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PAWAN MAKAN
+91-9638877700
mahanagarmetro7@gmail.com

PM Modi helped stop Putin from using nukes in Ukraine, claims Polish minister

New York. (Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi played a pivotal role in persuading Russian President Vladimir Putin against using tactical nuclear weapons during the Ukraine war in late 2022, Poland's Deputy Foreign Minister Wladyslaw Teofil Bartoszewski claimed. Speaking at a press conference after the India-Poland Joint Economic Commission meeting in New Delhi on Monday, Bartoszewski said PM Modi is one of the few world leaders whose counsel Putin takes seriously because of India's decades-old strategic ties with Moscow.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a very well-known world statesman, who is very respected. India has a long-standing relationship with the Russian Federation and, before that, with the Soviet Union. President Putin actually pays attention to what Prime Minister Modi tells him," Bartoszewski said. He went further, saying PM Modi had already demonstrated that influence at a critical moment in the Russia-Ukraine war. "I



mentioned the role Prime Minister Modi played in stopping Putin from using tactical nuclear weapons in Ukraine at the end of 2022. Prime Minister Modi is one of the few people who can actually exert some pressure and influence on President Putin, and that is clearly

something India could do to help stop this conflict," he said.

The remarks put the spotlight back on PM Modi's diplomatic outreach in Ukraine war that is now in its fourth year. In September 2022, the Prime Minister famously told Putin that "today's era is not of war" during a meeting on

the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Uzbekistan. India has since maintained its call for dialogue and diplomacy while refusing to join Western sanctions against Russia. PM Modi has also continued to engage with Putin and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, even meeting the latter in Kyiv in 2024 and on the sidelines of multilateral summits since. New Delhi has continued buying discounted Russian crude despite sustained pressure from the US and European allies to curb energy trade with Moscow. India has argued that its purchases are driven by energy security and national interest. Putin, meanwhile, last month described India as a "great country" and defended New Delhi's independent foreign policy. Bartoszewski also endorsed India's approach to the Iran war, where New Delhi has similarly balanced its strategic interests while urging restraint and diplomacy. India has condemned terrorism, backed de-escalation and dialogue, and sought to preserve stability in the Gulf, from where it imports the bulk of its crude oil.

CM DK Shivakumar's Delhi visit fuels buzz over Karnataka cabinet expansion

Karnataka Chief Minister's Delhi visit has put the spotlight back on the long-delayed cabinet expansion, with sources indicating he is likely to meet the Congress leadership to discuss filling the 20 vacant ministerial berths.

Bengaluru. (Agency)

Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's visit to New Delhi on Wednesday has reignited speculation over a possible meeting with the Congress high command on the long-pending expansion of his cabinet, amid mounting pressure from ministerial aspirants.

According to his official itinerary, Shivakumar will arrive in the national capital on Wednesday evening and is scheduled to meet Union ministers. While the programme does not include any meeting with the Congress leadership, party sources said he is expected to hold discussions with the high command. His return schedule has also been kept open, fuelling speculation over political consultations.

The visit comes days after Shivakumar said he would travel to Delhi once the party leadership gave him an appointment, asserting that there was no delay from his side on the cabinet expansion.

"Whenever they give me time, I will go. They will give me a date in another three or four days. Once they do, I will go and come back," he had said on Monday. Shivakumar took oath as chief minister on June 3 along with 13 ministers, following Siddaramaiah's resignation on May 28. With Karnataka permitted to have a 34-member council of ministers, including the chief minister, 20 ministerial berths remain vacant, intensifying lobbying within the ruling Congress. Party sources said the chief minister faces the challenge of accommodating a large number of aspirants while balancing caste, regional and political considerations, with limited vacancies available.



Legislatures are training ground for leaders, says Speaker Om Birla

JAIPUR. (Agency)

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Wednesday described legislatures as the "training ground" for political leadership and urged lawmakers to deepen their understanding of issues raised in the House while upholding parliamentary traditions through meaningful debate and constructive participation. Birla said leaders are not made by creating disruptions in the House but through reasoned arguments and informed discussions. Addressing the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly's 75th foundation year celebrations, Birla said he had learnt parliamentary traditions from the Rajasthan Assembly and credited the House with shaping his legislative values. "The speeches and debates held in legislatures become part of history and are studied for years. The more a member listens and studies, the better the member will be able to contribute," he said.

'Anti-people policies': Congress slams Modi government over inflation surge

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

With wholesale price inflation rising to 9.87 per cent in June, the Congress on Wednesday claimed that the "anti-people policies" of the Modi government is leading the country towards an economic crisis. They demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi answer for the over the rising inflation and the government's "economic failure".

In a post in Hindi on X, Congress general secretary in-charge of communications Jairam Ramesh said, "Due to the Modi government's anti-people policies, the country is steadily heading towards an economic crisis. The Congress party has repeatedly warned the government about this over the past few months."

Amidst the worst wholesale inflation in 44 months (9.87%) and a staggering 27.4% surge in fuel and electricity prices, agricultural sowing has dropped to a three-year low, he said. The common people are reeling under the burden of rising inflation and unemployment, while the nation's farmers -- the providers of food -- are suffering the double blow of the government's flawed policies and adverse weather conditions, Ramesh said.

Vadodara Police's Multi-Crore 'Hafta Raj' Exposed Karjan becomes a safe haven for criminals. Who is protecting the 'Hafta Raj' masterminds?

MAHANAGAR METRO

VADODARA/KARJAN: While the Gujarat government makes tall claims about strict prohibition and rigorous anti-addiction campaigns, the ground reality in the Karjan taluka of Vadodara district tells a completely different story—one that has raised serious concerns among top officials in Gandhinagar. Law and order have allegedly been compromised in Karjan, turning the taluka into a safe haven for bootleggers and gamblers. A multi-crore illegal trade is reportedly flourishing right under the nose of the Karjan Police.

The Role of Middlemen: Bhupat Rabari and Khoda Rabari

Startling revelations suggest that the primary masterminds behind this syndicate are Bhupat Rabari (assigned to the Dabhoi beat) and Khoda Rabari, who are considered close associates of a Vadodara LCB (Local Crime Branch) PI. These two middlemen allegedly collect lakhs of rupees in extortion money (*hafta*) from liquor mafias and gambling dens across the Vadodara district, including Karjan taluka, to fill the coffers of high-ranking officers. Due to this nexus, local police consistently avoid taking action against these illegal establish-



ments. The illegal operations are highly organized across several locations: Karamdi Village: Located just 2 kilometers from the Karjan Police Station, more than 15 illegal country liquor distilleries are operating openly, manufacturing potentially toxic country-made liquor. Kulari Village: Near the drinking water tank, an individual named Naveen is openly running a Varli Matka gambling operation. Sapa Village: A Varli Matka betting racket is actively running in the new colony area. Simdi to Ranpur Road: Serious allegations have emerged against Parth Shah—the Sarpanch of Ranpur village and President of the BJP Yuva Morcha—for allegedly smuggling and concealing large consignments of illicit Indian-Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL). Kandari Village: Near the mobile

tower, an individual identified as Amit Vasawa is openly retailing IMFL. Bariyawas Area: An accused named Paresch Chunawada is openly selling illegal liquor.

