Prime Minister and the Defence Minister for their trust bestowed on him to head the Indian Army. The new Army chief paid tributes to the soldiers who have laid down their lives in the service of the nation and said their spirit of courage and selflessness would continue to motivate the soldiers for generations to come. 'VIJAY' Framework To Help Transform The

Army Admitting the fast-changing security scenario, General Seth said the Indian Army would undertake modernisation to prepare itself for future conflicts. While describing the Indian Army as a "combat ready and battle hardened force", he said changing nature of warfare demands greater attention to technology, innovation and integration. For doing that, he announced the unveiling of his

'VIJAY' framework which is an acronym denoting five key aspects of his vision. V - Vigilance and Preparedness Constant vigilance along the frontiers and threats would remain his primary concern, General Seth said. "The Army will maintain a very high level of operational preparedness in order to respond effectively to any challenge to our security," he said. I - Innovation and Transformation Putting great importance on innovation both in doctrine as well as technology, the Army chief said innovation needs to be ingrained in the way Army thinks, develops capabilities and conducts operations while transformation would be needed to adapt to evolving warfare. J - Jointness and Integration Terming jointness as indispensable to modern military operations, General Seth stressed greater coordination with Indian Air Force and Indian Navy. Moreover, he extended the scope of jointness to include not just military efforts but

also a "whole of nation" approach of military-civil fusion. According to him, today's national security involves coordinated efforts in different sectors and would also help achieve the national objective of Viksit Bharat 2047. A - Atmanirbharta Making atmanirbharta (self-reliance) as one of the pillars of his vision, General Seth said that the Army will increasingly utilise indigenous defence technologies and industry. "Our overarching objective will be to win our wars with indigenous solutions," he said and emphasised the need to reduce dependency on foreign military hardware. Y - Yodha First Referring to soldiers as the strength of the Army, General Seth said every soldier from an Agniveer to the veteran is a "Yodha". "It is my commitment to ensure technological proficiency, training and professional excellence of every yodha while also being fully committed to the well-being and empowerment of veterans and Veer Naris," he said.

## News box

## Gurgaon set for widespread rain from Wed as monsoon may arrive in 3 to 4 days

Gurgaon.(Agency)

After a largely dry June, Gurgaon is likely to see a significant change in weather over the coming days. India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast a sharp increase in rainfall activity from Wednesday, saying conditions are favourable for the southwest monsoon to advance into parts of Haryana within the next three to four days. IMD said the northern limit of the southwest monsoon currently passes through parts of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. With favourable atmospheric conditions developing, the monsoon is expected to advance further into Haryana, Punjab and Chandigarh over the next three to four days.

According to a special weather bulletin issued by IMD's Meteorological Centre in Chandigarh on Tuesday evening, light to moderate rain is expected at isolated places on June 30, followed by moderate rainfall at a few places on July 1 and at many places across Haryana between July 2 and July 6. Heavy rainfall is also likely at isolated locations on July 2, 4 and 6. The weather system is also expected to bring thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds of 40-50 kmph from July 1 onwards. IMD has advised people to avoid waterlogged areas, weak structures and taking shelter under trees during thunderstorms.

The forecast comes as Gurgaon remained hot on Tuesday despite a slight dip in temperatures. The city's maximum temperature settled at 38.4 degrees Celsius, while the minimum was 29.3 degrees Celsius. Though the maximum was lower than the previous day, it remained above normal for this time of year. IMD said the state's average maximum temperature was still 1.9 degrees above normal, while the average minimum temperature was 3.3 degrees above normal. Across Haryana, Hisar was the hottest place at 42.9 degrees Celsius, while Bhiwani recorded the state's lowest minimum temperature at 25.5 degrees Celsius. Authorities have advised residents to exercise caution during periods of heavy rain as waterlogging, traffic disruptions, reduced visibility and temporary disruption of civic services are possible in low-lying areas.

## 35km metro corridor to Pachgaon will have 28 stations in Gurgaon, Global City stop

Noida.(Agency)

The proposed Global City in Sector 36A will have a dedicated metro station under a planned metro corridor. The 35-km metro corridor will connect Sector 56 on Golf Course Extension Road with Pachgaon on Delhi-Jaipur Highway. Haryana Mass Rapid Transport Corporation (HMRTC) has finalised the detailed project report (DPR) of the corridor—estimated to cost Rs 10,428 crore—and forwarded it to the chief minister for approval. HMRTC appointed RITES as the consultant to prepare the DPR for the metro corridor initially planned from Vatika Chowk to Pachgaon. The corridor will have 28 stations and is expected to significantly improve connectivity across the city's rapidly expanding residential, commercial and industrial sectors while integrating with existing and proposed regional transit networks. An HMRTC official told TOI, "A major feature of the project is the inclusion of a metro station inside the proposed Global City being developed over nearly 1,000 acres in Sector 36A. To facilitate connectivity to the integrated township, Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSIIDC) will contribute Rs 1,500 crore towards the metro project." Envisioned as a self-sustaining "city within a city", the Global City project—being developed by HSIIDC—is planned as a mixed-use development comprising residential, commercial and industrial zones. Officials believe the dedicated metro station will ensure seamless public transport access for future residents, businesses and workers, reducing dependence on private vehicles.

After the draft DPR was prepared, the alignment was revised to extend the metro corridor to the Rapid Metro's Sector 56 station on Golf Course Road, enabling direct integration with Gurgaon's existing metro network. Once approved by the state govt, the DPR will pave the way for the project's statutory clearances and subsequent construction, marking another major expansion of Gurgaon's urban rail network.

## UP fixes deadline for takeover of township by civic bodies

Noida.(Agency)

In a move aimed at ending years of limbo over who maintains large private townships, UP govt has fixed strict timelines for handing them over to municipal corporations—a shift that could directly affect thousands of residents caught between paying civic taxes and hefty private maintenance charges. The state has issued a new standard operating procedure (SOP), mandating that townships developed under hi-tech, integrated and UP township policy be transferred to municipalities within a stipulated period after they become eligible for handover.

The move is significant because once a township is handed over, its roads, streetlights, water lines, drains, sewers, parks and open spaces come under civic management—ending years of ambiguity over upkeep. Until now, the process often dragged on for years as developers and municipalities disputed who would bear the cost of unfinished civic work. In an order dated June 24, principal secretary (housing and urban planning) P Guru Prasad laid out the framework for the transfer.

"According to the SOP, the handover of townships up to 200 hectares must be completed within 30 days. For projects between 200 and 500 hectares, the limit is 45 days, and for those larger than 500 hectares, it is 60 days," a GDA official said. The SOP makes joint inspections by municipal bodies mandatory before takeover. If civic infrastructure remains incomplete, the developer must deposit the required cost with the municipal corporation within 90 days. Once the money is paid, handover must be completed within 30 days. If disputes arise, the divisional commissioner will act as the final arbitral authority, with powers to issue a binding decision.

## Noida hospitals see rise in patients as heat triggers surge in dehydration cases

Noida.(Agency)

OPDs at hospitals across Noida are witnessing a sharp rise in patients suffering from acute dehydration and other heat-related illnesses as prolonged high temperatures coupled with high humidity continue to grip the region. While no heatstroke cases have been reported in the district so far, doctors said the number of patients reporting dehydration, dizziness, fatigue and fever has increased significantly over the past week, with outdoor workers emerging as the most affected group. A senior doctor at the district hospital said the hospital has recorded more than 200 cases of dehydration, dizziness and heat-related fever since last week. "Most of the patients are daily wage labourers, construction workers, street vendors, delivery personnel, traffic staff and others who spend long hours outdoors in direct sunlight. They often continue working without taking adequate water breaks because of the nature of their jobs. Many

come to the OPD complaining of excessive weakness, dizziness, body aches, headaches and dehydration after prolonged exposure to heat and humidity. Fortunately, we have not seen any confirmed heatstroke cases yet, but if people continue to ignore the warning signs, dehydration can quickly progress into a serious medical emergency," the doctor said. Doctors said the combination of high temperatures and humidity is making the situation worse as excessive moisture in the air prevents sweat from evaporating efficiently, reducing the body's natural cooling mechanism and increasing the risk of heat exhaustion. "Heat-related illnesses have risen by 30-40% over the past few days. The hospital's OPD is seeing a sharp increase in patients presenting with dehydration, electrolyte

imbalance, heat exhaustion and gastroenteritis," senior director of internal

progression to heat exhaustion is happening much faster. We are also seeing cases of acute kidney injury caused by profound fluid and sodium loss," he said. Dr Sanadhya added that the elderly, infants, people with heart ailments and those taking cardiac medications remain the most vulnerable. However, he said a growing number of otherwise healthy young outdoor workers are also requiring medical attention after underestimating the impact of humid weather. "Residents must not wait until they feel thirsty before drinking water. Frequent intake of water, oral rehydration solutions and water-rich fruits while avoiding alcohol and excessive caffeine is advised. People are also urged to wear loose cotton clothing, avoid strenuous outdoor activity during afternoon hours, and seek immediate medical attention if symptoms such as dark urine, persistent dizziness, muscle cramps, nausea, confusion or a sudden absence of sweating develop," he added.



medicine at Max Super Speciality Hospital, Noida, Dr Sanjay Sanadhya, said. "The surge is typical during periods of sustained extreme heat and humidity. Severe dehydration and acute electrolyte imbalances are the most common conditions we are treating, while

## Chhota Udepur's Ecological Massacre, Bribes Over Duty

## How Chhota Udepur's Rotting Minerals Dept. Protects the Sand Mafia

Mahanagar Metro Desk

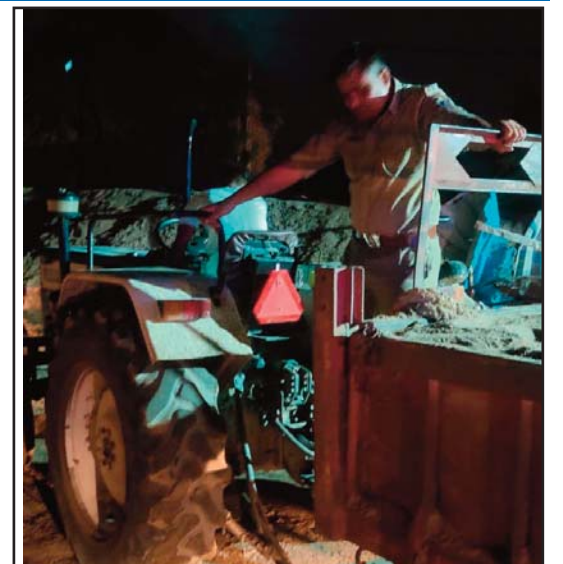
Pawan Makan

Chhota Udepur.

Under the direct guidance of the District Collector and strict instructions from the Superintendent of Police (SP), an intensified late-night drive against the rampant illegal sand mining mafia has exposed a deep, rotting fracture within the Chhota Udepur district administration. While the District Traffic Police managed a minor victory by intercepting and seizing a single overloaded, royalty-evading tractor-trolley near Suskal village, this isolated midnight bust has triggered a massive, furious public backlash against the district's completely dysfunctional Mines and Minerals Department. Public outrage, channeled through Mahanagar Metro, directly indicts mining officials of cowardly hiding in their air-conditioned offices, allegedly pocketing massive protection bribes while ground cops risk their lives on dark patrols. The contrast is sickening: while the police hunt under the cover of night, the highly compromised Minerals Department remains deep in a corrupt slumber, allowing the mineral mafia to shamelessly plunder and rape the district's lifeline riverbeds in broad daylight. Despite the mineral department's crippling, systemic inertia, the district administration and police have issued a desperate, fierce ultimatum, promising merciless joint operations to completely dismantle these politically shielded syndicates before they cause total, irreversible environmental collapse. The spotlight now rests firmly on the state government's next move. Mahanagar Metro vows to relentlessly



hunt this issue down and ruthlessly expose the white-collared political patrons orchestrating this ecological massacre. If the Mines and Minerals Department fails to awaken from its corrupt, bribe-fueled slumber, we will not hesitate to publicly unmask the faces shielding these environmental terrorists. The countdown has begun—the administration must now prove whether this special drive is a genuine clean-up or just a pathetic, temporary PR stunt to briefly pause a multi-million-rupee black market. The deafening silence of higher authorities is no longer just complicity; it is a blatant, disgusting betrayal of the very people they are sworn to protect. The victimized citizens of Chhota Udepur will no longer quietly watch this environmental terrorism. Every single stolen grain of sand is a direct, brazen theft from the



state's treasury, deliberately engineered to fatten the pockets of a parasitic syndicate. Our investigative team is already aggressively tracking the financial trails and hidden benami assets of these allegedly 'untouchable' officers and mining barons. The administration faces a brutal choice: enforce the law with an iron fist right now, or brace themselves for a merciless public exposure. Mahanagar Metro will not allow this systematic plunder to continue in the shadows. We openly challenge the dormant, rotting Mines and Minerals Department to act immediately or face our relentless investigative wrath. We will wage a non-stop war for Chhota Udepur's dying rivers until every single mineral mafia kingpin and corrupt bureaucrat is brought to absolute, unyielding justice.

## Bike scrapes car, teen dragged to broker's office, beaten to death

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

A 17-year-old boy whose bike brushed past a car in Loni was allegedly beaten to death by a property dealer and his aide in a road-rage attack on Monday. The accused dragged the teenager into their car, took him to a nearby office and thrashed him again before dumping him by the road outside. Police said the boy, who worked at his father's dairy farm, was returning home from a local swimming pool with two friends around 3pm when his bike grazed a blue Baleno in the Loni Border area.

The assault that followed unfolded in two stages. The victim's elder brother, Sakir, said two men stepped out of the car and began assaulting him on the roadside. "They started hitting him immediately. When he slumped to the ground, they kicked him and beat him with sticks," he alleged. The two then forced the boy into their car. One of them, a property dealer named Rahul, drove to his nearby office, while his associate allegedly took the victim's motorcycle and followed. At the office, the beating resumed. "They kept thrashing him and demanded money for the damage to the car. He was strangled several times and beaten for over half an hour," the brother alleged. Meanwhile, the teenager's two friends—both minors—kept calling him frantically



after losing sight of him when he was pushed into the car. After repeated attempts, one of the accused answered the victim's phone and told them, "Tumhara dost yahan pada hai (your friend is lying here)," before sharing the location. When they reached Rahul's office, they found the teenager lying injured outside, barely conscious. "They splashed water on his face, but he did not respond. The accused told them to take him away or they too would be killed," Sakir said.

The boys took him home on a motorcycle. As his condition worsened, the family rushed him to GTB Hospital, where doctors declared him dead. Surendra Nath Tiwari, DCP (rural), said an FIR was lodged at Loni Border police station against Rahul and his unidentified aide under Sections 103 (murder) and 3(5) (common intention) of the BNS. "We have arrested Rahul. Teams are searching for his associate," Tiwari said. SHO Manish Bisht said preliminary

inquiry found road repair work had narrowed the carriageway, forcing traffic from both sides into a single lane. Rahul's car was parked beside the road when the bike grazed it. "A heated argument followed. In anger, the assault escalated," Bisht said. Police said the autopsy found multiple injuries on the teenager's body. "The exact cause of death remains inconclusive. We have preserved viscera samples for further examination," he added.