SMC Raid Information Leaked via WhatsApp

The most damaging revelation involves the sabotage of law enforcement actions. Whenever alert citizens log online complaints with the State Monitoring Cell (SMC) in Gandhinagar, corrupt personnel within the Vadodara LCB allegedly leak the team's live location via WhatsApp before they can arrive. Messages like The vehicle has left, close down your dens! are sent to alert the mafia. When media personnel attempted to contact the concerned police officials regarding these allegations, they consistently avoided answering and disconnected the calls.

Assault on Journalism: Editor Threatened for Reporting Truth

Emboldened by the extortion syndicate, middleman Bhupat Rabari allegedly used his influence to openly threaten Pawan Makan, the Editor of the 'Mahanagar Metro' newspaper, for publishing the truth. Refusing to back down, the editor filed a formal

written complaint against Rabari at the police station.

Critical Questions Raised by 'Mahanagar Metro':

1. Why have Vadodara District Superintendent of Police (SP) Sushil Agrawal and PI Patel remained silent on this multi-crore extortion racket operating directly under their jurisdiction?
2. Will the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) investigate the disproportionate assets and bank balances of these allegedly corrupt officers and their middlemen?
3. Why are local public representatives and the sitting MLA silent on this rampant trade of chemical-infused toxic liquor?
4. Who will take responsibility if a major hooch tragedy (*Latthakand*) occurs in Karjan due to this illicit liquor trade, resulting in the loss of innocent lives?

This corrupt syndicate directly undermines the clean governance image projected by the state's Chief Minister and Home Minister. Observers are now waiting to see what strict action the government in Gandhinagar will take against this unbridled police-mafia nexus and those threatening the press.

Inside Congress' Bihar project: Rahul Gandhi's organisational reboot faces revolt?

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Congress is attempting its most ambitious organisational overhaul in years through the Sangathan Srijan Abhiyan, a nationwide exercise designed to rebuild the party from the grassroots. At the heart of the initiative is the creation of a centralised digital database of members and office-bearers, with the leadership hoping to modernise the organisation and make it more cadre-driven.

But even before the campaign gone national, its pilot project in Bihar has become the centre of a fierce internal battle. The Bihar unit's digital membership drive, touted as a model that could eventually be replicated across the country, is drawing criticism from within

the party, with several senior leaders alleging that the new system effectively allows organisational posts to be secured through money rather than merit.

BIHAR PILOT PROJECT

Launched in April under the banner 'Sangathan Srijan Sathi', the Bihar Congress has rolled out a digital membership drive in which each membership costs Rs 50.

According to party leaders, the exercise is around 70 per cent complete, with more than three lakh members already enrolled. The campaign is expected to conclude by the end of July.

Membership is being carried out exclusively through a dedicated mobile application developed for the Bihar



Congress. Each registered mobile number can enrol up to four members, while every applicant must upload a Voter ID card and a selfie for verification.

MEMBERSHIP TO LEADERSHIP

Unlike previous organisational exercises, the Bihar model directly links membership mobilisation to eligibility for party posts.

Under the new framework, a party worker must enrol 3,000 members to qualify for the post of Vice President, 2,000 members to become General Secretary, 1,000 members to be eligible for the post of Secretary, and 200 members to secure a Prakhanda-level organisational position.

The Congress leadership says the criteria are designed to make appointments performance-based, rewarding those who expand the party's grassroots base rather than those who rely on lobbying or personal connections.

Supporters of the model argue that the system replaces lobbying and patronage with measurable organisational work, rewarding those who can expand the party's base.

News box

Fire breaks out at Lifelong industrial warehouse in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A major fire broke out at the Lifelong industrial warehouse in Jhund Sarai on Pataudi Road near the KMP Expressway on Tuesday night, prompting a large-scale firefighting operation. No casualties were reported. According to fire department officials, the Manesar Fire Station received a call through the emergency 112 helpline at around 10.30 pm about the blaze. Fire tenders were rushed to the spot, and after assessing the intensity of the fire, additional vehicles were called in. A total of 29 fire tenders were deployed to contain the blaze. The fire was brought under control after an intensive firefighting operation, with firefighters dousing flames that had spread to the second floor of the warehouse. Fire officer Narendra Singh said the department responded immediately after receiving the alert and scaled up the operation after declaring it a major fire because of the extent of the blaze. The warehouse stored fitness and massage equipment. The exact cause of the fire is yet to be established. Police, Civil Defence personnel, SDRF teams, and the industrial unit's management were present at the site and assisted in coordinating the emergency response. Officials said there was no loss of life or injuries in the incident. The cause of the fire will be determined after a detailed investigation.

Hot, humid conditions to persist in Gurgaon till July 16, relief likely from July 17

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Residents should brace for hot and humid weather over the next two days, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing a yellow alert for Gurgaon and most districts of Haryana till July 16. Weather conditions are expected to improve from July 17. According to IMD's district-wise forecast issued on Tuesday, Gurgaon remains under a "be updated" (yellow) warning for hot and humid conditions on July 14, 15 and 16. No weather warning has been issued for the district on July 17 and 18, indicating likely relief from the prevailing sultry conditions. The minimum temperature in Gurgaon was recorded at 25 degrees Celsius on Tuesday, 1.6 degrees below normal. The maximum temperature was 36.4 degrees Celsius. While rainfall activity remained subdued in Gurgaon during the 24 hours ending 8.30 am Tuesday, isolated showers were reported from parts of the state. Hisar received 18.2 mm of rain, Fatehabad recorded 28 mm, Mandkola in Mewat received 0.5 mm, and Jagdishpur logged 1.5 mm. The IMD has advised residents to avoid prolonged exposure to heat and humidity, stay hydrated and limit strenuous outdoor activity during the afternoon, particularly for children, the elderly and those with existing health conditions. Meteorologists said weather conditions are expected to become more favourable from Thursday onwards, with the hot and humid warning being withdrawn across Haryana from July 17.

Wires or transformers, power hazards within an arm's reach at 24 Ghaziabad schools

Gurgaon.(Agency)

At least 24 govt schools across Ghaziabad remain exposed to electrical safety hazards, with high-tension power lines running over classrooms, playgrounds and toilets, and transformers positioned close to entrances or boundary walls. A list prepared by the basic education department and shared with the power department recently shows the schools are spread across four blocks — six each in Loni, Bhojpur and Muradnagar, and five in Rajapur. Of these, 15 have high-tension lines passing directly over their campuses, while in some, electricity poles stand on the school campuses. At two schools in Rajapur, high-tension lines pass directly over the main entrance, while a live wire runs over the boundary wall and across the school campus in Muradnagar's composite school (CS) Bhoorgarhi. Teachers said the risk intensifies during the monsoon, as strong winds and rain can bring tree branches into contact with live wires, raising the chances of snapping, sparking or current leakage. "Many of these power lines pass over playgrounds, toilets or open assembly areas where children gather. During heavy rain and strong winds, tree branches often get entangled with the wires, increasing the risk of snapping, sparking or current leakage. Students are naturally curious and often play close to these areas," a teacher at one of the affected schools said. Another teacher at primary school Bhoorgarhi said an 11,000-volt high-tension line passed directly above the main entrance to their campus. "About two years ago, a line snapped and got entangled in a tree branch amid rain, but it happened on a Sunday when the school was closed. anghadi, Shamsher and Bhoorgarhi.

1,200 under scanner as cops step up drive to identify Bangladeshi illegals

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Police have intensified crackdown on illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, verifying the identities of more than 1,200 people living in colonies, slums and labour settlements across the city. Most of them work as daily-wage labourers or garbage collectors. As part of the drive, documents submitted by those suspected to have migrated illegally have been sent to district magistrates in the states they claim as their native places, and, where required, to the facility security officer (FSO) concerned, to confirm the authenticity of their identities and addresses. Thirteen Bangladeshi nationals detained during a special drive at construction sites in sectors 69, 70 and 104 are set to be deported

later this week, once legal formalities are completed. Police said the men had entered India illegally via the West Bengal border before coming to the city for work. After medical examinations, they were shifted to a designated deportation centre in Sector 1, IMT Manesar, and will be handed over to Border Security Force to facilitate deportation through the international border. The operation has also been expanded to identify those who facilitated the stay and employment of illegal immigrants. Investigators are examining labour networks to determine whether contractors knowingly hired undocumented workers. "Raids are continuously being made in the suspected colonies, slums or areas," a police officer said. The verification

exercise is expected to continue over the coming weeks as responses from



district authorities come in. TOI earlier reported that an investigation by Gurgaon police brought to the fore how the migration happens through a carefully stitched chain of agents, boatmen, labour contractors and rented settlements that carries workers from across the border straight into NCR's labour

economy. Police said the illegal migrants first establish contact with contractors in India through workers already employed here. Once the deal is fixed, local "agents" arrange the crossover. Small bamboo rafts are assembled, and boatmen ferry them across streams dividing Bangladesh from North Dinajpur in West Bengal. "Most crossings happen late at night. The border is porous and water routes make movement easier. Since they speak Bengali, they often blend with Indian crowds and are not detected unless documents are checked," a senior officer said. From the border, contractors arrange for transport deeper into the country, bringing the workers to cities where accommodation is often ready before they arrive — cramped.

Wushu, pentathlon and squash added to Haryana School Games list

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Directorate of secondary education, Haryana, has issued guidelines for the 2026-27 Haryana School Games, scheduled to be held from July 20 to Aug 3, introducing stricter eligibility verification norms and adding three new sports — wushu, modern pentathlon and squash — to the competition. Wushu is a Chinese martial art and combat sport; modern pentathlon is a multi-event competition that combines different athletic disciplines; and squash is a racket sport played in an enclosed court. With the inclusion of the three sports, the total number of disciplines in the Haryana School Games has increased from 30 to 33. The department has placed greater

emphasis on age verification, documentation and player eligibility for the block- and district-level competitions to ensure transparency and fair play. Govt, govt-aided, recognised private, CBSE and Aarohi schools across Gurgaon will participate, with the district education department directing schools to complete document verification and player registration well before the competitions begin. Assistant education officer Jagdish Ahlawat said schools have been instructed to complete verification of documents of all participants before the start of the games. He said the department will strictly enforce age verification, eligibility norms and document scrutiny, while schools have been asked to complete the screening

process and registration of participants within the prescribed timelines.

Competitions will be held in the under-14, under-17 and under-19 categories. To prevent age-related disputes, the department has introduced a rule allowing a player to compete in only one age category during an academic session. The revised guidelines make documentation central to the eligibility process. Every participant must submit a duly filled eligibility form along with a recent passport-size photograph verified by the head of the school. Mandatory documents include a birth certificate, school leaving certificate wherever applicable, Class 8 or Class 10 certificate, previous year's marksheet and an age verification test report. Officials said players with incomplete, incorrect or unverified documents.

Cook found dead in woods behind Camelias, face smashed with 10kg stone

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

A 39-year-old cook from Jharkhand was found murdered with his face repeatedly smashed with heavy stones on a forested patch behind DLF Camellias on Tuesday morning. Police suspect the killing followed a heated argument during a late-night drinking session. The body of Bandi Oraon, a resident of Asni Mugla village in Jharkhand, was discovered around 6am in a jungle patch along the road connecting Genpact and Faridabad. A group of workers from a nearby company, who had entered the area, spotted the body and alerted police. Oraon worked as a cook at a nearby residential society and lived in rented accommodation in Wazirabad. Police said the assailant repeatedly struck Oraon's face and head with two heavy stones, inflicting fatal injuries. The blood-stained stones, one weighing around 10kg, were recovered from the spot. "The body was lying 30-40 metres from the main road inside the jungle. We first found a small blood-stained stone and later another larger stone with blood marks. The victim had multiple injuries to his face and head. Prima facie, it appears he was dragged into the jungle before being attacked repeatedly with the stones," a police officer said. Police said drag marks on the ground and injuries on the victim's body supported the suspicion that he was assaulted elsewhere before being pulled deeper into the wooded area, where the attack continued until he died. Teams from Sector 53 police station, accompanied by forensic experts and a dog squad.

Hindon swells, GDA wants 7km wall near cricket stadium site GDA plans

Noida.(Agency)

Ghaziabad Development Authority (GDA) has proposed to construct a Rs 185-crore embankment to protect the international cricket stadium that will come up in Morti, Aero City and Harnandipuram township as Hindon's water level rises. Water has entered the city forest and is flowing within 100 metres of the stadium site, while low-lying colonies, including Karhera, Ator-Nagla and Kanawani remain vulnerable. While floods might not directly affect the stadium, the access roads might get inundated. GDA has planned to build the embankment

keeping this in mind. A GDA official said, "A 7-km, six-lane road from the City Forest area to Farukhnagar will be built on this embankment. It will create another access road to the stadium while securing it from floods." Uttar Pradesh Cricket Association and GDA are jointly developing the Rs 450-crore stadium project. The embankment will be designed by IIT for Rs 2 crore. "Another Rs 2 crore will go towards making a DPR," said the official. This is a part of GDA's traffic circulation plan that is meant to ease the movement of cars around the proposed stadium. Over the past few years, water has entered the

floodplains during monsoon. Officials said the water level at the Hindon barrage is below the danger mark for now. "It is steadily increasing and on Tuesday the maximum level was 202.8 m. The danger level is 205 metres," an executive engineer of the UP irrigation department, Raj Kumar Vern, said. "At the Vasundhara barrage, water discharge was recorded at 4,454 cusec. The floodwater has entered low-lying areas and the water levels are being monitored." The villages along the Hindon river in Ghaziabad that are considered to be vulnerable according to last year's assessment are City Forest.