# Kullu doctor suspended amid protest over death of woman after childbirth

An order issued by the Health and Family Welfare Department on June 30 said that Dr Anu Devi, specialist (obstetrics and gynaecology), has been placed under suspension with immediate effect pending a departmental inquiry.

**Shimla. (Agency)**

The state government has suspended a gynaecologist posted at the Regional Hospital, Kullu, following the death of a woman after childbirth, in what has become a high-profile case that has triggered widespread public outrage and protests. An order issued by the Health and Family Welfare Department on June 30 said that Dr Anu Devi, specialist (obstetrics and gynaecology), has been placed under suspension with immediate effect pending a departmental inquiry.

According to the order, Manju Sharma, 23, died following a surgical procedure performed by Anu Devi at the Regional Hospital, Kullu, on June 21. The suspension has been ordered under Rule 10 of the Central Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1965, based on a report submitted by the Director of Health Services

recommending an inquiry into the incident.

During the suspension period, Anu Devi will remain attached to the Directorate of Health and Family Welfare in Shimla and will not be allowed to leave the headquarters without prior permission from the competent authority.

Sharma's death sparked massive protests in Kullu, with local residents and social activists staging demonstrations and a sit-in outside the hospital. Protesters had also blocked traffic at Dhalpur, demanding strict action against those responsible and a fair investigation into the incident.

Tuesday also was the second day of hunger strike by the protesters, which

included family members of the deceased woman. They have been demanding that the doctor and two

visited the protest site outside the Regional Hospital, where the victim's family members and local residents have been staging a dharna.

"A similar incident had occurred at Kullu Hospital in 2018, when a woman also died during an operation. However, the then government did not take any action," Thakur said.

He said the present government had acted promptly by suspending the doctor. "Two or three other staff members are also likely to be suspended in the coming days," the MLA added.

Leader of the Opposition and former Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur also visited the Regional Hospital, Kullu, along with senior BJP leaders. They met the bereaved family members and interacted with agitating local

residents, assuring them of support and demanding a fair and transparent investigation into the incident. On June 20, Sharma from Sunaru village under Bali Chowki in Mandi district was admitted for a delivery.

The attending doctor conducted the surgery but her condition deteriorated suddenly afterwards, her family members alleged.

Her family members have alleged that the hospital staff were informed about her deteriorating health but a nurse dismissed it, claiming the woman was feigning distress.

According to the news agency PTI, the district administration has ordered a magisterial inquiry led by Kullu Sub-Divisional Magistrate into the incident after talks with the family. The health department has also constituted a committee to submit a report on the incident on Tuesday.



nurses at Regional Hospital, Kullu, be suspended, claiming that negligence led to the death of the 23-year-old.

Meanwhile, Congress MLA from Kullu, Sunder Singh Thakur, on Tuesday

## Short news

**Tree fall incidents: Bombay HC seeks details of alleged gaps in BMC's de-concretisation drive**

**Mumbai. (Agency)**

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday asked the petitioners and intervenors in a public interest litigation (PIL) on tree falls to share their findings and suggestions with the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), after an intervenor disputed the civic body's claims regarding tree de-concretisation across the city.

The HC was hearing an intervention application filed by social activist Sagar Ugale in a PIL by activist Rohit Manohar Joshi and others seeking de-concretisation around the bases of trees in Mumbai and Thane, while raising concerns over deaths and injuries caused by falling trees.

The PIL has sought directions to the civic authorities to formulate a disaster management plan with provisions for compensation and compassionate employment for the families of those killed or injured in incidents involving tree collapses.

The HC had earlier noted that the Maharashtra (Urban Areas) Protection and Preservation of Trees Act, 1975 provides for the constitution of a Tree Authority in every urban local body for the protection and preservation of trees. Earlier this month, the BMC had submitted that the petitioners and intervenors could accompany officials of the Garden Department and point out locations where de-concretisation work had not been carried out.

**Rs 100 crore 'land scam' in Sambhal, government officials among 31 booked**

**Lucknow. (Agency)**

Police in Sambhal have booked 31 people, including serving and former government officials, over the alleged fraudulent transfer and illegal occupation of nearly 38 bighas of gram sabha land at a prime location, valued at around Rs 100 crore. The FIR also named several persons who were allegedly in possession of the land.

Among the 31 people named in the FIR are the then Deputy Director of Consolidation, the then Executive Officer of the Sambhal Municipal Council, and several other serving and former government officials.

No one has been arrested so far. The case was registered following an inquiry into a complaint filed by a resident, who had alleged that the transfer of the public land was secured through forged records, involving revenue and municipal officials, along with private individuals.

"The gram sabha land, situated along the Sambhal-Moradabad highway, was allegedly transferred in favour of a local resident named Saeedul Rehman in 2008 pursuant to an order passed by the then Deputy Director of Consolidation. The mutation order was subsequently challenged before the Allahabad High Court. But the petition was not pursued further," an official said.

According to the police, the disputed land was allegedly leased in 1967 by the Sambhal Municipal Council to Saeedul Rehman without obtaining the mandatory approval of the state government. It has been alleged that Rehman subsequently transferred portions of the land to other private parties.

Police said that in February 2008, Rehman secured a mutation order from the then Deputy Director of Consolidation on the strength of an allegedly forged lease deed purportedly issued by the Municipal Council on July 12, 1967.

## US-sanctioned SBL Energy made last Sudan shipment in January: Sources

**Indian explosives manufacturer was preparing exports to the US but a factory blast disrupted plans, an official said on the condition of anonymity.**

**Nagpur. (Agency)**

SBL Energy Ltd, the Indian explosives manufacturer recently sanctioned by the United States over alleged supplies linked to the civil war in Sudan, dispatched its last shipment to the war-torn country on January 27 this year, nearly six months before the sanctions were imposed, an official said on the condition of anonymity. The company was also preparing to begin exporting to the United States but a deadly factory blast in March disrupted the plans, the paper has learnt. Speaking to The Indian Express on the condition of anonymity, a senior company official said SBL Energy had not exported any material to Sudan after the January shipment.

The official claimed that the company had



made around 10-11 shipments to Sudan since it first began exporting to the country in 2022, while clarifying that these referred to the number of shipments made and not individual containers. After the initial consignment in 2022, there was a gap of nearly two years before exports resumed, with the final shipment leaving for Sudan on January 27 this year.

Last week, the US sanctioned SBL Energy Ltd and its CEO Alok Choudhari, alleging the company supplied explosives to the Sudanese Armed Forces through Target Multi Activities Co Ltd (TMAC), thereby intensifying the civil war. However, the official maintained that SBL was not the principal supplier of TMAC, claiming the Sudanese firm sourced explosives from around eight suppliers, including those based in South Africa and Colombia, all of which have also been sanctioned. The official claimed that both TMAC and SBL were designated simultaneously on June 26, adding that SBL faced "secondary sanctions" as it was among TMAC's suppliers. The official said TMAC was not a sanctioned entity while SBL was supplying material to it.

## Gujarat High Court rejects suspended IAS officer's bail plea

**Vadodara. (Agency)**

SUSPENDED IAS officer R M Patel's personal phone, the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has told the Gujarat High Court (HC), held 800 photographs of land-use conversion applications — a photographic trail of every file that passed through his desk, each one allegedly carrying a price tag. One day before the ED searched his premises, his Google history recorded a query — "how to reset Samsung S24 Ultra," the agency submitted in court.

The HC found that combination difficult to overlook and rejected the bail plea of the former Surendranagar collector in a money



laundering case linked to an alleged bribery racket in his own office. Justice H D Suthar of the Gujarat HC, in a 48-page judgment delivered on Monday, held that Patel had "failed to satisfy the twin

conditions under Section 45 of the PMLA Act" — in absence of reasonable grounds to believe that (Patel) is not guilty or unlikely to commit the offence again." The ED, which described the case as "a system", submitted before the court that Patel, as the then Collector, held final approval authority on the IORA portal and received the largest single share (50 per cent) of bribes, amounting to Rs 3.12 crore. The investigation traces back to December 23, 2025, when a search at the residence of Chandrasinh Mori, then a deputy mamlatdar in the Collector's office, yielded Rs 67.5 lakh in cash and handwritten "hisab sheets"

(accounts) that allegedly documented bribes collected for Change of Land Use (CLU) permissions. The material was shared with the Anti-Corruption Bureau under Section 66(2) of the PMLA, resulting in an FIR under the Prevention of Corruption Act, while the ED opened its own ECIR and later registered a money laundering case. Appearing for the agency, Additional Solicitor General S V Raju told the court that bribe rates had effectively been standardised: Rs 10 per square metre for approvals under the Gujarat Land Revenue Code and Rs 5 per square metre under the Saurashtra Gharkhed Tenancy.

## Sumul Dairy polls: Days to go, Gujarat Congress moves 11 candidates to 'safer place'

**The elections are scheduled for July 15. For the past ten years, BJP-backed individuals have helmed the dairy.**

**Surat. (Agency)**

TWO WEEKS before the elections for the Surat-Tapi District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Ltd, the Congress-backed Pashu Palak Heet Rakshak Samithi (PPHS) on Tuesday moved 11 of its candidates to a "safer place" outside Gujarat.

Congress leaders said the move was taken to shield the 11 individuals from "pressure tactics" of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), whose candidates are contesting under the banner of Sahkar Panel. They alleged that the proposer of a Samithi candidate had been missing since Sunday.

The co-operative is popularly known as Sumul Dairy. Even as the BJP has already won five seats on the dairy's board of directors uncontested, the party faces challenges on the remaining 11 poll-bound seats. Also, some of its members, who were denied a mandate earlier, will

be fighting for membership with the support of the Congress-backed group. The elections are scheduled for July 15. For the past ten years, BJP-backed individuals have helmed the dairy. According to its annual report for 2024-25, the dairy's total trade turnover for that fiscal was Rs 6,276 crore.

Sumul Dairy, which comprises 1,039 primary milk producer co-operative societies, is run by a board of 19 members, 16 of whom are elected. The other three are ex-officio members from the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation, the National Dairy Development Board, and the district registrar's office. The milk producer co-operatives, in turn, have 2.50 lakh members, and their presidents vote to elect the board of directors. After Monday — the first day of form withdrawal — 40

candidates were left in the fray for the 11 seats, sources in the dairy's election unit told The Indian Express. An official from the Surat district collector's office is the



election officer.

They added that while the elections were initially due in 2025, after the terms of chairman Mansinh Patel and vice-chairman Rajesh Pathak ended, they could not be held then due to the local

body polls and the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision drive. "This led to a delay in the co-operative body elections. So, a custodian was placed in charge," said Pathak.

At least three PPHS picks are those who were denied a mandate to contest the polls by the ruling party. Critical of the BJP for introducing the mandate system in the co-operative body elections, Congress Legislature Party leader Tushar Chaudhary said, "By giving a mandate, directors are bound in advance to work at the behest of the party and are given free rein that leads to corruption.

We have come to know that the BJP has won five seats uncontested. Keeping the PPHS's interests in mind, we have moved them (the Samithi's candidates) to a safer place. We will give (the BJP) a tough fight on the remaining 11 seats."

## Punjab must face inconvenient truths

Ajay Vir Jakhar

STANDING under the shade of a Bakain tree on a scorching day (it's 46°C), I observe the canal water irrigating my field — a toxic slurry of sewage and chemical effluents discharged from the Buddha Nullah. This is the water that flows into our taps too — serving as a grim symbol of Punjab's deep malaise and current electoral predicament. Inconvenient truths require inconvenient truth-tellers. Leaders in states such as Punjab and Kerala know but ignore what the electorate fails to realise: the states are sliding towards balance-sheet insolvency, not just periodic liquidity crunch. Punjab is allowed to have net borrowing of Rs 29,419 crore (3% of the Gross State Domestic Product or GSDP, as per the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act), while the state's revenue deficit stands at Rs 21,955 crore (2.2% of GSDP). The underlying calculation is unforgiving, making the endgame a simple question of timing, not probability; possibly within four years, after repaying the principal and the interest, paying salaries, providing free electricity and handouts to women, there may not be enough money to fulfil the pension obligations. The level of Punjab's public debt and annual borrowings is not a state secret. Annual interest payment consumes 40.58% of the state's own tax revenue. Punjab is now spending four times more on servicing its existing debt than on creating assets. This is the classic debt trap. Unfortunately, governments routinely alleviate a debt problem by borrowing more money just to service the existing interest obligations. When analysing the debt crisis, I subscribe to the theory that politicians lacking strength of character and integrity ultimately represent the gravest financial liability. It's true that the economic bequest to the AAP government was not good. The state's outstanding debt was Rs 2.85 lakh crore on March 31, 2022. Since then, this government has wasted its historic mandate, made mistakes, not by accident but out of political compulsion. The state's outstanding debt is expected to increase by 64% to reach Rs 4.5 lakh crore on March 31, 2027. A government's fiscal position is a volatile mix of politics, economics, finance, and law and leadership that enables this cycle. Step into any mohalla in Punjab and ask what the government stands for, and the answers pour out in a torrent: free electricity, cash doles, unconstitutional halqa incharges, drugs, petty crime, a compromised police force and corruption. All are present in ample measure, yet none offer any cause for pride. It is not a partisan issue: politicians unable to win public trust on their own merits routinely embark on expensive crusades to broadcast their benevolence.

All major parties enter elections by promising unsustainable populist handouts, systematically borrowed from future generations to fund the politics of today. Punjab's debt-to-GSDP ratio (45.65%) is the highest among major states. Leave apart debt repayment, Punjab spends more on interest payments (Rs 28,775 crore) than it does on education and health combined. Ultimately, controlling a state's budget will alienate powerful organised blocs like government staff and farmers. The task will require a rare political commodity: a statesman with the sheer capacity to absorb public hatred. In a state where politics revolves around blaming the Central government or exploiting religious fault lines at every turn, reality is finally exacting its revenge. No state can survive in political isolation, least of all Punjab. In the throes of societal and fiscal collapse, the state cannot pull itself out of the hole without external help. To make matters worse, the current regime has adopted AAP's Delhi playbook, picking fights with the Centre at every turn to the absolute detriment of the state.

In today's adversarial and performative politics of the country, a Congress victory would produce the same deadlock. For Punjab to reverse the trajectory of decline, whoever wins the 2027 election will need the cooperation of the Union government — otherwise, the state will sink further into a disaster of its own making.

## What's UCC got to do with no eggs on Bengal menu

The debate has turned into a discussion about cultural identity and freedom of choice

Jayanta Ghosal

THE newly elected Chief Minister of West Bengal, Suvenudh Adhikari, has announced that the state will introduce the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill in the Assembly on Monday. The UCC law represents a long-term ideological strategy of the BJP. The government has the option to pass the Bill as it has more than a two-thirds majority. However, since West Bengal has a significant Muslim and Christian population, some leaders believe that first sending the Bill to a select committee would make the process more democratic and allow a broader discussion. Regardless of the method, the expectation is that the UCC Bill will eventually be passed in West Bengal. The UCC means there will be a common set of laws for all citizens, where personal matters like marriage, divorce, inheritance and related issues will not be governed separately based on religion. It reflects the BJP's larger ideological vision of a unified legal framework under the idea of 'Akhand Bharat'.

To understand the larger ideological goal behind it, we need to look at the historical background. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) was founded in 1925 and the Bharatiya Jana Sangh in 1951. After years of political struggle, this ideological stream eventually transformed into the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 1980s. For decades, the Jana Sangh, RSS and BJP have carried forward the ideology based on the idea of Hindu cultural nationalism, which its supporters describe as Sanatan Hindu nationalism. Later, independent India adopted the Nehruvian model of secularism and socialism and took India in a different direction. During the freedom movement, Indian nationalism had different streams. The Congress leadership fought against British colonial rule, while another stream of right-wing nationalism also emerged. Leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak represented a form of Hindu nationalist thought, which later influenced the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS. An aggressive strain of Hindu nationalism was followed by Veer Savarkar. When Jawaharlal Nehru was elected Prime Minister, Rajendra Prasad was the President, whose philosophy of Hindutva was strong; the same applied to Sardar Patel's Hindu philosophy. After Independence, Nehru's model of secularism became dominant. However, the BJP and RSS continued to argue for a different interpretation of Indian identity, rooted in Hindu cultural traditions. When Atal Bihari Vajpayee became Prime Minister and LK Advani emerged as a key BJP leader while the RSS remained influential, issues like cultural nationalism, Ram temple construction, Article 370 and the UCC remained central parts of the party's ideological agenda. However, critics argue that this approach is an attempt to create religious



polarisation by bringing identity issues into politics. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, one of the founders of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, was from Bengal. He played an important role in arguing for the creation of West Bengal during the Partition, opposing the idea of the entire Bengal becoming part of Pakistan. Mookerjee had many discussions on this issue with Nehru. He also wrote several letters to him. The celebration of West Bengal Day, the focus on Bengal's history, and the emphasis on Mukherjee's legacy are all connected with this political narrative. However, the opposition party argues that not only Mukherjee but several Congress leaders had also supported the development of West Bengal during the Partition. The BJP believes that West Bengal has remained outside its ideological influence for a long time because of decades of Left rule and later the Trinamool Congress government. It created a different political culture in Bengal. Illegal immigration has become a major political issue in West Bengal. Adhikari wants to be seen as a strong Hindu nationalist leader in Bengal and the face of this new political identity. He is following the BJP central leadership, and they are planning to follow the Bengali communist model. However, for this transformation to succeed, the BJP believes that the political influence of Mamata Banerjee must first be weakened. The party wants to challenge the Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee leadership model within

the TMC and neutralise it politically. It is questioning the credibility of the TMC organisation by exposing its leaders accused of corruption. At the same time, the BJP has also faced criticism over some of its decisions. The decision to involve ISKCON in providing mid-day meals in schools and the exclusion of eggs from the menu reflected an attempt to promote vegetarianism even as non-vegetarian food habits are connected with Bengali culture. The debate has turned into a discussion about cultural identity, freedom of choice and whether political ideology was influencing everyday life. Questions are being raised whether a particular cultural identity is being promoted over another. The larger question is how Bengalis themselves are responding to these changes. Interestingly, even among Muslims in West Bengal, there has not been a major protest or public reaction against the proposed UCC so far. This raises a question: have sections of the Muslim community accepted the idea that there will no longer be separate personal laws or special provisions? For example, during Eid celebrations, the traditional Namaz arrangement at Red Road was shifted to Brigade Parade Ground, and there was no major protest over the change. A new Bengal appears to be taking shape. The question is whether Bengalis themselves are ready to move away from the Left's longstanding radical and pluralistic political model and connect with the BJP's idea of 'Akhand Bharat' and cultural nationalism.

## HC opens door to probe into smuggling

Public participation remains one of the strongest safeguards against environmental crime

ILLEGAL tree felling is an assault on public resources, biodiversity and the rule of law. The Himachal Pradesh High Court's recent intervention in the alleged timber smuggling case in Una is thus both timely and necessary. By seeking a detailed affidavit from the Forest Department and ordering independent monitoring of the Gagret check-post, the court has signalled that protecting forests cannot be left to routine official assurances alone. The allegations are disturbing. They point to the possibility of an organised network exploiting forest resources across the Himachal-Punjab border. Equally troubling is the gap between enforcement claims and the scale of illegal transportation acknowledged by the authorities. If hundreds of vehicles carrying unauthorised forest produce have been intercepted over the years, the question is inevitable: how much illegal timber may have escaped detection? The case also raises concerns about



governance requires more than registering FIRs after violations occur. It demands real-time surveillance, digital tracking of timber transit permits, better coordination between neighbouring states and regular

audits of vulnerable checkpoints. Independent oversight, as ordered by the high court, can strengthen public confidence in enforcement. Another aspect that deserves attention is the treatment of those who bring environmental violations to light. Whistleblowers and citizens documenting suspected illegal activities should be protected. Public participation remains one of the strongest safeguards against environmental crime.

Himachal's forests are invaluable ecological assets, supporting biodiversity, regulating water resources and sustaining local livelihoods. Their protection is a constitutional obligation. The HC has opened the door to a more rigorous examination of the problem. The state must seize this opportunity to dismantle organised timber smuggling networks, strengthen institutional accountability and ensure that conservation laws are enforced in both letter and spirit.

## Why Delhi's autos are celebrating 250 yrs of US

It is clear that almost every initiative in Indo-US relations has been driven by the US

K. P. Nayar

AS the US celebrates the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Donald Trump has temporarily replaced Narendra Modi and Yogi Adityanath on Delhi's roads. The US President's visage has been on the city roads' autorickshaws since the US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, announced his visit to India in May. Officially, the 250th anniversary falls on July 4, but in India, the celebrations noticeably began with fanfare in May and will continue throughout the year.

Trump's face - curiously unsmiling - has "Happy Birthday America!" emblazoned above it and "250 Years Old" set against the Stars and Stripes in the background on autorickshaws. The weather-resistant rexine advertisements which cover the entire back panels of three-wheelers are an initiative of the US Embassy in the national Capitol. They have had a mixed reception from the public, which is used to such posters showing PM Modi celebrating some "achievement" with some BJP Chief Minister or the other. The Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister has been the most prominent face beside the Prime Minister's before Trump displaced them. Before Modi, when Delhi's autorickshaw drivers were solid backers of the Aam Aadmi Party, it was then Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal whose image was on the rear of three-wheelers. According to Paul M. Nichols, the Embassy's Contracting Officer, tender documents issued for this campaign were for 8,000 autorickshaws to have Trump on their back panels. A second set of posters display the Statue of Liberty over the American flag and the words "Freedom 250" at both ends. Simultaneously, the Embassy compound - in particular, Roosevelt House,

the residence of Ambassador Sergio Gor - is illuminated every night in the national colours of red, white and blue. The illumination gives the impression of Aurora Borealis, the Northern Lights spectacle to which lakhs of tourists flock to view in Nordic countries throughout the winter every year. One imagines neighbouring embassies may



envy the nightly attention that the US Mission is getting from Delhiites for Freedom 250. The Declaration of Independence had a profound impact on India and its struggle for freedom from British rule. This was partly because the US also won its freedom from Britain. Thus, it was a model for India's own freedom struggle against British rule. Perhaps because the appeal of the 1776 Declaration was so deep on the Western-educated Jawaharlal Nehru and on a member of the UK's House of Commons, Dadabhai Naoroji - although a

fighter for India's freedom - its overpowering impact was confined to the 'elite' among the foot soldiers for Indian independence. Even after BR Ambedkar incorporated elements of the American Declaration in his authorship of India's Constitution, this did not change. Like the 1787 US Constitution, India's Constitution, adopted by the

Constituent Assembly in 1949, begins with the Preamble, "WE, THE PEOPLE ...". I have frequently been intrigued during my years as a foreign correspondent in the US that Indian visitors - especially history buffs - want to go to Gettysburg and often spend an entire day at the National Military Park, where President Abraham Lincoln delivered his memorable Gettysburg Address. When the US State Department organised a media tour of Washington's Museum of American History in 2013 for the sesquicentennial of the Gettysburg Address, almost the entire complement of the foreign media which turned up comprised Indian correspondents. On the contrary, not many Indians visit the Independence Hall in Philadelphia, America's first capital, where both the Declaration of Independence and Constitution were adopted by the Founding Fathers of what is today's US. Nor do Indians constitute even a fraction of one million visitors annually who go to the National Archives in Washington, where the Declaration is enshrined in its rotunda. A cynical view is that the Gettysburg Address is easier for Indians to absorb and digest because the speech is a surprisingly brief 272 words - one word less in some historical texts. A more generous explanation is that ordinary Indians can relate more to Lincoln's words, which have greater resonance for them even to this day. "Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

In my high school, students had to deliver the Gettysburg Address from memory. And Toastmasters there received accolades for the best delivery. For many Indians, the contents of the Gettysburg Address are still a work in progress in their country. Not so with the Declaration of Independence.

For a journalist, unlike for historians or political scientists, a newspaper column on America's 250th birthday cannot be fulfilling without an analysis of the present state of India-US relations. For policymakers in New Delhi who do not want to rock the boat, everything is hunky-dory. But the relationship's potential is far from realised. Atal Bihari Vajpayee once told me as Prime Minister that whenever an American met him, Vajpayee had the feeling that his interlocutor was reading out from an invisible list of demands. Nobody gave me a list to read out to Bill Clinton or George W. Bush, Vajpayee lamented. Almost every initiative on the bilateral agenda in Indo-US relations has come from the American side:

The nuclear deal, high-technology cooperation, the diaspora influx through the H1-B route, etc. It is to India's credit that official negotiators have skillfully turned their negotiations on these initiatives to India's benefit, most pronouncedly in the bilateral nuclear deal. On the 250th birthday of the most powerful country, there is a crying need for more original ideas to emanate from New Delhi if the oldest democracy and the most populous democracy are to foster one of the most important global relations in this millennium. Right from 1947, the US always knew what it wanted from India. Of course, it did not get what it tried for, most of the time. But it never gave up. The problem with the Trump administration is that it does not know what it wants from India. Nothing comparable to the nuclear agreement is coming out of the White House nowadays. And the right hand in Washington's power circle does not know what its left hand is doing.

# Beauty

treatments that rejuvenate



# Your Eyes



### Hydrate skin under eyes and treat pigmentation

Dark circles under your eyes can be treated with creams, provided they are used diligently. Dermatologists can recommend products that suit your skin best. Senior cosmetic dermatologist Dr Akanksha Shah says, "Some under-eye creams work by treating pigmentation around the eyes making them look less tired whereas some work to just hydrate the skin around the eyes making it more youthful. There are certain under-eye creams with retinol, vitamin C, hyaluronic acid and other anti aging molecules that work on reducing fine lines around the eyes."

### Rejuvenate the peri-orbital area

The vampire treatment is a popular one not just for your face but for your eye area as well. This procedure stimulates skin cells around the eyes to form new collagen and rejuvenates the peri-orbital skin by its anti-aging effects. Cosmetologist Dr Jamuna Pai explains, "The vampire treatment is about taking your own blood and then using a centrifuge to separate platelets. The platelet rich plasma or PRP and hyaluronic acid, which is a natural component of our skin, is injected into the skin around the eyes to revive it."

### Stimulate collagen formation

Derma-rollers are micro-needles that are rolled over the skin to stimulate collagen formation. Mild derma-rollers are used along with the PRP treatment for best results. Gel

peel to lighten skin around eyes There are some specially made peels, which are mild, yet effective and can be used for delicate areas like the skin around your eyes. These exfoliate and lighten the skin and treat tired looking eyes that have dark circles.



### Get rid of puffiness or under eye hollowness

Fillers are injectable sterile gels made of hyaluronic acid. Dr Shah says, "Fillers are injected into facial areas with

static wrinkles and folds and for adding volume and contour to the face. People with under-eye hollowness or under-eye puffiness who always tend to look tired are the best candidates for fillers. Fillers take about only 20 minutes to perform and they last for eight months to a year, depending on the filler injected. This procedure has a down time of seven to 10 days due to possibility of temporary injection-site redness, swelling and bruising."

### Smoothen crow's feet

Lines formed on the outer corner of your eyes when you smile are crow's feet. These dynamic wrinkles can be dealt with by microinjecting botulinum toxin into the muscles around eyes, that contract and lead to wrinkle lines. This procedure when combined with brow lift can lead to a youthful look. Botox takes one week for full results to show and lasts for four to six months.

### Tightening skin around your eyes

Radio-frequency tightening can be specially used to tighten the skin around the eyes as well especially for the ones with sagging lids, under-eye bags and puffiness. Dr Shah explains, "It uses radiofrequency to cause thermal effects on the tissue and eventually leads to tightening and new collagen formation. Improvement in lid lag, peri-orbital wrinkles as well as a brow lift can be achieved with radio-frequency tightening. Two to six sessions are recommended 15-20 days apart depending on the age of the patient. It is painless and all one feels is heat while the treatment is on. It has no downtime and one has mild redness of the skin for few hours after the procedure."

**Makeup and facials can get you a temporary glow, but if your eyes are tired, puffy, with circles and under eye bags, it can ruin your entire look.**

**Skin care professionals in the city are offering a range of treatments that can help rejuvenate the skin around your eyes. Here are a few of them...**

## How to clean your make-up brushes at home



If you're a make-up lover, then you ought to have brushes. These brushes always come handy with blending foundation for trying the intense smokey eye look. But do you know that these make-up brushes may contain bits of make-up, oil, dirt, and lots of bacteria? It's true and that's why you should always clean your brushes at a regular interval. If you don't want to invest in an expensive make-up brush cleanser, we have decoded simple tricks which you can try at home and keep your brushes clean.

Here's how you can do it: Take a bowl of warm water and dip all your brushes in water for a few minutes. Now, add a few drops of clear shampoo or even baby shampoo to make a solution. Dip all your brushes into this solution and swirl your brush tips in a bowl one by one. Next, take out the brush one by one and gently rub it on your palm to work the lather. To clean it further, run the same brush under the tap of water.

If you still think the brush is dirty, keep repeating the two steps mentioned above. Lastly, dip the brush in warm water again for some time. Then wipe these brushes with a cloth, maintaining the shape of the bristles. You can keep them flat on a paper and let them dry the entire day.

# CAN YOUR Beauty SALON HARM YOU?



The quickest way to pamper yourself is to indulge at the salon. However, a recent study claims that a simple fish pedicure that involves tiny toothless carp nibbling away at dead skin could spread deadly infection and disease. And that's just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. So, if you have intentions of stopping by the salon for a beauty treatment, read on.

Skin-tillating? ...not at all! If you have a weak immune system, or condition like diabetes and psoriasis in particular, experts advise you to stay away from your local beauty parlour. They warn of the dangers of contracting Hepatitis C from the use of unsterile scissors (through a nick during a haircut or even a manicure). A website even reports how American singer Paula Abdul suffered a long and painful thumb infection she picked up at a Los Angeles nail salon and testified before legislators in support of a bill to increase nail salon health standards.