Delay in shifting power lines pushes opening of Rewari highway till Sep

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Completion of the Gurgaon-Pataudi-Rewari highway has been delayed once again, with National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) now targeting Sept this year to complete the remaining work. The 43-km project continues to face bottlenecks, including the shifting of high-tension transmission lines and completion of key structures along the corridor. One of the major hurdles is a 440kV transmission line passing over the main carriageway near Harsaru. An NHAI official said approvals for shifting the line have been obtained and the required charges paid to Delhi Transco Limited. Foundation work for relocating the transmission infrastructure is expected to begin within the next few days. Foundation work is also underway for shifting a 220kV transmission line belonging to the Bhakra Beas Management Board near Wazirpur. According to officials, relocating both transmission lines is necessary to

clear the right of way and ensure the mandatory safety clearance over the highway. Construction of other components of the highway project is also progressing. At Pahari village,



work on the rail overbridge has advanced, with girders cast and reinforced earth walls completed. The deck slab remains one of the major pending components. At Dwarka Expressway interchange, slab casting is underway for the unidirectional flyover being built as part of the project. Once operational, the highway is expected to improve connectivity between Gurgaon, southern Haryana and Rajasthan

while easing pressure on the Delhi-Jaipur Expressway. It will also provide an alternative route for industrial hubs such as Manesar, Bilaspur and Dharuhera, facilitating smoother movement of commuters and freight traffic. The project has missed multiple deadlines since construction began, with progress affected by utility-shifting issues, delayed approvals from the railways and the removal of a drain near Dwarka Expressway. NHAI has also cited constraints in the availability of bitumen due to the West Asia crisis as one of the factors affecting the pace of construction. The project was approved in 2018 to upgrade the existing two-lane state highway into a four-lane national highway to strengthen regional connectivity and cater to the rapid urbanisation of southwest Haryana. Union road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stone in July 2020. The project, estimated to cost around

Rs 900 crore, was initially scheduled for completion in Dec 2022. Construction, however, began only in Nov 2021 with a revised two-year timeline. Since then, utility-shifting hurdles and delays in obtaining statutory approvals have led to repeated extensions. The project suffered another setback in Sept 2022 after National Green Tribunal intervened following a petition by environmentalists over forest clearance and compensatory afforestation. The petition challenged the proposal to undertake compensatory plantation around 300 km away in Panchkula, arguing that it would not adequately offset the loss of green cover along the project corridor. In April 2024, Supreme Court allowed NHAI to resume construction but directed that compensatory afforestation be carried out within the city. Since then, work has also faced intermittent disruptions due to seasonal rainfall and winter construction restrictions imposed to curb air pollution, officials said.

A 55-year-old man found murdered inside a room in Tripura

Agartala. (Agency)

A 55-year-old man was found dead in his residence in the Kathalia Bhadrabari area in Tripura's Sepahijala district Tuesday night. Police launched an investigation and suspected it to be a premeditated crime. However, nobody is arrested yet in connection with the crime. Family members alerted police after discovering the incident, and when police arrived, they found the main door locked from the outside. Upon breaking open the lock, officers discovered Uttam Nama's blood-soaked body inside the house. Preliminary investigation suggested that the victim was fatally stabbed with a sharp weapon. Investigators believe the assailant locked the house from the outside after the crime, possibly to conceal the murder and delay its discovery. A forensic team visited the crime scene to collect evidence to aid the investigation, police said. The victim's younger son, Chayan Nama, has been missing since the incident, prompting the police to consider all possible angles, including the son's potential involvement. Investigators are working to establish the whereabouts of both the victim's wife and sons at the time of the murder. Police have initiated questioning of family members and other individuals connected to the case to determine the sequence of events leading up to the killing.

Congress in-charge Rajendra Pal Gautam to review preparations for UP assembly elections

Lucknow. (Agency)

All India Congress Committee (AICC) Uttar Pradesh in-charge and former minister Rajendra Pal Gautam will be on a two-day visit to Lucknow starting Wednesday. During this visit, he will hold a series of meetings with various committees and officials of the state Congress regarding preparations for the upcoming assembly elections and strengthening the organisation. On the first day, Gautam will meet with state Congress President Ajay Rai, Congress Legislature Party leader Aradhana Mishra 'Mona', the treasurer, accounts department, war room, connect centre, frontal organisations, state heads of various departments and cells, and AICC secretaries. He will also interact with party leaders and workers. On the second day of his visit, he will hold separate meetings with the state Congress headquarters staff, media department, social media team, disciplinary committee, the party's women candidates for the 2022 assembly elections, members of the state election committee, and the property department. State Congress media department president and former minister Dr. C.P. Rai said that this visit of the in-charge is aimed at reviewing the preparations for the assembly elections, strengthening the organisation and establishing better coordination between various committees.

UP: BJP gears up for 2027 Assembly elections, micro-management begins at booth level

Lucknow. (Agency)

While the Panchayat elections in Uttar Pradesh have been postponed, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has intensified preparations for the 2027 Assembly elections. Sources indicate that the party has formulated a strategy to contest the elections along the lines of a "Pradhani" strategy, implementing micro-management from the district to the Mandal, Shakti Kendra, and booth levels. The goal is to reach out to every voter and bring them to the polling booth. The party organisation has already begun assigning responsibilities for this purpose. Election preparations are in full swing at both the government and organisational levels. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is regularly visiting various districts of the state, while State President Pankaj Chaudhary and Organisation General Secretary Dharampal Singh are visiting various areas to hold meetings with officials and workers, mobilising them for election mode.

Immersive tech, audio-visual storytelling: Chandigarh's first digital museum to celebrate Le Corbusier's legacy

Existing museum to be retained while half of the building will be transformed into a technology-driven experience

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Visitors to Chandigarh's iconic Le Corbusier Centre may soon be able to step into the life and vision of the city's master planner through immersive digital galleries, interactive installations and gaming experiences. The UT Administration has sent a proposal to the Government of India to establish Chandigarh's first digital museum, aimed at making the legacy of the French-Swiss architect more engaging, accessible and technology-driven. UT Tourism Director Radhika Singh told The Indian Express that the proposed project envisions a modern digital museum that will use immersive technology, audio-visual storytelling and interactive exhibits to offer visitors an entirely new way of experiencing

Corbusier's life, architectural philosophy and contribution to Chandigarh. "We have sent the proposal to the Government of India under Swadesh Darshan 2.0," Singh said. Unlike a conventional museum, the digital museum will allow visitors to engage with exhibits through immersive projections, digital storytelling, films and interactive displays. Officials believe such technology-based experiences will appeal to children, students and tourists, while also encouraging repeat visits and increasing footfall. The museum will come up within the existing Le Corbusier Centre in Sector 19, which will be divided into two distinct sections with one half to function as the present museum, preserving the heritage building where Le Corbusier himself worked, while the other section will be

redeveloped into the digital museum without disturbing the historical character of the original structure.



The proposed museum has been envisioned with seven thematic galleries, each narrating a different chapter of Corbusier's life and work. Visitors will be taken through his early years, his evolution as one of the world's most

influential architects, his architectural philosophy, the conception and planning of Chandigarh, and other defining milestones of his career. Each gallery will use technology to create an immersive environment rather than relying solely on conventional displays. Large-format digital projections, film-based presentations, interactive screens and multimedia installations will recreate different phases the Swiss-French architect's journey, allowing visitors to understand not just the buildings he designed but also the ideas that shaped his vision. The project also proposes dedicated interactive zones where visitors can participate in architecture-inspired games, try digital sketching activities and explore Chandigarh's planning through engaging technology-based experiences.

Woman, three children consume pesticide in Kapurthala, 6-year-old girl dies, three critical

According to Civil Hospital sources, the trio are undergoing treatment by specialist doctors, but are still critical.

Jalandhar. (Agency)

A six-year-old girl died while her mother and two siblings are critical after they allegedly consumed pesticide at their residence in Punjab's Kapurthala district, police said on Tuesday. Police have launched an investigation to ascertain the circumstances leading to the incident. Originally hailing from Katihar district in Bihar, the family has been living in Mallu Qadrawabad village in Kapurthala for 15 years, according to police. Lavkush Kumar said that he returned home after completing work in the fields at around 11 pm. "I entered the house only to find my wife Santosh Devi semi-conscious and vomiting, and a bottle of pesticide lying close by. Inside the house, our three children were lying unconscious," Lavkush said.