"If a person is already infected with a bacterial or fungal infection and warts or molluscum (viral) and bleeds into the water in the tank, then there definitely is a very chance this could be passed to another client, either via the fish or contaminated tank water; if this not taken care of it can be



harmful," says skin expert Dr Krupa Amonkar. In addition, there is a danger of contracting the Hepatitis c virus from unsterile scissors either through a nick during a haircut or during a slip that draws blood in a manicure. A website reports how singer and American Idol judge Paula Abdul suffered long, painful thumb infection that she apparently picked up at a Los Angeles nail salon and testified before legislators in support of a bill to increase nail-salon health standards. Mike Comins, chairman of the British Association of Cosmetic Doctors, says: "Hepatitis C is a robust virus that can live outside the body for quite a long time and may not display

any symptoms at all. It can linger for decades, increasing your risk of cirrhosis and liver cancer. It's very contagious and not routinely tested for." Adds skin doctor Rita Shah, "One has to be careful. If the instruments are not sterilised properly, there's a risk they could spread blood-borne infections." Hair and now! Ever thought a simple blow dry could nix it for you? That's apparently that case.

You can actually suffer 'asphyxiation' from a Brazilian Blowdry as a major ingredient in the straightening treatment dubbed the Brazilian, or permanent, blowdry is said to be formaldehyde. And in spite of certain restrictions on the amount of the chemical that can be used, and new formaldehyde-free formulations, certain firms are still selling products that can cause breathing difficulties and other unpleasant side-effects.

That's a scare, not counting smaller woes like head lice from dirty brushes! And don't forget hot wax has the potential to be seriously dangerous if it's not handled properly or even a stroke from a washbasin! If you have managed to just end up with a crick in your neck and shoulder after a shampoo, count your blessings. Research indicates that the position in which you have to hold your neck while being shampooed over a basin could, in a few cases result in a stroke, known as Beauty Salon Stroke Syndrome. The result can be dizziness, facial numbness, and even a blood clot in the brain. This is especially dangerous for those with high blood pressure. The warning signs are out, next time you might want to do a re-think before your hairdo or manicure.



# What's your Favourite Fragrance?

## Beauty tricks for the no make-up lovers

For those who are really not that high on makeup and prefer to go without it, choosing the right colour shades for yourself can be tricky. Subtle makeup when done perfectly can highlight your features naturally, making it look as if you aren't wearing make-up at all.

What are the shades that you can choose?

From baby pinks and purples to lighter shades of maroons and reds - the list just goes on. Beauty professional Anisha Sharma says, "The best way to select a subtle shade for your skin is by testing

which ones of those suits you better. Sometimes, women who are very fair or the ones who are slightly darker, tend to select a lip shade like nude which then makes your complexion dull. Like a baby pink will suit a person who has a fair complexion and a light purple will suit someone with a wheatish or a darker skin shade."

Ways of selecting the right colour Make-up professional Meghna Butani says, "The right way to select a particular hue for yourself, especially a lip colour, is by testing the shade on the back of your hand. However, if you are planning to choose an eye shadow or a blush, it is always advisable to ask the lady at the sales counter to show you a tester which you can then put on and try out."



very romantic in their form.

Woody perfume: If you do not wish to go in for a fruity or a floral scent, you can always opt for a woody perfume. The strong scent is perfect for an evening wear and includes notes of warm musk, spicy wood, saffron, white and black pepper intertwined with patchouli. Keep these in mind

How many times have you walked into a perfume store and been baffled by the wide range of scents, thinking which one to buy? Well, there are a couple of things that one must keep in mind when choosing a perfume.

> The first step to choosing a perfume is understanding the base notes and the middle notes of the perfume which ultimately is the smell that you choose to wear.

> Always apply the scent on your wrists to understand the scent of the perfume better.

> Smell coffee beans between applying perfumes on your wrists so as to de-clog your nose.

> Remember that a perfume smells differently on every person.



**W**hile you may splurge on clothes, electronics and gadgets - this season go all out to buy a perfect perfume for yourself. Make yourself feel special with our guide to choosing the right fragrance for yourself.

**For men**  
Sporty perfume: For the ones who like sporty fragrances, a mixture of musk and bergamot is the perfect combination. It is an invigorating scent and keeps you fresh all day long.

**Classic perfume:** There is nothing that can make a man smell better than classic perfumes. Strong base notes in cedar wood, bergamot and rosemary are the best options when it comes to picking a classic perfume.

**Stoic perfume:** A strong yet unwavering

fragrance with notes of wood and earth are the perfect option for the festive season. You can also opt for floral notes with traditional spice for the day while for the evening, a combination of bergamot with patchouli and black pepper with tobacco will be a better option.

**For women**

**Fruity perfume:** A popular choice, the fruity scent works wonders during festive occasions. You can opt for the tangy ones - orange and lime combined with cedar wood or warm musk.

**Floral perfume:** Some of the floral fragrance which includes notes of jasmine and bergamot or rose with geranium or ylang ylang are popular amongst women. These perfumes ease the senses and are also

## Hair today, gone tomorrow

Hair has a personality of its own and not one that is easy to please. When your tresses behave well, you feel good. But a moody mane can give you stress. What's worse? Hair loss. Hair's...er... here's all the help you need.

**Q. When do I seek help?**

The popular notion is that if you shed around 100 hair strands a day, it is time to consult an expert. But there is no universal standard number. The rule: if you consistently, for a minimum period of two weeks, notice more hair loss than otherwise, take action. Sometimes, when you run a hand through your hair and strands detach easily, that too, is a red flag.

**Q. Does oiling help?**

Yes. The traditional champi (massage) with coconut oil has been proven to have tremendous benefits on hair and scalp. Coconut oil has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties that boost hair health. A good massage improves blood circulation in the scalp.

**Q. Do hair spas work for hair loss?**

Not really. Hair spa will not reduce hair loss. It helps with frizziness and dryness, as deep conditioners, serums and hair packs help in that. Though it does reduce hair breakage that usually happens while combing and washing hair.

**Q. Do touted wonder cures like saw palmetto work in controlling hair loss?**

Saw palmetto is a plant whose fruit extract is used to make medicines for hair loss. Believed to work in combating hair loss, it actually blocks an enzyme called 5 alpha reductase which can help in addressing thinning hair. However, it works better in male pattern hair loss. Do consult your dermatologist before trying it out.

**Q. Do DIY remedies or kitchen cures prevent or control hair loss?**

No matter how many articles you have read on social media about onion juice, kari patta or aloe vera helping in re-growing hair, the fact remains that these topical treatments affect just the texture and look of your hair. Hair density is not affected by topical

treatments.

**Q. Is there an anti-hair loss diet?**

Green foods provide biotin and red and orange foods have iron and antioxidants - all necessary for hair growth. For a hair-raising experience: eat eggs, fish and lean chicken, sprouts, soya, paneer and nuts such as almonds, walnuts, and omega-3 enriched flaxseeds. Multivitamins with B complex, vitamin C and iron can help combat hair loss,

but it is best to see a dermatologist before quaffing them down.

**Q. Does red light therapy work?**

Yes, it can stimulate hair growth. The most commonly used wavelengths for treating hair loss with red light therapy are in the range of 630-670 nanometers. The visible red light is capable of being absorbed by the

molecules of the hair follicle leading to possible re-growth, following a natural biological reaction. Try this with a reputed trichologist.

**Diet tip:** Control your sugar intake: it is a pro-inflammatory agent, which in excess may aggravate hair loss. Nutritional deficiencies and hormonal issues too can lead to a thinning crown



# Cops take Chetan Chaudhary to Pune's Lohagad fort to recreate crime scene

**Chetan Chaudhary, 22, co-accused in the Ketan Aggarwal murder case in Pune's Lohagad Fort, has been taken to the site by the police for recreation of the crime scene. The exercise is being treated as important to the investigation, days after a similar reconstruction involving Siya Goyal, the other accused.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Chetan Chaudhary, 22, co-accused in the Ketan Aggarwal murder case, was on Wednesday taken to Pune's Lohagad Fort by cops to reconstruct the crime scene as part of the investigation. Dressed in a black, striped T-shirt and white pants, Chetan was seen surrounded by police as he walked up the stairs to the fort.

Siya Goyal, 20, the other co-accused in the case, was also taken to the site on June 28 for reconstruction of the crime scene. She, in collusion with Chetan, killed her fiancé Ketan, 25, by pushing him off the fort. During her crime scene reconstruction, the police used a mannequin as part of the exercise. The dummy was pushed down the walls of the Lohagad Fort. Pune Rural Police will analyse Chetan's gait and use the



reconstructed video to compare with the CCTV footage from the fort. Gait analysis is a forensic method used to identify suspects by analysing the way they walk, especially when they cover their faces with a mask, hoodie or helmet to evade facial recognition. Chetan's CCTV footage from the fort showed him wearing a hoodie, with his face concealed behind sunglasses and a mask. Meanwhile, the police custody of Siya and

Chetan has been extended to July 3. During the court hearing on June 29, investigators said that multiple aspects of the case still need to be examined, including the exact crime location on the fort, deleted digital evidence, and the victim's missing passport. A police official said during the hearing that Chetan climbed the fort in a hoodie but later removed it, and remained in a black T-shirt. "While leaving, he put on the hoodie again," the investigators added, pointing out that by doing so Chetan believed he would avoid attention. Police said the 22-year-old then returned to Pune on the same scooter. Last week, investigators also questioned Siya's parents and brother at length and recorded their statements. Police sources said that Siya and Chetan first attempted to kill Ketan allegedly on June 14. Days

prior, they are believed to have conducted a practice run to figure out the execution of their plan.

The investigation so far has revealed alleged online searches, deleted messages and detailed planning before the realtor's killing. Investigators also found that Siya and Chetan searched YouTube and Google for various ways to kill Ketan before deciding pushing him off the Lohagad Fort would be easiest. According to investigators, Siya and Chetan opted for what they believed was the easiest way instead of risking social isolation and embarrassment. Siya allegedly told the police that she did not want to marry Ketan and thought that if he was killed, it would buy her time, at least three years, before she could think of marriage. Her boyfriend Chetan also wanted another two or three years.

## Delhi sizzles as 41°C, feels like 53°C, yet met dept says 'not a heatwave'

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Although the the India Meteorological Department said the city did not meet the criteria for a heat wave, residents baked under intense weather conditions on Tuesday as the "feels like" temperature climbed to 53.5 degrees Celsius at 5.30 pm.

The maximum temperature at Safdarjung, the city's base station, settled at 40.5 degrees Celsius, 3.1 notches above normal. Palam recorded a maximum of 41.0 degrees Celsius, 3.2 notches above normal, while Lodhi Road recorded 40.1 degrees Celsius, 3.1 notches above normal. Ridge was the hottest station at 41.5 degrees Celsius, 4.8 notches above normal, and Ayanagar recorded 40.1 degrees Celsius, 2.0 notches above normal.

Experts said that the dry westerly winds from Pakistan are keeping temperatures high, while southwesterly winds from the Arabian Sea are also reaching Delhi and increasing humidity.

"When these dry and moist air masses interact, clouds do form, but there is not enough moisture for widespread rainfall. By the time cloud formation takes place, usually around 4 or 5 pm, the day's maximum temperature has already been recorded. That is why both the maximum temperature and the 'feel-like' temperature have remained unusually high," Mahesh Palawat from Skymet said. The weather office said trace rainfall was recorded till 8.30 am at Safdarjung, Palam, Lodhi Road and Ayanagar, while Ridge did not receive any rain. No rainfall was recorded at Safdarjung, Lodhi Road and Ridge.

The minimum temperature at Safdarjung settled at 30.2 degrees Celsius, 2.3 notches above normal. Palam also recorded a minimum of 30.2 degrees Celsius, 2.4 notches above normal. "As per data, the heatwave criteria are satisfied only at one station over the subdivision of Haryana-Chandigarh-Delhi," the IMD said.

## 83K aspirants register for first phase of DU undergrad courses

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The University of Delhi received around 82,940 registrations for undergraduate admissions during the first phase of the Common Seat Allocation System (CSAS) for the 2026-27 academic session, officials said on Tuesday. The registration process began on June 26 for candidates who appeared in the Common University Entrance Test for Undergraduate programmes (CUET-UG) 2026. Admissions to 73 UG programmes and more than 100 BA programme combinations across 67 colleges will be conducted solely on the basis of CUET-UG scores, subject to the eligibility criteria.

To streamline the admission process and minimise errors, DU has introduced an automated data integration system through the Centre's API Setu. The system automatically imports key applicant details, including name, date of birth, photograph and signature, directly into the university's admission portal, reducing the need for manual data entry.

Applicants from the general, OBC-NCL and EWS categories are required to pay a one-time registration fee of ₹250, while candidates from the SC, ST and PwBD categories pay ₹100. Once the first phase concludes, candidates will proceed to Phase II, during which they will submit their preferred combinations of colleges and courses. They will also map their CUET subjects with the subjects studied in Class 12 to determine eligibility.

Meanwhile, DU has opened admissions under the extracurricular activities (ECA) quota, offering 1,370 seats across 14 categories. Theatre has the highest allocation with 123 seats, followed by Indian classical dance (125) and Indian vocal music (109).

**Seats under ECA quota**

Leading colleges such as Miranda House, Hindu College, Lady Shri Ram College, Hansraj College, Kirori Mal College, Ramjas College and Gargi College are offering seats under the ECA quota. As per UG bulletin, admissions under the ECA and sports quotas will be based on 25% weightage to CUET scores and 75% weightage to certificates & trials.

## Why is Delhi targeting bikes first in its EV drive?

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

For years, Delhi's electric vehicle policy remained parked in the slow lane, stalled by debates over hybrids, charging stations, and the economics of going fully electric. But when the capital finally hit the accelerator, it did not begin with luxury electric sedans or family SUVs. It chose the humble motorcycle and scooter.

From April 1, 2028, Delhi residents will no longer be able to register a new petrol-powered two-wheeler. Simply put, if one bought a bike after that date, it would have to be electric. The Rekha Gupta-led BJP government on Monday (June 29) announced the Delhi Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy. The government said that the aim of the policy is to achieve a minimum 30% electrification of Delhi's vehicle fleet by March 31, 2030, when the policy rolls out.

At first glance, the decision might appear unusual. Cars occupy more road space, consume more fuel and dominate conversations around electric mobility. Yet the Delhi government's new EV Policy makes motorcycles and scooters the centrepiece of its clean-air strategy.



The reason lies not in what occupies the most space on Delhi's roads, but in what occupies the largest share of them.

**DELHI'S POLLUTION PROBLEM IS WEARING A HELMET**

Delhi's air pollution is often blamed on diesel trucks, stubble burning of crops or construction dust. But transport remains one of the city's biggest pollution sources, particularly during the winters.

According to the latest report that was cited by the Delhi Cabinet while clearing the policy, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) revealed that vehicular emissions contributed around 23% of Delhi's PM2.5 pollution during winter, making transport the single largest source of pollution in the city.

And among vehicles, two-wheelers dominate the scenario. The CAQM estimated that around 67% of Delhi's entire vehicle stock consists of motorcycles and scooters. In other words, nearly two out of every three vehicles on Delhi's roads are two-wheelers. This sheer volume changes the pollution equation in the national capital.

## Jet Airways Staff To Get Full Provident Fund, Pension Dues In Setback For SBI

The SBI and seven other lenders had argued that provident fund, gratuity, and pension fund dues should form part of the liquidation estate and be distributed among all creditors under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

In a major relief for former Jet Airways employees, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) upheld an earlier order directing the airline's liquidator to pay provident fund (PF) and gratuity dues in full, while dismissing appeals filed by the State Bank of India (SBI) and seven other financial creditors.

The appellate tribunal also upheld a February 4 order of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), directing that May 20, 2020, be treated as the effective date for



calculating the 24 months' worth of workmen's dues entitled to priority under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

The lenders had argued that provident fund, gratuity, and pension fund dues should form part of the liquidation estate and be distributed among all

creditors under the IBC. They also contended that such dues could be excluded only if dedicated provident fund and gratuity funds existed at the commencement of liquidation.

Rejecting the argument, the NCLAT ruled that employees' statutory dues would remain outside the liquidation estate, protecting them from competing creditor claims.

The banks had also sought to include the period spent in litigation while calculating the 24-month window for workmen's dues. Had that plea been accepted, employees would have lost their priority status for payment under the IBC.

## Vijay government approaches Supreme Court against complete cow slaughter ban

**The Tamil Nadu government has approached the Supreme Court challenging a Madras High Court order imposing a blanket ban on cow slaughter, arguing that the High Court's directive goes beyond the legal framework and seeks relief.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The Tamil Nadu government has moved the Supreme Court challenging a Madras High Court order imposing a complete ban on cow slaughter in the state except in cases permitted under Section 4 of the Tamil Nadu Animal Preservation Act, 1958, which allows the slaughter of a cow only if it is over 10 years old, unfit for work or breeding and certified as such by the competent authority.

In its plea, the state government argued that the High Court had gone beyond the framework of the law by directing a blanket prohibition on cow slaughter, contending that the order exceeded the scope of the provisions laid down under the Act.

The challenge stems from a May 27 order by a division bench of Justice GR Swaminathan and Justice V



Lakshminarayan, which, while observing that animal slaughter could take place only in designated slaughterhouses, also directed the state's Chief Secretary and senior police officials to ensure that no cow or calf was slaughtered on Bakrid "or on any other day."

The court had directed authorities to issue appropriate instructions to officials across the state to ensure compliance with the order. According to a report in

Live Law, the state government contended that these directions resulted in an internally contradictory judgment. The High Court passed the order on a petition filed by Surya, state general secretary of the Indu Makkal Katchi, who sought directions to prevent the alleged illegal slaughter of cows in public places. The petitioner claimed that despite submitting a representation to the authorities, no action had been taken.

While considering the matter, the High Court referred to Article 48 of the Constitution, which directs the state to take steps to prohibit the slaughter of cows, calves and other milch and draught cattle.

It further observed that Section 4 of the Tamil Nadu Animal Preservation Act permits the slaughter of a cow only if it is over 10 years old, unfit for work or

breeding, and certified as such by the competent authority.

Holding that the provision must be interpreted strictly in light of Article 48, the court ruled that slaughter could be permitted only after obtaining the prescribed certificate.

The High Court based its ruling in part on a government order that said a ban on cow slaughter was necessary to improve milk production and support the rural economy. The bench also relied on Supreme Court judgments holding that cow slaughter is not an essential religious practice associated with Bakrid. "The Hon'ble Supreme Court observed that many Muslims do not sacrifice cows on Bakrid day. Sacrifice of a cow on that day is not an obligatory overt act for a Muslim to exhibit his religious belief and idea," the bench noted.

## GST collections up by nearly 14% to Rs 1.95 lakh crore in June, driven by strong import revenues

New Delhi.(Agency)

India's gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections increased by 13.9% year-on-year to Rs 1.95 lakh crore in June, primarily driven by a sharp rise in tax receipts from imports that pushed the overall growth despite relatively modest gains in domestic collections. According to official data released on Tuesday, gross GST revenues stood at Rs 1.95 lakh crore in June, compared to Rs 1.71 lakh crore collected in the same month last year. While domestic GST collections grew 6.5% year-on-year to Rs 1.34 lakh crore, revenues from imported goods recorded a much stronger expansion of 34.6%, reaching Rs 60,038 crore and emerging as the principal contributor to the monthly increase. Manoj Mishra, Partner and Tax Controversy Management Leader, Grant Thornton Bharat said "While the sharp 25.2% growth in import GST provided the primary boost, domestic collections continued to expand steadily, indicating that compliance and formalisation remain strong. Equally noteworthy is the 28.4% increase in refunds, reflecting a conscious effort to improve liquidity for businesses, particularly exporters, without compromising revenue buoyancy. This suggests that the tax administration is increasingly balancing efficient revenue collection with timely taxpayer facilitation."

After adjusting for refunds, net GST collections grew by 11.2% to Rs 1.62 lakh crore in June from Rs 1.45 lakh crore a year earlier. Refund payments stood at Rs 32,436 crore, up 29.1% from the corresponding period last year.

## M&M total sales jumps 37 pc to 1.06 lakh units in June

MUMBAI.(Agency)

Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) Ltd on Wednesday reported a 37 per cent increase in total sales, including exports, to 1,06,207 units in June, compared with 77,742 units in the same month last year.

The company's domestic SUV sales rose 28 per cent year-on-year to 60,393 units during the month from 47,306 units in June 2025, M&M said in a statement. Commercial vehicle domestic sales stood at 26,076 units in June, registering a 35 per cent year-on-year growth, the statement added. Meanwhile, in a separate statement, the Farm Equipment Business (FEB) of the Mahindra Group reported total tractor sales of 59,935 units in June 2026, up 12 per cent from 53,392 units in the corresponding month last year. Within this, domestic sales logged 12 per cent growth year-on-year to 58,177 units from 51,769 tractors in June 2025, it said. "While it is early to assess the full impact of emerging El Nino conditions, strong government interventions like sustained fertiliser subsidies and targeted support measures at the local level are expected to mitigate some of the risk to farmers and cushion its impact to the Kharif season," said Veejay Nakra, President, Farm Equipment Business, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. In export markets, the company sold 1,758 tractors, registering an 8 per cent year-on-year growth, the company said.

## Hyundai Motor India posts total sales of 51,335 units in June

MUMBAI.(Agency)

Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) on Wednesday reported total monthly sales of 51,335 units in June 2026. This includes domestic sales of 39,635 units and exports of 11,700 units, HMIL said in a regulatory filing. Commenting on June 2026 sales, HMIL Managing Director & CEO Tarun Garg said the company achieved the total numbers "despite facing a production loss of 13,900 units owing to a fire incident at one of the supplier's manufacturing facilities which led to a temporary disruption in production".

"HMIL has taken all necessary steps to ensure production normalcy, including arranging automotive parts from alternate source locations," he added. Garg further said, "Our production operations have returned to normal across facilities since June 22, 2026. We expect to recover the loss in June production volume within Q2 of FY26-27."

## Rupee falls 19 paise to 94.75 against US dollar in early trade

MUMBAI.(Agency)

The rupee fell 19 paise to 94.75 against the American currency in early trade on Wednesday, weighed down by the strength of the American currency in the overseas market. Forex traders said whenever fresh foreign inflows enter the country, the central bank is likely to use the opportunity to rebuild its reserve position rather than allowing the rupee to strengthen too much. Moreover, uncertainty prevailed over the progress of US-Iran peace talks keeping a geopolitical risk premium in the market. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 94.67, then touched 94.75 against the US dollar, registering a loss of 19 paise from its previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee depreciated by 5 paise to close at 94.56 against the US dollar. "The global dollar is also adding pressure. After the US Federal Reserve maintained a cautious stance in its latest policy meeting, the Dollar Index has continued to hold above the 101 mark," CR Forex Advisors MD Amit Pabari said. As long as the dollar stays firm globally, the rupee is likely to remain under pressure, he added. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 101.34, up 0.15 per cent. Meanwhile, Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading higher by 0.38 per cent at USD 73.23 per barrel in futures trade.

# India's manufacturing growth moderates in June amid weaker demand: PMI

New Delhi.(Agency)

India's manufacturing sector growth eased in June as new business orders and international sales rose at softer rates, leading to slower expansion in output, employment and purchasing activity, a monthly survey said on Wednesday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell from 55.0 in May to 54.2 in June, indicating the second-weakest improvement in the sector's health since mid-2022. The PMI is a gauge of overall manufacturing conditions derived from measures of new orders, output, employment, supplier delivery times and stocks of purchases. In PMI terms, a reading above 50 indicates expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction. The survey noted that while several firms reported improved demand conditions, others pointed to subdued client appetite and strong market competition. "India's manufacturing PMI eased to 54.2 in June from 55.0 in May, signalling continued



expansion but at a slower pace. The moderation suggests demand has cooled slightly after the earlier surge linked to the Middle East conflict," said Pranjal Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC. Growth slowed across output, new orders,

of subdued sales in some European markets. On the price front, firms became more cautious about raising prices as demand softened. Output charges rose only moderately, marking the least pronounced increase in three months. Both input and output price indices declined, pointing to easing inflationary pressures as geopolitical disruptions receded, Bhandari said. On the employment front, stable workloads and weaker demand led firms to pause or scale back hiring. A lack of capacity pressures also limited recruitment at the end of the first fiscal quarter.

Backlogs of work were broadly unchanged, while employment grew at its weakest rate so far in 2026, the survey noted.

Investor and business confidence also weakened in June amid concerns over demand and market conditions. The proportion of firms expecting output growth in the year ahead halved compared with May, with many manufacturers reporting neutral expectations, resulting in a five-month low in overall optimism.

## IndiGo's new budget-friendly 'Lite' fare for cabin baggage flyers takes off July 15

According to the airline, the fare is designed for passengers travelling with only cabin baggage. By paying only for the services they use, customers can have greater control over their travel costs.

New Delhi.(Agency)

IndiGo has introduced a new budget-friendly fare called IndiGo Lite for Economy Class passengers. The new option is aimed at travellers who fly with only cabin baggage and do not want to pay for services they do not use.

The airline said IndiGo Lite will be available for booking from July 1, 2026, through its direct channels, including the IndiGo website, mobile app and contact centre. Travel under this fare will begin from July 15, 2026. The new fare will be offered on both domestic and international non-stop flights. It will be



available for one-way, return and multi-city bookings, and can be booked for both adults and children. According to the airline, the fare is designed for passengers travelling with only cabin baggage. By paying only for the services they use, customers can have greater control over their travel costs. Announcing the launch on X, IndiGo said, "Travel smart. Travel Lite. Meet IndiGo Lite – a fare designed for those who carry less, wait less, and do more." The airline believes the new fare will appeal to passengers looking for a simpler and more affordable travel option. Meanwhile, at the time of writing, shares of InterGlobe Aviation, IndiGo's parent company, were trading 0.25% lower at Rs 5,355.50 on Wednesday.

## Ola Electric doubles QoQ growth in Q1 FY27; June vehicle registrations at 16,144 units

The company registered 43,719 vehicles in the first quarter of FY2027, up from 22,252 units in the January-March quarter.

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

Ola Electric on Wednesday said its electric two-wheeler registrations nearly doubled sequentially in the April-June quarter, aided by improving retail execution, stronger product availability and sustained demand. The company registered 43,719 vehicles in the first quarter of FY2027, up from 22,252 units in the January-March quarter, according to the government VAHAN registration data cited by the company. June vehicle registrations stood at 16,144 units, the highest monthly tally in recent quarters, capping a quarter of steady recovery in

sales momentum. "The sustained momentum reflects the success of our operational improvements, strong product portfolio and continued customer



preference for Ola Electric," a company spokesperson said. The Bengaluru-based electric scooter maker said the sequential growth was driven by improvements in retail execution, customer demand and product availability following operational

initiatives undertaken over recent quarters. Ola Electric said it expects India's electric two-wheeler market to continue expanding, supported by rising consumer preference for electric mobility, favourable operating economics over internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and increasing awareness of energy security and sustainability. The company said it will continue to focus on expanding EV adoption through its vertically integrated technology and manufacturing platform, advanced battery technology and direct-to-customer sales network.

Ola Electric, India's largest electric two-wheeler maker by cumulative sales, manufactures vehicles and key components at its Futurefactory in Tamil Nadu and operates a battery research centre in Bengaluru. It sells vehicles through a company-owned retail network across the country.

## Nayara Energy slashes petrol price by Rs 5, diesel by Rs 3: Will IOC, HPCL, BPCL follow?

With global crude price easing and supplies becoming normal, Nayara Energy has taken the first step by slashing the retail prices of petrol and diesel. The question is will the Indian PSU oil marketing companies such as IOC, HPCL and BPCL follow suit?

Kolkata.(Agency)

Nayara Energy has cut retail process of petrol and diesel by Rs 5 per litre and Rs 3 per litre, being the first petrol-fuel company in India to do so after the peace process in West Asia and the resumption of movement of shipping lines in the Strait of Hormuz. Nayara Energy is the country's largest private sector petrol fuel retailer. This also happens to be the first instance of reduction in retail fuel prices by any company in more than two years in India. The pricing decision follows a drop in the price of global benchmark crude oil price decline from above \$110 to \$72-\$73 a barrel. Incidentally, OMCs slashed prices of the



commercial LPG cylinder from today by Rs 174. The prices of domestic LPG cylinders, however, are yet to be cut.

**India buying crude below \$70** Significantly, the average price of Indian crude oil basket have dropped below the \$70/barrel mark, which is even less than the pre-war levels in mid-end February this year. According to the PPAC, Crude Oil Indian Basket as on June 26 stood at \$68.86/barrel. "Crude Oil prices are

average of daily prices of respective month. Average for the current month are till date," says the petroleum ministry arm PPAC. The Indian basket of crude came down quickly in June. It was \$75.28/bbl on June 22, \$76.22 per barrel on June 18 and \$78.66 level as on June 16. Significantly, the Indian basket stood at \$70.70 per barrel on February 19.

**When will PSU OMCs cut petrol, diesel prices?**

The moot question now, will Indian PSU OMCs such as Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation cut prices now? So far these retailers have kept prices unchanged. These together account for more than 90% of the fuel pumps in the country. Incidentally, Nayara Energy was the first retailers to hike fuel prices after the outbreak of conflicts in West Asia on February 28. On March 26, it raised petrol prices by Rs 5 per litre and diesel by Rs 3 per litre. IOC, HPCL and BPCL hiked retail prices by a cumulative Rs 7.50 per litre in a few steps in late May.

**Retail petrol prices and inflation**

If the retail prices of petrol and diesel are reduced, it will help cool inflation. It will be of great help especially at a time when food inflation can raise its head, thanks to the super El Nino that is upon us. However, the government might think it prudent to recover the revenue it lost by cutting excise to the extent of Rs 10 per litre on both fuels to prevent a spillover of costly crude oil to the retail level before the assembly elections in April. It could also allow the OMCs to compensate for under-recoveries.

## Short news

**Cloudburst triggers flash floods in J&K's Doda, cuts off several villages**

Srinagar.(Agency)

A cloudburst triggered flash floods in parts of Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district on Tuesday, with the Bhalesa area among the worst affected. Torrential floodwaters carrying mud and debris washed over roads, severing connectivity to several interior villages and prompting authorities to launch clearance operations, assess the damage and advise people to avoid travel until the situation is brought under control.

Last year, at least 45 people, including two Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel, were killed, and 167 others injured after a major cloudburst struck Chositi village in the adjoining Kishtwar district, triggering flash floods and causing widespread destruction.