"I immediately alerted neighbours and called the 108 ambulance service." The four were rushed to the Civil Hospital in Kapurthala, where six-year-old Khushi died during the treatment, police said.



Given their critical condition, Santosh, her eight-year-old daughter Amrita and two-year-old son were referred to the Amritsar Medical College for advanced treatment, police said. According to Civil

Hospital sources, the trio are undergoing treatment by specialist doctors, but are still critical. Lavkush told police that he was not aware of any known family dispute. "My wife had spoken to my mother over the phone a day ago. I am not sure whether any disagreement ensued during the conversation." Station House Officer (SHO) Ranjit Singh said that, according to the preliminary information gathered so far, someone had allegedly discarded an empty pesticide bottle, which was later picked up by the family. The family is suspected to have washed the bottle, filled it with water and consumed the water. Soon after, the woman and the children fell ill. "The exact sequence of events is still being verified, and all angles are being investigated," the SHO said.

IMD forecasts isolated heavy rain in Haryana, Punjab

Panchkula. (Agency)

Rainfall activity is expected to become more widespread across northwest India later this week, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting fairly widespread to widespread rainfall over Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and Punjab during July 19-20, along with isolated heavy rainfall over the region. According to the All India Weather Summary and Forecast Bulletin issued by the IMD on Wednesday morning, isolated to scattered rainfall is likely

over Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and Punjab during July 15-18, while rainfall activity is expected to become fairly widespread to widespread during July 19-20. The IMD has also forecast isolated heavy rainfall over Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Punjab and West Uttar Pradesh during July 19-20, while East Uttar Pradesh is likely to receive isolated heavy rainfall during July 17-20. For the western Himalayan region, the weather office has predicted isolated to scattered rainfall over Jammu-Kashmir-Ladakh-Gilgit-Baltistan-Muzaffarabad,

Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand during the next few days. Rainfall is likely to become fairly widespread to widespread over Jammu-Kashmir-Ladakh-Gilgit-Baltistan-Muzaffarabad during July 18-20, Himachal Pradesh during July 17-20, and Uttarakhand during July 16-20. The IMD has further forecast isolated thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds with speeds of 40-50 kmph, gusting up to 60 kmph, over Jammu-Kashmir-Ladakh-Gilgit-Baltistan-Muzaffarabad during July 15-20 and Uttarakhand during July 15-20.

Himachal crypto scam, 2.5 lakh duped: 69 of 76 held out on bail, trial yet to begin & 2 arrests by ED in 2 years

Masoom Juneja, 41, was arrested by the ED from Punjab's Mohali for his alleged role in the scam and booked under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). His father, Vijay Juneja, is already in Himachal Pradesh Police custody, an ED officer said.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Two arrests in two years by the ED and 69 of 76 nabbed by the police out on bail — that has been the interminable track of investigations into the multi-crore multi-level marketing (MLM)-cryptocurrency scam in Himachal Pradesh. Flagged by then independent MLA in the Assembly in 2023, prime accused reportedly slaloming authorities and out of the country to Dubai, and around 2.5 lakh people debilitated by the fraud, the Shimla office of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) made its latest arrest on June 15. It had launched its probe in 2024 based on inquiries by the Himachal and Punjab Police. Masoom Juneja, 41, was arrested by the ED from Punjab's Mohali for his alleged role in the scam and booked under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). His father, Vijay Juneja, is already

in Himachal Pradesh Police custody, an ED officer said. A Himachal Pradesh police officer said, "The actual number of victims range between 80,000 and 1 lakh, who were further linked to around 1.50 lakh people. For instance, the main investor would be issued a unique ID to keep a tab on her investment in cryptocurrency. That person enrolled 10 others, including relatives and friends, resulting in 10 other digital IDs being generated under the main investor's ID. The investigation also established that in some of the cases, the unique ID holder invested under the IDs of her relatives and friends." Based on around 500 complaints received on a dedicated helpline launched in 2024, most victims were found to be from Kangra, Mandi, Hamirpur, Una districts of Himachal Pradesh and some

even from Punjab's Phagwara. They had invested the money received as compensation from the government for acquiring their land for various road



projects. "The total amount from the complaints went up to an estimated Rs 1,740 crore in the MLM-related cryptocurrency between 2018 and 2022. We have filed multiple chargesheets

against 76 accused in the response of almost 280 complaints. Many of the complaints are yet to be addressed," a senior SIT officers said. In 2019 the fraud gained momentum, investigators said, with returns being churned out after a one-time deposit. The scammers fixed the price of the digital coin — the face value initially starting at nearly Rs 70 each would shoot up to between Rs 800 and Rs 4,000. They claimed that the cryptos would only be traded in dollars. In September, 2024, when the scam surfaced, the Himachal Pradesh Police constituted an SIT under then DIG (Northern Range), Dharamshala, Abhishek Dullar. At present, Dullar is IG (Law & Order), Himachal Pradesh Police in Shimla. The SIT exists under SP (CID) Rajesh Chhabra.

Faithline | Dhumini's dark lesson

Parenting experts, feminists, celebrities and regular people all seem to be having a field day declaring their views on Ketan and Siya. Some opinions put the blame squarely on her family and 'defend' her as a helpless girl. Aren't they forgetting that Siya allegedly made a conscious choice, helped by a man, her boyfriend Chetan? Some appalling posts by women even said that Ketan deserved it. This attitude does not help the cause of women in India. It only makes any number of men close ranks. There are already several videos out there by outraged men, condemning 'feminists'. But can we deny there are men and women who seem born with 'asuric' natures, who take naturally to deceit and do not think things through? Who possess a destructive combination of guile and stupidity? Have we not seen both nice people and wicked people in the same family? It is normal to express shock and horror about such gruesome events, and introspection about society is healthy. But to generalise wildly and shame a family before the courts can review the facts and pass a reasoned judgement seems like trial by media and social media. I am uncomfortable with it. If we would like a bit of perspective, perhaps we could cast our minds back to seventh-century India. Human nature seems unchanged, as many modern incidents attest, from the days of the Dasha Kumara Charita or the Adventures of Ten Princes. It is a Sanskrit storybook by one Dandin, with several English translations. Unlike other ancient books focusing on gods and kings, Dandin's work realistically depicts the lives of ordinary men and women in ancient India. The supernatural plays only an occasional part—but consider that the 'supernatural' remains an element of the natural order of things even today. There are stories in Dasha Kumara Charita about good and bad people, both men and women. The female characters fall into several categories rather than simple binaries of 'good' and 'bad'. The stories paint women across a spectrum of morality, from devoted heroines to scheming tricksters. This includes tales of wives who deceive, betray or conspire against their husbands, plotting to do away with their spouses for illicit lovers. In particular, the tale of Dhumini is considered an extremely dark story about human proclivities and their consequences. It is told by a demon to prince Mitragupta to prove a cynical point about human nature. In passing, 'Dhumini' means 'dark smoke', an appropriate choice of name for a frightening character in a stark story. The demon catches Mitragupta and discusses existential questions, like the Yaksha in the Mahabharata. The Q&A goes: What is wicked? A woman's heart (this view is in this story, there are other stories about decent and wise women). What enables the welfare of a householder? A wife's good qualities. What is love? Imagination. What helps in accomplishing difficult things? Wisdom. The illustrative tales follow. Dhumini's tale goes that in Trigarta, a Himalayan kingdom, there lived three brothers named Dhanaka, Dhaanyaka and Dhanyaka. When a terrible famine fell on them, they first devoured grain and cattle. To Dhanyaka's horror, his two older brothers then ate their own wives. When they turned to eat Dhumini, the wife of Dhanyaka, he escaped with her to the forest from these humans-turned-cannibals. Out there, they found the badly mutilated victim of a crime with missing limbs, ears, and nose. Dhanyaka fed him berries and applied medicinal herbs on his wounds, before going in search of food. Left alone with the cripple, Dhumini was overcome by desire for him. She forced the disabled man to satisfy her. When Dhanyaka returned, she pretended she had a headache and asked him to fetch water. When he went to a well some distance away, she followed him to push him in, and ran away to Avantika in the plains, carrying the cripple. Everyone thought the cripple was her husband and that she was a noble pativrata selflessly taking care of him.