More than 220 people were reported missing as rescue teams continued efforts to trace survivors. The incident took place along the route of the Machail Mata Yatra to the Himalayan shrine of Mata Chandi, throwing the pilgrimage route into disarray. The flooding affected pilgrims who had travelled nearly 17 km of the yatra, which begins at Gulabgarh town and started on July 25 this year.

Mud-filled floodwaters swept through homes and temporary camps used by pilgrims at Chashoti village, which is around 8 km from the shrine. The scale of the destruction was severe, with large areas hit by the sudden flow of water and debris. Among those killed were two jawans of the CISF.

**PIL filed in Andhra Pradesh HC against allotment of temple land for Vizag Data Centre**

VISAKHAPATNAM.(Agency)

A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has been filed in the High Court challenging the State government's allotment of 160 acres of endowment land to M/s Vizag Hyperscale Data Centre Park Limited for a proposed data centre project near Visakhapatnam.

The petition, filed by environmental activist and Jal Biradari National Convener Bolisetty Satyanarayana, contends that the land, spread across Survey No 275 of Adavivaram and Survey No 26 of Mudasarlova, belongs to the Simhachalam Devasthanam and should not have been transferred for commercial purposes.

The petitioner has alleged that the allotment violates environmental regulations, including the provisions relating to the Kambalakonda Eco-Sensitive Zone and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006.

It has also raised concerns over the project's proximity to the Mudasarlova reservoir catchment, claiming that the development could have adverse ecological and environmental consequences.

The PIL has sought cancellation of the land allotment and the environmental clearance granted to the project. It has also requested the court to direct the authorities to restore the land to the Simhachalam Devasthanam and restrain any construction activity until a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment is carried out. The matter is pending admission before the High Court.

**LoP Ashoka accuses Karnataka government of creating hurdles for SIR**

BENGALURU.(Agency)

Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly R Ashoka alleged that the state government is creating hurdles for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and in some cases non-officials, including Congress leaders, have been appointed as Booth Level Officers (BLO). The SIR of electoral rolls started in Karnataka on Tuesday.

Speaking to media persons in Bengaluru, the LoP said that, as per the rules, only government officials can be appointed as the BLOs, but persons who are not government employees and Congress leaders have been appointed as BLOs in around 20 places in Jayanagar in Bengaluru.

He also accused the Congress government of not deploying an adequate number of BLOs for the work. Instead of the required 30 BLOs, only 10 or 11 BLOs were seen working in assembly segments in the state capital, he said, adding that the state government seems to be trying to create hurdles at the beginning of the process.

The state government is not interested in removing the names of dead voters and illegal immigrants from Bangladesh from the electoral rolls, he said and added that the purpose of SIR is to ensure that only genuine voters remain in the electoral rolls. The BJP leader said that in Chamarajpet, the BLOs during their door-to-door visits were displaying the photograph of Congress MLA Zameer Ahmed Khan.

The BJP leader said Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has released more grants only to areas with Congress MLAs. While Congress MLAs' constituencies receive Rs 100 crore, BJP MLAs' areas get only Rs 40 to 50 lakh, he said and added that there are more BJP MLAs in Bengaluru and the discrimination must be ended immediately.

**8 killed, 22 injured as bus rams truck, bursts into flames in Rajasthan's Dausa**

The incident took place between 2.30 am and 3 am when the bus crashed into a truck and caught fire near Rajasthan's Dausa district. Initially, six bodies were confirmed before the deaths rose to eight.

Dausa.(Agency)

As many as eight people were killed after a passenger bus rams a truck and turned into a massive fire on the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway in Rajasthan in the early hours of Wednesday. At least 22 passengers sustained injuries in the horrific incident.

The bus, carrying around 37 passengers, was travelling from Uttarakhand's Haridwar to Madhya Pradesh's Indore when the accident took place between 2.30 am and 3 am. According to officials, the injured were rushed to nearby hospitals for treatment. Six bodies were initially shifted to the district hospital as rescue and recovery operations continued. India Today correspondent Sharat Kumar reached the spot and talked to the eyewitnesses. Police, fire services and emergency response teams reached the spot soon after the incident and carried out rescue operations. Dausa Superintendent of Police



Piyush Dixit was present at the accident site to supervise the operation. The police said that the injured passengers were rushed to the

hospital immediately. Former CM of Rajasthan Ashok Gehlot expressed condolences to the family of the deceased.

**Mangaluru woman, her daughters killed as rain-triggered landslide brings down house**

Mangaluru.(Agency)

Three members of a family, including two young girls, were killed and three others were rescued after a rain-triggered landslide destroyed a house in Mangaluru in the early hours of Wednesday, officials said.

The house was buried under a mound of earth after heavy overnight rain caused a landslide in the Nagori area. Officials said six family members were trapped under the debris when the structure collapsed.

Residents, Fire and Emergency Services personnel and other rescue teams rushed to the spot and began efforts to pull out those trapped. The deceased were identified as Shanta, 46, her eight-year-old daughter Anamika Chaurasia, and four-year-old daughter Pari.

Three others, Balkrishna, 48, Alka, 14, and



Anusha, 11, were rescued alive from the debris and taken to a nearby hospital for treatment, officials said. The family, originally from Bihar, had been living in the Kankanady area for the past two decades. Preliminary findings showed that a large mass of soil from the hill above the house

gave way due to incessant rain, causing the house to collapse.

Personnel of the National Disaster Response Force later joined the search and rescue operation. After the bodies of the three victims were recovered from the debris, the operation was concluded. Dakshina Kannada Deputy Commissioner Darshan visited the site, reviewed the situation and received updates from officials leading the rescue effort. The district administration has urged people living in hilly and landslide-prone areas to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions as heavy rain continues in the coastal district.

Officials have also started a study of the area around the site to assess whether it is safe for residents. The incident left three members of the family dead and three injured, while authorities continued to monitor safety risks in the surrounding area amid ongoing heavy rain.

**Bulldozer action on 4 Rajasthan hotels linked to 13-year-old girl's gang rape**

Authorities in Sri Ganganagar demolished four hotels allegedly used in the assault of a 13-year-old girl. The action came as outrage grew over allegations involving more than 30 men and 12 arrests so far.

Sriganganagar.(Agency)

Authorities in Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagar demolished four hotels late Tuesday night that were allegedly used in the sexual assault of a 13-year-old girl, as public anger continued to mount over one of the state's most shocking recent rape cases.

The action was carried out by the district administration and police, with bulldozers deployed to raze the hotel structures linked to the alleged crime. Superintendent of Police Harishankar said the accused would face the strictest possible punishment.

According to the police, the survivor was allegedly sold to a hotel owner by a rickshaw puller after she went missing from her home on June 18. Investigators allege that she was then repeatedly raped by more than 30 men over five days at multiple hotels across the city.

The FIR states that several hotel owners and operators were involved in the



exploitation of the minor and that attempts were made to suppress the crime. The girl has also alleged that she was forced to consume alcohol whenever she experienced pain from the repeated assaults.

Police have arrested 12 accused so far, while the investigation is continuing to identify and apprehend the remaining suspects.

The alleged gang rape has triggered widespread outrage in the district, with residents demanding the demolition of illegal hotels and capital punishment for those responsible. The Congress has also staged protests, accusing the administration of failing to prevent the crime and seeking strict action against all those involved.

**Calcutta High Court seeks government report on steps taken to prevent 'attacks' on Opposition leaders**

Directs police to register FIRs in all instances of eggs being hurled

Kolkata.(Agency)

The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday directed the state government to file a comprehensive report regarding the steps taken to prevent the alleged attacks on political leaders and workers and directed police officers to register FIRs in all instances of eggs being hurled at Opposition leaders.

The HC also directed the police to follow the applicable guidelines and take necessary steps in the event of any untoward incident.

The bench of Acting Chief Justice Tapabrata Chakraborty and Justice Partha Sarathi Sen issued the directions while hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) regarding alleged assaults on TMC MPs, MLAs, councillors



and workers after the Assembly elections. The HC also directed the state government to submit an affidavit before it on July 20 stating the steps it has taken and the number of FIRs the police registered in connection with egg pelting. Senior Advocate Kalyan Banerjee,

appearing in support of the PIL, pressed for interim directions, contending that attacks on political workers had become a "recurring phenomenon". "Pass orders... people are endangered every day... One cannot come out of the airport," he submitted.

Additional Advocate General Rajdeep Majumdar, appearing for the state argued, "The state does not support these at all. Where complaints are reported to the police, the police are taking action. An FIR will be filed and an investigation will be conducted. Action is being taken against the accused. Two weeks should be given. The state will inform what action the police are taking." Banerjee further alleged, "The police are

abetting. They are encouraging mob lynching. A state minister is asking to throw eggs. Bulldozers are being driven in the presence of MLAs. We will prove it with videos and pictures. They are being paraded around in shorts and with a rope around their waist. What does the court think, is there rule of law in the state? Immediate interim orders should be passed. Otherwise the police will not take any action."

Majumdar said, "Until a complaint is filed, it is not possible for the police to take any action... the angry crowd is doing all this." Hearing both the sides, Acting Chief Justice Tapabrata Chakraborty observed, "We will give directions to the state. But it is not possible to give interim directions at this time."

**Suspected of affair, Telangana woman stabs sleeping husband to death in front of son**

Hyderabad.(Agency)

A 38-year-old man was allegedly stabbed to death by his wife while he slept at their home in front of their youngest son in Telangana on Sunday night, with locals alleging the killing was triggered by a suspected extramarital relationship involving the accused.

The deceased, identified as Nagesh, was allegedly attacked with a knife by his wife, Kavitha, at their residence in a village in Mahabubnagar district. According to police, the couple had been married for around 15 years and have three sons.

Police said the attack took place while Nagesh was asleep inside the house. While the couple's eldest son was away at a college hostel, one of their younger sons was sleeping outside the house, and the youngest son was inside when the incident unfolded. According to local residents, Nagesh cried out for help, saying his wife was attacking him, prompting the couple's youngest son to rush out and allegedly witness the assault.

The child's screams alerted neighbours, who rushed to the residence and assembled outside the house. After continuous knocking on the door, neighbours said Kavitha eventually opened it, allowing them to enter the house, where they found Nagesh lying in a pool of blood.

Neighbours rushed him to Mahabubnagar District Hospital in an auto-rickshaw. As his condition was critical, doctors referred him to Osmania General Hospital in Hyderabad, where he later died during treatment.

Local residents have alleged that the murder may have been linked to a suspected extramarital relationship involving the accused. However, police have not confirmed this angle and said the motive behind the killing remains under investigation. Devarakadra Circle Inspector Ramakrishna Reddy said Kavitha was taken into custody after the incident and a case was registered.

**VB-GRAM G scheme launch in Kadapa village on July 2**

KADAPA.(Agency)

The Union Government's new rural employment programme, Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G Ram G) will officially replace the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) from July 1.

The scheme will be launched at Mukkavaripalle village in Obulavaripalle mandal of Railway Kodur constituency in the erstwhile Kadapa district on July 2 in the presence of Union Minister for Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, and Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan.

Interestingly, Andhra Pradesh is once again hosting the launch of a landmark rural employment programme. MGNREGS was inaugurated on February 2, 2006, at Bandlapalli village in Anantapur district by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Union Rural Development Minister Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, and the late Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy.

Although different political parties are in power at the Centre and in the State now, Andhra Pradesh has once again been chosen as the launch venue for the revamped rural employment programme.

The new VB-G Ram G scheme to replace MGNREGS scheme has been introduced with the objective of strengthening rural livelihoods while preventing distress migration by creating employment opportunities within villages.

## NEWS BOX

## Koeman calls time on Netherlands managerial tenure after Round of 32 World Cup exit

New Delhi. (Agency)

Ronald Koeman has stepped down as Netherlands head coach following the Dutch side's shock FIFA World Cup 2026 Round of 32 elimination to Morocco, bringing an end to his second spell in charge of the national team.

The 63-year-old announced his decision in an emotional Instagram post on Tuesday, a day after the Netherlands suffered a heartbreaking penalty shootout defeat in Monterrey. The Dutch had taken the lead in the 72nd minute but conceded a dramatic stoppage-time equaliser before losing 3-2 on penalties, crashing out before the Round of 16 for the first time in 12 World Cup appearances. "Last night, I made the decision to end my tenure as head coach of the Dutch national team," Koeman wrote. "We all dreamed of a World Cup in which we would make history. That didn't happen. No one is more disappointed about that than I am. As head coach, you bear that responsibility."

Koeman also reflected on a managerial career that included spells at clubs such as Ajax, PSV, Valencia, Southampton, Everton and Barcelona, along with two stints in charge of the Netherlands. He said he felt "proud and grateful" for the opportunities he had received



but admitted the manner of his departure from the national team was painful. The Dutch entered the tournament ranked eighth in the FIFA rankings and topped Group F with victories over Sweden and Tunisia, alongside a draw with Japan. Despite Morocco being ranked one place higher, the Netherlands were widely expected to progress to the last 16 before their dramatic exit. Koeman's resignation followed mounting criticism over the team's performances throughout the tournament. Dutch media questioned the side's inconsistent displays, accusing them of sluggish build-up play and a lack of intensity despite securing top spot in the group. He also hinted that his coaching career may be nearing its end, revealing that his wife's health battle had altered his perspective on life. "Football has been my life, but health is priceless," Koeman wrote, thanking his wife, Bartina, for encouraging him to continue despite her illness. Dutch football association technical director Nigel de Jong acknowledged the campaign had fallen well below expectations.

## Kylian Mbappe makes World Cup knockouts his own as France crush Sweden in Round of 32

New York. (Agency)

Kylian Mbappe has long made the World Cup his stage. On Tuesday night in New York New Jersey, he added another chapter to an already remarkable legacy.

The France captain struck twice in a commanding 3-0 victory over Sweden to send Les Bleus into the Round of 16, extending his record for the most goals scored in World Cup knockout matches. His brace also took him to 18 goals in World Cup history, one shy of Lionel Messi's tally, while drawing level with the Argentine on six goals in the race for this edition's Golden Boot. Mbappe currently leads the standings by virtue of two assists. Bradley Barcola added France's second goal as Didier Deschamps' men underlined their status as one of the tournament favourites and booked a meeting with Paraguay in Philadelphia on July 4. **KNOCKOUT KING**

The World Cup has consistently brought the



best out of Mbappe, but the knockout rounds have become his true domain.

With Sweden determined to frustrate France, the 27-year-old once again found the breakthrough when it mattered most. After a patient first-half display in which Les Bleus repeatedly threatened without reward, Mbappe finally unlocked the contest moments before halftime. Receiving the ball inside the penalty area after neat work between Michael Olise and Ousmane Dembele from a short corner, Mbappe shifted the ball onto his right foot with trademark quickness before drilling an unstoppable effort beyond Jacob Widell Zetterstrom.

Rather than soak in the applause, Mbappe sprinted straight towards Didier Deschamps, embracing his manager, who had only recently returned to the France camp after attending his mother's funeral. Soon the entire French squad surrounded their coach, offering a touching reminder of the togetherness that has become one of the team's defining qualities.

## Mexico secure first knockout win in 40 years, oust Ecuador to reach last 16

**Azteca was rocking long before kick-off and the celebrations continued well after the final whistle as Mexico beat Ecuador 2-0 to register their first FIFA World Cup knockout victory in 40 years and book a place in the last 16.**

New Delhi. (Agency)

Azteca found its voice long before kick-off and never stopped singing. Even a one-hour delay caused by thunderstorms could not quieten the famous stadium as Mexico delivered a night their supporters had waited four decades to witness. Javier Aguirre's side defeated Ecuador 2-0 to secure their first FIFA World Cup knockout victory since 1986 and book their place in the Round of 16.

powered his header beyond Verbruggen to send the match into extra time. Roared on by more than 80,000 fans, the co-hosts produced their most complete display of the tournament, with Julian Quinones and Raul Jimenez striking in a dominant first half before a disciplined defensive performance sealed another clean sheet.

Mexico 2-0 Ecuador, FIFA World Cup 2026: Highlights The victory ended Mexico's seven-match losing streak in World Cup knockout fixtures dating back to 1994 and set up a Round of 16 clash at the Azteca on Sunday against either England or DR Congo. "A really good first half and in the second half we managed to stay calm behind the ball," Aguirre said. "Judging by the atmosphere and how happy everyone is, I'm convinced there's a real bond between the fans and the team."

The match eventually got underway after a one-hour delay because of lightning around the stadium, but Mexico wasted little time asserting themselves. They pressed aggressively, moved the ball with confidence and forced Ecuador deep inside their own half from the opening whistle. Raul Jimenez nearly rewarded the home crowd inside the opening minutes, peeling away to meet Luis Romo's inviting cross before glancing a header narrowly wide. Teenager Gilberto Mora then came within inches of producing one of the goals of the tournament, whipping a fierce effort from a tight angle just beyond

Hernan Galindez's far post. Ecuador briefly threatened against the run of play when Gonzalo Plata sparked a swift counter-attack and John Yeboah skipped past his marker



before drilling an angled effort against the outside of the post. Mexico's breakthrough finally arrived in the 22nd minute. Roberto Alvarado threaded a perfectly weighted pass through Ecuador's high press and Quinones shrugged off Willian Pacho before opening his body and firing an unstoppable finish into

the top corner for his third goal of the tournament.

**AZTECA CELEBRATES**

The Azteca erupted again nine minutes later after Ecuador surrendered possession on the edge of their own penalty area. Jimenez started the move himself, exchanged passes with Quinones and rifled a first-time finish into the top corner for his 47th international goal, moving within five of Javier Hernandez's all-time Mexico scoring record.

Mexico continued to play with freedom and confidence, while Ecuador needed an excellent save from Raul Rangel to deny Yeboah before the interval. Aguirre's men went into half-time with a deserved two-goal advantage after producing arguably their best 45 minutes of the tournament. The second half began with thousands of Mexico supporters chanting "Y si s?" ("What if?"), a slogan that has become the team's rallying cry as belief spread around the packed Azteca that this could finally be the year El Tri ended their long-standing World Cup hoodoo.

## Serena Williams trolled for cancelling press conference after Wimbledon heartbreak

**Serena Williams came under fire on social media after cancelling her post-match press conference following a heartbreaking first-round exit at The Championships, Wimbledon on Tuesday.**

New Delhi. (Agency)

Serena Williams came under fire on social media after cancelling her post-match press conference following her emotional first-round exit at the Wimbledon Championships on Tuesday. The 23-time Grand Slam champion returned to Grand Slam singles for the first time in nearly four years, but her comeback ended in a 6-3, 6-7(6), 6-3 defeat to 20-year-old Australian Maya Joint on Centre Court. While fans applauded Williams' spirited display against an opponent 24 years younger, many were left surprised after she skipped her scheduled media interaction. Williams had looked on course to produce a memorable comeback after saving

a match point in the second-set tie-break to level the contest. She also earned an early break in the deciding set before Joint recovered to win five of the final six games and seal the biggest victory of her career in



two hours and 22 minutes. Rather than speaking to reporters, Williams issued a brief statement through tournament organisers, expressing her gratitude for getting another opportunity to compete at the All England Club. "It was really great to be back at Wimbledon. I never expected to be here. The atmosphere was amazing. Walking

out was amazing. I definitely relished it and missed it and enjoyed the moment more than anything." As news of Serena Williams' decision to skip her post-match press conference spread, many fans voiced their disappointment on social media. Among those critical of the move was Spanish journalist Jos Morán, who argued that speaking to the media is an essential responsibility for professional tennis players. Writing on X, Morán said: "Serena Williams won't give press on her return to tennis four years later. Speaking in front of journalists might not be the most fun thing in the world, but it's a good way to reach people and promote this tournament amid a World Cup, with how damn tough it's been."

Tennis players also need to realize that this is part of their job too. Tennis is where it is thanks to the people who watch us. If nobody talked and stories got made up, nobody would get hooked on this. For a legend like Serena not to speak today, on a day like this, is a huge shame."

## Stan Wawrinka fights back tears, chokes on words in heartbreaking Wimbledon goodbye

New Delhi. (Agency)

Stan Wawrinka's Wimbledon journey came to an emotional end on Tuesday as the three-time Grand Slam champion fought back tears after his final appearance at the All England Club, receiving a standing ovation following a spirited first-round defeat to Matteo Berrettini. The 41-year-old Swiss, who announced in December that 2026 would be the final season of his career, signed off from Wimbledon after a hard-fought 7-6(7), 6-7(16), 7-6(7), 7-6(5) loss to former finalist Berrettini. Playing in the main draw for the 19th and last time after receiving a wild card, Wawrinka produced flashes of the tennis that made him one of the game's most feared shot-makers. The pair entertained a packed No. 1 Court with a contest that featured a marathon 34-point second-set tie-break. Wawrinka's trademark one-handed backhand repeatedly drew applause, but Berrettini's powerful serve

proved decisive in the closing moments. After the two embraced at the net, Wawrinka struggled to contain his emotions as he walked off the grass courts of



Wimbledon for the final time. "It is never easy to say goodbye to something that you love so much," Wawrinka said. "I am grateful. I would like to thank everybody because I had the chance to play one last time

here. I couldn't have dreamed of a better goodbye. The former world No. 3 admitted that retirement is a difficult reality to accept, even though he knows the moment has arrived. "I don't want to retire but I know it is time for me to stop," he said. "One of the reasons why I kept playing for so long was to enjoy the moments like tonight." Wawrinka said the connection with fans has been one of the biggest reasons he continued competing well into his 40s. "For me, it's the best feeling ever to see the young kids, first, being in tournaments, and of course supporting me. That's always going to be special," Wawrinka said. "One of the reasons why I kept playing for so long is because of the fans and because of the emotion I can get and share with them when I'm playing matches."

"Tonight, again, was really special. Amazing support, amazing atmosphere, playing against Matteo who is a great friend and a great guy. We had a good battle, and I'm happy with that match tonight."

## World Cup: Henry explains why Olise, not Mbappe, is France's most important player

**France great Thierry Henry believes Michael Olise has become Les Bleus' most important player after the Bayern Munich star starred in their 3-0 win over Sweden in the FIFA World Cup Round of 32. Kylian Mbappe scored twice to send France into the last 16, but Olise's two assists and all-round display stole the show.**

LOS ANGELES. (Agency)

Kylian Mbappe scored twice to fire France into the FIFA World Cup Round of 16, but Michael Olise was the driving force behind the 3-0 win over Sweden, prompting Thierry Henry to declare that the Bayern Munich playmaker has become Les Bleus' most important player. France eased to a 3-0 win over Sweden in the Round of 32, their biggest victory in the knockout stages of the World Cup since beating Brazil 3-0 in the 1998 final.

Mbappe struck either side of Bradley Barcola's goal, but Olise orchestrated the attack throughout the night, setting up two goals and producing moments of individual brilliance that left pundits in awe. Henry, who worked with Olise during his time with France's Under-21 side, reserved special praise for the 24-year-old after the match. While acknowledging Mbappe's status as France's talisman and leading goalscorer, the Arsenal legend argued that Olise is now the player who makes Didier Deschamps' side tick. "When you're that kind of guy, technical, you forget about your defensive duty. He doesn't Michael is a freak. The way he sees stuff is not the same as others he sees everything so perfectly, so quickly, if you're not his wave sometimes he (gets) annoyed. " (When I coached him) sometimes he does stuff in training and you have to stop yourself from saying WOW this guy is on another planet - he is just different. " MVP will always be Kylian (because of his numbers) but the most important player is Michael Olise. "

Olise's performance gave weight to Henry's assessment. The Bayern Munich attacker was at the centre of almost everything France



created going forward. He nearly produced one of the moments of the tournament in the 35th minute when a looping clearance dropped invitingly on the edge of the area. Olise contorted his body to execute an acrobatic bicycle kick that beat goalkeeper Jacob Widell Zetterstrom but crashed off the post. Ousmane Dembele came close to

converting the rebound, but Sweden survived. "If he would've scored there, it would have been the goal of the tournament," Zlatan Ibrahimovic said on Fox Soccer. France finally broke Sweden's resistance on the stroke of half-time. Olise and Dembele combined cleverly from a short corner before finding Mbappe on the left side of the penalty area. The captain cut inside Viktor Gyokeres onto his right foot and rifled an unstoppable finish past Jacob Widell Zetterstrom.

**OLISE'S MASTERCLASS**

Olise's vision was on full display again eight minutes after the restart. Spotting Barcola's run behind the Swedish defence, he threaded a perfectly weighted through ball between two defenders, allowing the Paris Saint-Germain forward to race clear and double France's lead. The playmaker completed another memorable evening in the 74th minute with his second assist of the match. Another incisive pass split Sweden's backline and released Mbappe into the left channel, with the France captain finishing clinically.

'Ho Gaya':

# Sonakshi Sinha

**Gets Irritated With Paps As She Steps Out With Zaheer Iqbal And Shatrughan Sinha**

Actress Sonakshi Sinha, who is one of the coolest when it comes to giving pictures and posing for the paparazzi, looked visibly irritated by the constant filming while leaving a restaurant following a dinner outing with her family. Sonakshi was snapped in the city last night as she stepped out for a dinner outing with husband Zaheer Iqbal and her father, veteran actor Shatrughan Sinha. Now, a video has surfaced from the actress' spotting yesterday, in which the trio can be seen leaving the restaurant as photographers gathered outside the eatery to capture them. While Sonakshi Sinha initially greeted the paparazzi, she later became a little impatient and asked them to stop taking photos and videos of her. Addressing the paparazzi firmly, with folded hands, Sonakshi requested the cameramen, "Bas, guys. Thank you. Good night!" As the cameras continued to record them, Zaheer too requested them to stop filming before Sonakshi



firmly said, "Guys... Ho gaya. Ho gaya. Bas. Thank you." Despite her request, the paparazzi kept filming for a few more moments before the family headed to their vehicle.

#### Sonakshi Sinha movies

Sonakshi made her acting debut opposite Salman Khan in Dabangg in 2010 and later starred in films including Rowdy Rathore, Son of Sardaar, and Holiday. In recent years, she has received praise for her performances in streaming projects such as Dahaad and Heeramandi.

#### Sonakshi Sinha and Zaheer Iqbal's relationship timeline

Sonakshi and Zaheer got married in a civil ceremony under the Special Marriage Act on June 23, 2024. The intimate wedding took place at Sonakshi's home in Mumbai and was followed by a star-studded reception attended by several Bollywood celebrities. Among those present were Salman Khan, Huma Qureshi, Rekha, Tabu, Anil Kapoor, Gulshan Devaiah, Yo Yo Honey Singh, Rajkumar Rao, Kajol, Richa Chadha, Siddharth, Aditi Rao Hydari, and Raveena Tandon, among others. Sonakshi and Zaheer shared screen space in the 2022 film Double XL, a social comedy-drama that also starred Huma Qureshi. The film revolved around body positivity and challenged conventional beauty standards, with Sonakshi and Huma playing the lead roles, while Zaheer portrayed one of the key characters.



'The Entitlement Is Unreal':

# Dia Mirza

**Slammed For Boasting About Son Avyaan Schooling A Delivery Guy**

Dia Mirza has found herself in hot water following a recent video of her sharing an incident about how her son, Avyaan, schooled a delivery guy that surfaced on social media. While speaking on Soha Ali Khan's podcast, Dia revealed how she cannot tolerate coconut water being delivered in plastic bags and how her son schooled a delivery guy for doing so.

Speaking to Soha, Dia Mirza revealed, "The coconut wala delivered the coconut and nothing burns my blood more than coconut water arriving in plastic bags with plastic straws. So this boy, bichara, he didn't know whom he was delivering to. So Avyaan opened the door, put his hands on his hips and said, 'Bhaiya plastic me lekar aaye hai, hamare ghar mein plastic not allowed, aap usko plastic se nikalo, usko neeche rakho aur plastic aur straw leke jao' (Why have you got this in plastic? Plastic is not allowed in our home. Put it down and take the plastic away)." "Imagine standing up to somebody who is an adult and to have that conviction," reacted Soha while lauding Avyaan for his courage.

Following the clip of the interview going viral, netizens have been calling out Dia for her 'entitled' behaviour. A user, while reacting to

the clip, wrote, "Imagine talking so rudely and with such entitlement to someone who's literally providing you a service in 40-degree centigrade. The entitlement is unreal—it blinds them to basic respect and decency. If you don't want plastic, just go to the thela and buy it yourself and carry it in paper bags. And then the same people act all polished and 'real' on camera... what a joke."



"A child scolds a poor coconut vendor, who sells door to door trying to make ends meet in scorching Indian summers, to 'take back his plastic,' while adults celebrate it as 'standing up to a grown-up.' Then the mother of the said child appears on camera, fully decked out in 20+ makeup products for that perfect dewy glow... Guess what those products are sold in? You guessed it right, plastic packaging! This is what insulated privilege looks like," another user wrote.

**Shreyas Talpade Reveals Shah Rukh Khan, Farah Khan Helped Him Buy His First House**



Farah Khan recently visited Shreyas Talpade for her cooking vlog, and during the segment in which she gives gifts to her guests, the actor recalled how he and Shah Rukh Khan helped him buy his first house. Shreyas recalled that when he fell short of being eligible for a loan, Shah Rukh Khan wrote a guarantee letter for him upon Farah Khan's request. Shreyas recalled, "Main bank gaya tha, but loan eligibility nhi tha mera, and then the banker lady said, 'Kaunsi film kar raha hai? Maine kaha Om Shanti Om, usne poocha kaun hai usmein? (I went to the bank, but I didn't qualify for a home loan. The bank officer asked me, 'Which film are you working on?' I said, 'Om Shanti Om.' She then asked, 'Who's starring in it?') I said Shah Rukh Khan; she asked who's directing? I said, Farah Khan. She said, 'Can you get me a letter?'" He added, "I called Farah, and she got me a letter from Shah Rukh Khan in two days and that evening they sanctioned the loan." Farah said, "I am so happy because humne tuje kya hi paise diye honge Om Shanti Om ke (We probably didn't even pay you much for Om Shanti Om)."

#### About Om Shanti Om

Directed by Farah Khan and headlined by Shah Rukh Khan, the film blended romance, comedy, reincarnation, mystery, and drama into a larger-than-life spectacle. Nearly two decades later, it continues to enjoy cult status, with its memorable dialogues, chartbuster songs, and iconic characters remaining deeply embedded in pop culture.