Needed — a 'new deal'

India requires an initiative like the 'Manhattan Project', where we put together our best minds

EVERY morning, one scans the headlines of national newspapers, scrolls through the cellphone, even glances at the TV... all in search of some encouraging news, but to no avail. The world is moving at a fast pace as the dawn of the AI age breaks. Nations, companies, institutions, individuals at the cutting edge in the US, China, Taiwan, South Korea, etc. are talking about exciting new technologies, of quantum computing, robotics, clean energy, of AI becoming sentient and developing consciousness. Elon Musk and his company speak of reaching Mars, of space travel, of data centres in orbit... human potential and imagination are being unleashed as I write this essay. But here at home, what do we see, what is the national debate? News regarding political and religious strife, headlines about edicts issued by religious authorities which cut into the political arena. There is news about investigations into the collection of funds at important places of worship. Then there are the thousands of deras of various religious hues being run by local godmen — here, too, there are enormous funds at stake. Gradually, the line separating politics from religion has been obliterated and today they move in tandem. In this mayhem, one searches for some logic, some facts, some direction... something which advances the national interest. One searches for well-enunciated political or economic views — they may be rightist, centrist, leftist, socialist or communist. All in vain, only the multi-coloured hues of religion are overlaid on everything. Here is no water but only rock/ Rock and no water and the sandy road... TS Eliot's famous poem The Waste Land comes to mind as I go through the morning ritual of reading the papers. Where does the common man fit in, in whose name all this is done? He is the 'sacrificial goat', but what does the 'sacrificial goat' really want? Does he want to walk in these dark alleys — no, he wants employment, two square meals for his family, shelter from the elements, education and health facilities for his children, and he wants the state to guarantee security of life and property.

The opening up of the Indian economy in the 1990s helped unleash trapped potential and we saw this in the development of our IT sector. The foundation laid

by IITs, IIMs and regional engineering colleges of the time gave a standard of education which enabled this development. Individual effort coordinated with government encouragement facilitated it, and over time India became a powerhouse in the IT services sector. The ecosystem generated a vast pool of talent which developed IT companies such as TCS, Infosys, Wipro and HCL. India also exported its talent globally. Even today, many of the top names in the world of technology are of people of Indian origin who had their humble beginnings in the corridors of our IITs and regional engineering



colleges. Satya Nadella, Sundar Pichai, Shantanu Narayan etc. are all a case in point. The million-dollar question is that as this sector is threatened, what will be its replacement. Thousands of jobs are being lost and threatened as AI disruptions play havoc. In the 1990s, India came back from the brink, but do we have to reach the brink again to discover ourselves? There is a playbook India can refer to which led to the previous success. This includes the formation of organisations such as NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Service Companies), STPIs (software technology parks of India), SEZs (special economic zones) and their associated tax breaks and infrastructure, and of course all the liberalisation reforms of the period.

The IT industry was nurtured; it was given much leeway, and the government, for the most part, played a supportive role and kept the formidable

'Red Tape' out of the way. IT caught the imagination of the nation, and the average citizen saw it as a way out of poverty and the low-income bracket. To sum it up, it gave opportunity and respectability to our educated law-abiding citizens, and it propelled the nation into becoming a major global services provider.

Today, India's economy is many times larger than what it was in the 1990s, but with this scale and growth comes an antithesis — a recession can be far more damaging. People who have attained a certain standard of living and who have invested in the IT dream have far more to lose today. Not only the directly employed but also entire economies which have been built around the IT hubs in the country. So, what is the replacement? We need to find our niche again. The government must once again be a facilitator more than a regulator. Maybe the niche is in AI-augmented services and data centres, maybe it is in the vast EV and clean energy transition which is ongoing. The move away from fossil fuels is here to stay as our energy needs grow and the reality of climate change becomes more apparent.

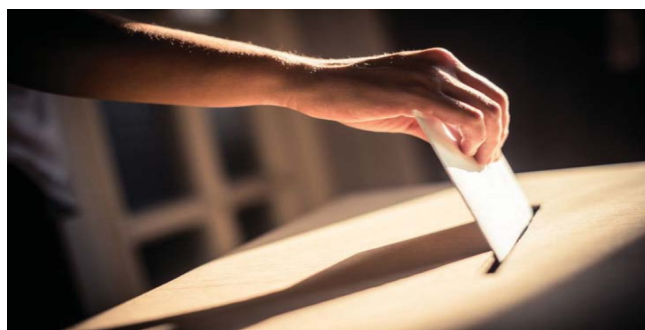
Or perhaps it is encouraging and facilitating something far more basic: Indian corporates are said to be sitting on a record cash reserve of over \$200 billion and much of it was built over the last four years. Why are they not investing within India when there is so much ground to be covered? Surely, sectors such as pharma where most of our APIs (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients) are still imported from China are not only vulnerable to a foreign country's whims but also need to cover this basic shortcoming with significant investments. Surely, energy in all its forms is still a vast mountain to be climbed. Education: vast amounts are spent by parents on foreign education; why can't we give quality options here? Health: our teeming millions need much more infrastructure. I have just named some of the top fields which come to mind. I am sure the experts would be able to contribute much more. Our private sector, if given the proper environment, is more than capable of being globally competitive and a world leader. We just need to enable and facilitate it.

Poll reform : Consensus is a prerequisite for ONOE

ONOE risks diluting India's federal structure by subordinating state-level political priorities to national narratives

BJP MP PP Chaudhary, chairperson of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) examining the Bills on simultaneous polls, has stated that the proposed 'One Nation, One Election' (ONOE) reform could become operational by the 2029 Lok Sabha elections. According to him, the panel has found that "almost 99 per cent of stakeholders, particularly from civil society and various organisations, favour simultaneous elections." A balanced assessment of ONOE requires looking beyond political rhetoric to gauge its constitutional, administrative and democratic implications. The proposal continues to draw strong objections from some Opposition parties, constitutional experts and advocates of federalism. The challenge is to develop a mechanism that is acceptable to all concerned. The case in favour of ONOE rests largely on economic efficiency and smoother governance. Frequent elections involve substantial financial costs, leading to repeated imposition of the Model Code of Conduct. The JPC has cited studies

estimating that synchronised elections could save investment.



nearly Rs 7 lakh crore by reducing disruptions to administration, industry, tourism and public services. Supporters also argue that uninterrupted five-year cycles would enable governments to focus on long-term development, policy implementation and

However, there is much more to elections than potential gains in terms of money and governance. ONOE risks diluting India's federal structure by subordinating state-level political priorities to national narratives. The constitutional mechanism proposed to synchronise electoral cycles, particularly the possibility of curtailing or extending the tenure of legislatures or holding elections only for the remainder of a term, needs to be discussed thoroughly. Concerns have also been raised about granting the Election Commission wider discretionary powers in managing synchronisation. Electoral convenience should not erode a level playing field. The onus is on the JPC to adopt a calibrated approach so that the reform ensures efficiency as well as democratic integrity. Geographic Reference

Ayodhya and the burden of public trust

Opposition leaders argue the travels came at cost of roughly Rs 762 crore over a decade. But the bigger picture is arithmetic before charisma.