The film featured Shah Rukh Khan in a double role as Om Prakash Makhija, a junior artist in the 1970s, and Om Kapoor, a superstar in the present day. Deepika Padukone made a sensational Bollywood debut as the glamorous actress Shantipriya and her reincarnated avatar Sandy, while Arjun Rampal played the ruthless film producer Mukesh Mehra. Shreyas Talpade delivered one of the film's most loved performances as Pappu Master, Om Prakash's loyal and humorous best friend, adding warmth and comic relief to the emotional narrative.

**Raghav Juyal, Niharika NM's Cosy Photos Leave Fans Wondering If They Are Dating**



Raghav Juyal and Niharika NM have set social media buzzing with their latest Instagram post. The dancer-actor and the influencer-actor shared a series of cosy pictures on Monday, leaving fans wondering whether they were hinting at a romantic relationship or simply teasing their upcoming film Bhai Tera Star Hai. The pictures quickly went viral, with fans flooding the comments section with questions, blessings and excited reactions. While some were convinced that the two had made their relationship Instagram official, others suspected that the post could be part of promotions for their upcoming project.

#### Raghav Juyal And Niharika NM Spark Dating Rumours

In the photos, Niharika is seen dressed in a cosy red sweatshirt, while Raghav opted for a grey jacket. The two kept the caption simple, using only a red heart and a star emoji. What caught everyone's attention was the warmth in the pictures. Raghav is seen embracing Niharika from behind as the two smile and blush, adding fuel to the dating rumours.

The post also drew reactions from rapper-singer Raftaar and content creator Ashish Chanchlani. Ashish dropped four evil eye emojis, while Raftaar wrote, "Je baat laadle," along with three evil eye emojis.

#### Fans React To Raghav And Niharika's Pictures

Fans were quick to react to the post, with many expressing surprise and excitement. One fan wrote, "Oh my God... crying, screaming, throwing up. I genuinely can't process this. My heart is racing, my hands are shaking, and I'm smiling through happy tears. Raghav Juyal in a romantic role is everything I ever wanted."

Another user commented, "Masha Allah! I hope it's not before the movie promotion stint. You both look awesome together." A third fan wrote, "Noooooo wayyyyyy soooooo unexpected." One well-wisher added, "I really wanted see Raghav in love now that it become true, I am so happy for both of you, stay together in love always." The comments reflected the curiosity around their equation, with several social media users asking whether the post was personal or promotional.

## NEWS BOX

## Minab school strike still lacks answers four months after suspected US hit

Jerusalem.(Agency)

More than four months after a US missile struck an Iranian primary school in Minab in what was reported as the deadliest strike in the US-Israeli war against Iran, there is still no final account of what happened. Most of the victims were children, but the full toll remains unclear. The Trump administration has not directly accepted blame, though a US official with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press that the military had evidence almost immediately that the site had been hit. AP said it reconstructed the strike and its aftermath through interviews with US officials, human rights workers and Iranians in direct contact with rescuers and victims' families. Most of them spoke on condition of anonymity, citing fears of retribution. When asked last week about the strike, President Donald Trump said he had seen nothing to make him believe the US was responsible. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not respond to AP's request for comment. On the morning of February 28, students arrived at the Shajarah Tayyebah school in Minab, one of a number of schools in Iran set up for children from families linked to the Revolutionary Guard and other state institutions, according to Shiva Amelirad, international representative of an Iranian teachers' union who has been in contact with people in the city. Amelirad said that while most schools in Iran function within the Islamic Republic's guidelines, the Shajarah Tayyebah schools were more directly aimed at reinforcing the Guard's worldview. She said, "Regardless of the students' family backgrounds, children are civilians and any attack targeting a school is unequivocally condemnable." AP's assessment of satellite imagery said the school building was inside the same compound as a Guard base. It had earlier been a Guard building before being fenced off and converted more than a decade ago. Some students were children of Guard officers, while others were local children from an area populated by Baluch people, a majority-Sunni ethnic minority that is often repressed by the Iranian government, according to a local rights group.

## Seizures, then zero brain activity: US teen dies after viral Benadryl challenge

World (Agency)

A 15-year-old girl in the US has died after allegedly taking part in the Benadryl challenge, a viral social media trend that encourages users to consume large amounts of the allergy medication to experience hallucinations. According to the family, Leah Presson was left with "zero brain activity" after she suffered seizures shortly after ingesting the medicine, the New York Post reported. She was declared brain-dead on June 14. Her father, Richard Presson, later confirmed that the teenager had died after days of fighting for her life. The Benadryl challenge first gained traction in 2020 and has resurfaced online in recent weeks. The dangerous trend encourages teenagers to record and upload their attempts on social media platforms after consuming excessive amounts of the antihistamine. Participants reportedly take around 12 to 14 Benadryl tablets in an attempt to induce hallucinations, despite warnings from medical experts about potentially life-threatening side effects. The trend involves taking excessive doses of Benadryl in an attempt to experience a high or induce hallucinations, caused by the effects of diphenhydramine — the active ingredient in the allergy medication. Diphenhydramine, an antihistamine commonly used to treat allergies and allergic reactions, can cause side effects such as drowsiness, dry mouth, difficulty urinating and a faster heartbeat. However, taking large amounts can trigger dangerous reactions, including confusion, slurred speech, enlarged pupils, overheating, abnormal heart rhythms, seizures and, in extreme cases, death.

## "Microsoft Powered Genocide": Employee Resigns, Sends Mass Email

World.(Agency)

A former Microsoft employee in Italy has publicly accused the technology company of helping to facilitate Israeli military operations in Palestine, prompting renewed debate over the role of major technology firms in armed conflicts.

Nour, who worked as a Critical Environment Technician at a Microsoft data centre in Italy for nearly two years, announced his resignation in a mass email sent to thousands of Microsoft employees across Europe on June 26. In the message, he alleged that Microsoft's expanding network of European data centres has played a significant role in supporting Israeli military surveillance operations targeting Palestinians. In his letter, Nour claimed that Microsoft's cloud infrastructure and artificial intelligence technologies have been used by the Israeli military during the ongoing war in Gaza. He accused the company of profiting from conflict while exploiting workers and natural resources to support military operations. "For the past 994 days, Microsoft has powered the genocide of our people in Palestine, with its European data centres playing a key role in enabling crimes against humanity," the letter alleged.

The former employee referred to reports published in 2025 alleging that Microsoft data centres in the Netherlands and Ireland stored large amounts of intercepted Palestinian communications data. According to those reports, the data was used for intelligence gathering, military targeting and the development of artificial intelligence systems. Nour also alleged that Microsoft transferred data from European servers to Israel after details of the surveillance programme became public. He further criticised the hosting of the Al-Munassef application, which Palestinians use to navigate Israel's permit system, on Microsoft infrastructure. In his message, Nour called on Microsoft employees to resist what he described as the company's involvement in war and surveillance activities.

# Pakistan military intercepts four drones from Afghanistan: statement

**The Afghan defence ministry posted on X that it had carried out "airstrikes" in Balochistan and northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, that it said caused casualties among Islamic State group members.**

ISLAMABAD.(Agency)

Pakistan's military said on Wednesday it had intercepted four drones sent from Afghanistan the previous day, the latest incident in months of conflict between the two neighbours. The Taliban government had vowed a response to deadly Pakistani airstrikes on eastern Afghanistan this week

and the Afghan defence ministry said in a statement overnight it had carried out aerial operations targeting militants in Pakistani border provinces. Pakistan's military said Afghan Taliban forces on Tuesday had "launched four rudimentary drones across the border in Balochistan... the hostile aerial platforms were immediately picked up by Pakistan's robust air defence network". "If the Afghan Taliban continue to provoke Pakistan, they would receive a befitting response which would cost them heavily," it added. The Afghan defence ministry posted on X that it had carried out "airstrikes" in Balochistan and northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, that it said caused casualties among Islamic State (IS) group members. The Taliban military forces lack a fully functional air force but have used small drones, targeting areas primarily in the border regions of Pakistan, experts say. Pakistan, which denies its territory is used

by IS, did not mention any casualties and accused the Afghan government of "misleading" its people, saying the drone attacks were "effectively thwarted".



The regional IS branch, Islamic State-Khorasan, has claimed responsibility for attacks in Afghanistan in recent years that have killed civilians. The incident is the latest flare-up of conflict between the neighbours whose relationship has been

fraught since 2021, when the Taliban government took power in Kabul, and following a war that erupted in February.

After a deadly weekend attack in Karachi, Pakistani airstrikes killed dozens of people in eastern Afghanistan, with Islamabad saying on Monday it targeted militants but the Afghan government reporting civilian casualties. The United Nations confirmed the strikes killed 28 civilians and wounded dozens more. Pakistan has not commented on civilian casualties and said 29 militants were killed in the strikes and ground operations. The months of conflict that has killed hundreds has centred around Islamabad's accusations that the Taliban government shelters militants behind a surge in attacks, particularly the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) which has waged a violent campaign against Pakistan for years. Afghan officials deny those assertions and counter that Pakistan harbours hostile groups and does not respect its sovereignty.

## Stopped atomic destruction: Netanyahu warns of another strike on Iran if needed

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has warned that Israel is prepared to strike Iran again if necessary, signalling that military action remains firmly on the table even as Washington and Tehran push ahead with negotiations aimed at ending months of regional confrontation. Speaking to Israel's Channel 14, Netanyahu said Israel would continue to act independently to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, signalling that further military action remains a possibility despite ongoing diplomatic efforts. He defended Israel's previous operations against Tehran and suggested that another strike could follow if Israeli security concerns remain unresolved. "In Iran, we saved ourselves from atomic bombs," he said, adding: "There will be a third time if necessary." The remarks, reported by Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency, underscore Israel's continued opposition to any arrangement that it believes leaves Iran with the capability



to pursue a nuclear weapons programme. **WARNING AMID US-IRAN PEACE TALKS**

The warning comes at a delicate diplomatic moment as the US and Iran continue negotiations intended to transform a preliminary ceasefire framework into a broader political settlement. The talks, being mediated by Qatar with regional coordination and international backing, are focused on ending hostilities, easing sanctions, addressing nuclear concerns and stabilising security arrangements across the Middle East. The emerging US-Iran understanding follows months of military confrontation that intensified

after coordinated US and Israeli operations against Iranian targets earlier this year triggered retaliatory attacks from Tehran and raised fears of a wider regional war. According to details released under the proposed framework, Washington and Tehran have agreed in principle to pursue a phased de-escalation process. The draft memorandum includes commitments to halt military action, reopen the Strait of Hormuz, negotiate sanctions relief and establish mechanisms to address Iran's nuclear activities. Iran has reiterated within the framework that it will not develop nuclear weapons, while broader technical negotiations continue.

**'ISRAEL NOT BOUND BY US-IRAN DEAL'**  
However, Israel has repeatedly signalled that it does not consider itself bound by any agreement that, in its view, leaves Iranian military or nuclear capabilities intact. US President Donald Trump has publicly urged restraint and warned against renewed escalation.

## Ready for war if diplomacy fails: Iran warns US ahead of high-stakes Doha talks

World.(Agency)

Iran on Tuesday warned that it was prepared for war if diplomacy with the United States failed, while reiterating that dialogue remained its preferred course, as officials from both countries prepared for separate talks in Qatar aimed at advancing the implementation of their memorandum of understanding (MoU). Speaking in an interview on state television, Iran's Parliament Speaker and chief negotiator, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, said Tehran would continue pursuing dialogue with the US but is also fully prepared for military confrontation if its commitments were not honoured. "We are pursuing dialogue, but if the dialogue is not implemented, we are also prepared for war and will respond accordingly," Ghalibaf said. During the interview, Ghalibaf also reiterated Iran's position on its nuclear programme and said the country's nuclear rights and "red lines" were non-negotiable. He maintained that Iran's

nuclear activities remained within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Islamic Republic of Iran is a member of the Nuclear Non-



Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and is under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and considers enrichment to be its right. NPT obligations are being observed, but Iran's nuclear rights and red lines are non-negotiable, and these are considered components of the Islamic

Republic's power and a guarantee against American excesses," he said. Ghalibaf questioned the credibility of international guarantees, citing Iran's experience under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

He said discussions were continuing and stressed that Tehran would not move to the next phase of implementing the agreement until the five key clauses, "one of the most important of which is the issue of Lebanon", oil exports and navigation through the Strait of Hormuz were fully consolidated and formalised. "In Article 1 of the memorandum, the US is committed and guarantees that the war in Lebanon will end, no military operations will be carried out, the people will return to their land, and the national sovereignty of Lebanon will prevail over its land. This is a very big victory and must be achieved, and we are now pursuing its definitive implementation," he said.

## FBI deems ransom notes in Savannah Guthrie mother's disappearance to be fake: Report

**Federal investigators have ruled all three messages linked to Nancy Guthrie's disappearance as fake. All three messages in question were initially delivered to various media outlets, including celebrity news site TMZ.com, before they were turned over to authorities for review.**

Washington.(Agency)

All three kidnapping-related messages that have surfaced in news media reports about the disappearance of "Today" show co-host Savannah Guthrie's elderly mother have been deemed by federal investigators to be fake communications, an FBI official told Reuters on Tuesday. The FBI assessment of inauthenticity pertains to the two ransom notes reported in early February, days after 84-year-old Nancy Guthrie vanished, and a third, more recent message from someone

claiming to know the kidnapers' identities, the official said. "None of the ransom notes are believed to be genuine," the FBI official told Reuters, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss details of an active investigation. A second law enforcement source familiar with the matter confirmed the FBI assessment of the ransom notes. The disclosure that the FBI has discounted the veracity of the three notes — two of which were widely reported to have been communications from kidnapers — seemed to raise doubts about investigators' fundamental premise that Nancy Guthrie was abducted for ransom to begin with. A spokesperson for the Pima County Sheriff's Department, which is leading the overall investigation, declined to comment, citing its agreement to refer all enquiries regarding ransom notes to the FBI. "We don't have any updates, other than this is still an active investigation," the sheriff's spokesperson, Angelica Carrillo, said. She added that DNA samples and video

evidence collected in the case "remain under forensic analysis." All three messages in question were initially delivered to various



media outlets, including celebrity news site TMZ.com, before they were turned over to authorities for review. Savannah Guthrie, 54, longtime co-anchor of the NBC morning news program "Today," has referenced ransom demands in video messages she and her siblings have posted on social media, urging kidnapers to open a direct line of communication with her family and

pleading for her mother's return, saying in one video, "we will pay."

**CRYPTOCURRENCY PAYMENT WENT UNCLAIMED**

The elder Guthrie, who had been in frail health with limited mobility, was last seen alive at her home in Tucson, Arizona, on January 31, after spending an evening with her older daughter, Annie Guthrie, and son-in-law. The FBI, which has taken the lead in examining any purported ransom notes or other communications from suspects in the case, had previously declined to say publicly whether any of the messages under review were considered credible.

Investigators determined that the first two originated from the same sender, the official told Reuters, though how that conclusion was drawn was not specified. The first note, according to TMZ, demanded a sum "in the millions" to be paid in cryptocurrency and set two deadlines for payment — on February 5 and February 9.