A temple dedicated to Maryada Purushottama Sri Rama must itself become an institution upholding maryada—righteousness and rectitude. Who, in their right mind, would cavil or quarrel with such an expectation? Yet the controversy erupting over the Ramjanmabhumi temple chanda chori or dacoity of offerings, partly acknowledged but much more alleged, reminds us of the huge gap between proclaimed ideals and actual practice.

Even in the holiest of our shrines. But tell me, which important shrine, irrespective of religious affiliation or denomination, has been wholly free of allegations, controversies, scams, scandals or incidents of violence or lawlessness? Extend this question beyond Hindu temples to the holiest of the holies of other faith traditions, whether it is Harmandir Sahib, Mecca or the Vatican itself.

None, I am afraid, has been exempt.

About the Ayodhya Ram temple scandal, much has already been written, and far more spoken. The irregularities, to put it mildly, have cast a shadow over India's most visible temple. Predictably, the issue has degenerated into partisan mudslinging. The Opposition has seized upon it to embarrass the ruling dispensation. The BJP and the larger Sangh Parivar will undoubtedly strive to contain the damage, restore public confidence and rectify whatever has gone wrong. Television studios, digital platforms and social media have all done what they do best: amplify outrage, apportion blame and deepen existing political divides.

None of this is surprising.

For the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya is no ordinary place of worship. It is the culmination of one of independent India's most significant religious and cultural movements. For millions, it symbolises not merely the construction of a magnificent shrine but the rectification

of what they regarded as a long-standing historical wrong. The emotional investment in Ayodhya, therefore, extends far beyond architecture or ritual. Any stain on its reputation inevitably wounds the sentiments of countless devotees. What is more, the Ramjanmabhumi Movement and the subsequent return of Sri Rama to his birth city and the capital of his kingdom, many would agree, propelled the BJP to power in both Uttar Pradesh and, soon after the Centre. Now, those plotting their defeat hope that it is the same Ram Mandir that will bring about their downfall. I wish, therefore, to steer clear of the beaten track and offer a rather different way of looking at this unhappy episode.

Every public controversy in India now seems destined to become a partisan contest. The first question invariably asked is: who stands to gain politically? A more useful question is different: what should we learn institutionally and morally?

Democracies do not mature merely by changing governments; they mature by improving institutions. Civilisations endure not because they are free of humiliations or setbacks but because they possess the capacity for self-correction and re-invention. If the present controversy prompts us to rethink how our most sacred institutions ought to be governed, posterity may judge it less by the allegations themselves than by the reforms they eventually inspired.

If the allegations are proven true, what has occurred is not merely an administrative lapse. It is a breach of trust. The issue is not simply financial impropriety or managerial incompetence. It concerns fidelity to the very ideals embodied by Lord Rama himself. This is so obvious that

few, on either side of the political spectrum, would deny it. Sri Rama, revered as Maryada Purushottama, the supreme exemplar of righteousness, restraint, propriety and duty, is worshipped not only because he was victorious. But because he exercised power in the service of justice, fulfilled all his duties and subordinated personal interest, even conjugal



happiness, to uphold larger moral obligation. It follows that a temple dedicated to him cannot be judged solely by the grandeur of its architecture or the scale of its revenues. It must also be judged by the integrity of those entrusted with its care. For years, many Hindus have argued that Hindu temples deserve greater autonomy and less governmental interference. Whether one agrees entirely with that position or not, one principle surely follows. Greater autonomy must be matched by greater

accountability. Sacred institutions cannot ask to be trusted while resisting scrutiny. Transparency is not the enemy of faith; it is one of its strongest allies.

Indeed, Hindu civilisation has always possessed within itself the resources for ethical renewal. Dharma is not merely ritual observance; it's righteous conduct. Temple wealth has never been meant to enrich individuals but to sustain worship, serve pilgrims and advance the larger good. The Ram temple, indeed Hindu society, now has an unprecedented opportunity. Out of the present embarrassment can emerge a new benchmark for temple administration in India. Indeed, faith has nothing to fear, but everything to gain, from honesty. Not that this is only a Hindu concern. Every religious community in India, every public institution, confronts the same challenge: how to ensure that power remains accountable and trust is never taken for granted. The Ram Mandir occupies a uniquely visible place in the nation's imagination. Precisely because expectations are so high, its standards must be higher still. The true triumph of the Ram Mandir movement will not be measured only by the temple that has been built, but by the institutional apparatus that preserves and safeguards the faith of millions. That is why the greatest opportunity presented by this unhappy controversy is one that few are yet discussing.

Hindu temples must become models of integrity, transparency, public service and ethical leadership. If Ayodhya can show the way, the present moment, painful though it is, may yet mark not the diminution of a great national achievement but the beginning of its moral fulfillment.

Mostly associated with ageing, grey hair can be a natural process and can occur at any age.

Home remedies for grey Hair

Medically speaking, everybody has malenocyte in skin and hair, and when these malenocyte are not produced, a person tends to face whitish grey hair. If you are not yet ready for the silver-fox hair look and are looking for inexpensive, non-time consuming hair remedies for grey hair, then you have reached the right place. Today, we will take you through the top home remedies of grey hair, which will help your body in increasing the production of melanin.

Beef up the protein. Protein rich foods, such as lean meat, soy, whole grains, eggs, and cereals not only help you in maintaining long strands of healthy black hair, but they also give your hair a natural shine and smooth texture. Make sure to include health doses of meat, cereals, soy and whole grains in your diet.

Eat foods that are rich in vitamins, minerals and iron. Food items, such as green leafy vegetables, tomatoes, bananas and cauliflower will help in preventing and treating premature greying of hair. It can show wonderful results for healthy hair growth as well.

Indian gooseberry or amla. Amla is an excellent remedy for grey hair when mixed in coconut oil and applied to your scalp on a regular basis. Best would be to boil some dried amla pieces in coconut oil and let it stand overnight. Apply this oil to your hair for speedy treatment of grey hair. If you want you can grate some ginger and honey in this mixture too.

The black tea remedy for grey hair. Make one cup of black tea without adding milk to it and add one tablespoon of salt to this mixture.

Now massage the lukewarm tea on your head, making sure that your hair roots are nicely nourished. Let the mixture stay on your hair for at least half an hour, before washing your hair thoroughly with a good quality shampoo.

Henna powder can come to your rescue. Make a paste with henna powder, yogurt, methi seeds, coffee, basil juice and mint juice and boil it nicely. Let the mixture stand overnight before you apply it on your hair.

Wash your hair with shampoo in about 3 hours for natural black hair colour.

Dried sage for premature greying of your hair. Boil some water and add 4 tablespoons of dried sage. Let the mixture stand for 2 hours and drain it further. Now add a few drops of glycerine



power to the mixture, which will provide your hair with nourishing Vitamin E. Mix well and massage on your scalp for natural shine and long, healthy black strands. **Massage your scalp with coconut oil.** Boil one cup of coconut oil. Add hibiscus leaves, almond oil and methi powder to the mixture. Cool and strain and keep it in a glass jar to apply at least 3-4 times in a week.



Home remedies to bring the glow back



Anita Tuli, an expert in aromatherapy products says, "Nature has all the answers to help you nurture your skin. Each natural ingredient has its own special quality and helps your skin in different ways." Here are some home remedies...

- A little bit of sandalwood and turmeric powder mixed with some rose water can work wonders for the skin giving it baby-like softness.

- Triphala contains polyphenols, flavonoids and other antioxidants that possess both anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties, clearing acne as if it ceased to exist.

- Sandalwood, gram flour and turmeric powder have antimicrobial properties that reduce skin inflammations, clear acne and reduce sunburn.

- Orange peel acts as an astringent and skin-toning agent, clearing acne, age spots and skin blemishes.

- Lemon juice is acidic with exfoliating properties helps to

Summer is over, but it has left behind an unwanted tan on your skin. When it comes to replenishing your skin with much-needed nourishment and also getting rid of darkened skin, one should trust Mother Nature.

peel away the skin's top layer, there by removing existing pigmentation or dark spots. Lemon juice can be mixed with a little bit of sugar, which is an excellent cleansing agent.

- Winter cherry (Ashwagandha) soothes skin abrasions caused due to environmental conditions. One of the best ingredients that nature has to offer for dealing with skin irritation.

- Peppermint, basil and neem leaves have cooling properties that reduce skin inflammation, insect bites, skin burn and

rashes. You can also mix in a little honey. It contains antioxidants and antibacterial agents that help reduce skin irritation.

- Tomatoes are the best to lighten your skin and remove tan. Natasha says, "Lycopene, the carotenoid found in tomato, with its antioxidant properties is used in many anti-ageing treatments."

- Aloe Vera soothes troubled skin and is great for all sorts of skin trouble due to its ability to stimulate healthy cell growth and repair damaged tissues.

The perfect recipe

- Grind four almonds, soaked in water overnight

- Mix one tablespoon gram flour and two tablespoons of raw milk or milk cream to this

- Add five-six drops of lemon juice and honey

- Apply this paste to your face and neck, avoiding the eyes and allow it to dry

- Wash with cold water after about 25-30 minutes

- Do this twice a week and see the change in your skin tone and texture

1. Apply sunscreen regularly

Whatever the skin type, using sunscreen is a must. If protecting your skin from damage caused due to sun was never your priority, start now. Sunscreen will protect your skin from sun and you'll look younger. Most importantly, go for sunscreens for oily skin to avoid clogged pores.

2. Don't wash your face too often

Don't over cleanse your face even though your oily skin texture may tempt you into washing your face again and again. Yes you may want your skin to look fresh, clean and oil-free but washing your face several times in a day actually leads to increase in oil production. Also, over-cleansing may make your skin dry. You can wash your face twice a day and use blotting papers during the day to keep oil away.

3. Nourish your skin

Antioxidants help prevent oxidising and help your skin stay supple. So antioxidants is certainly something that you need to incorporate in your skin-care routine. Opt for oil-free moisturisers that contain antioxidants. Also follow a diet that includes berries, beans and veggies to feed your skin

4. Get adequate sleep

Sleep is extremely important not only

Anti-ageing tips for oily skin

give yourself as it not only damages your health but also your skin. And if you have a sweet tooth and indulge in too many sweets, cut down on them. Studies have shown that consuming lots of sugar over long periods can cause skin to age and dull due to a process in our body called glycation. Limit your consumption of candies and eat healthy vegetables and fruits instead. Also, drinking alcohol dilates your blood vessels and increases blood flow near the skin's surface which makes your skin appear sallow. So limit your consumption of alcohol.

Oily skinned women have typically less lines and wrinkles visible as compared to women with normal and dry skin. Though there are a few benefits of having oily skin, here's how you can prevent your skin from ageing faster



for your skin but your overall health. This doesn't mean you sleep all day, just get adequate sleep of around 8 to 9 hours. Also, sleep on your back as sleeping on your face can wrinkle the skin and age skin at a faster rate.

5. Consume Omega-3 fatty acids

Omega-3 fatty acids revitalises your skin and repairs it from inside. Eat foods rich on omega-3 fatty acids like salmon, halibut, eggs, soy milk and yogurt. They are not only delicious but also do a lot of benefit to your skin.

6. Avoid sugar, smoke and alcohol

Quitting smoking is the best thing you can





How to

Look pretty in Glasses

Glasses are a great way to look smart, sassy and sophisticated. Here are ways to look pretty in glasses.

1. Keep your brows well-groomed

Keeping your eyebrows neat and in a good shape will highlight your eyes despite wearing glasses. Use a brow powder to fill in the gaps and a brow liner to define your brows.

2. Use concealer

Glasses tend to highlight dark circles, wrinkles or imperfections under your eyes. In order to avoid this, lightly dot concealer on dark circles and blemishes. Blend in with make-up sponge

3. Use the right eye shadow

Wear colour that complements the colour of your frame. If you wish to highlight your eyes and glasses both, pick a shade that's opposite to the colour of your frame in the colour wheel. For a natural look, stick to neutral shades.

4. Apply eye liner

To make your eyes pop, apply an eye liner. Make sure you just line the rim of your eyes and do not end up creating a smokey effect. You should look stunning and not downright scary.

5. Use a bold lip colour

Don't let your glasses take away all the attention. So if you have a brown or a black frame, opt for a bold lip colour like a deep red or a hot pink. If you have coloured frame, opt for nudes like rosy pink.

6. Do the right hair-do

Keep in mind that a half up and half down hair do isn't that great for girls wearing spectacles to stick to just one of them. Either leave your hair loose with face-framing bangs or tie them up in a loose bun or a ponytail and you'll look great.



4 ways to whiter Teeth

So, you have always been complimented for your dazzling smile. We hope you have a perfect set of pearlys to give you that radiant smile.

We hope you have a perfect set of pearlys to give you that radiant smile.

Yellowing of teeth are a thorough let-down. Dark lipsticks, especially shades of red and even neons, bring out the yellowness of your teeth. Thus, it is imperative to have a clean set of white teeth for you to flaunt that neon pout. However, whitening or brightening your teeth need not be an expensive affair. You don't always have to splurge on products and treatments that will leave a dent in your pocket. Here are some natural ways to whiten your teeth.

Mix baking soda

This is by far the cheapest and most effective way to whiten your pearlys. Baking soda is easily available in most general stores. Squeeze out a little toothpaste in a bowl. Add a pinch of baking soda to it. Mix it up and then brush your teeth with it. Indian food tends to stain teeth a lot, because of the use of turmeric. Try this mixture before bedtime. Ensure that you rinse your mouth thoroughly afterwards, as baking soda doesn't taste good if left in your teeth.

Gorge on strawberries

Strawberries are tasty and make for a great scrub for your teeth. The tiny seeds in the fruit scrub away the tartar off the teeth. Works well on days when you are feeling too lazy to do much else in the way of oral hygiene.

Use a straw

We all love our daily cuppa. However, caffeine addiction wreaks havoc on your teeth. Sad but true. Having too many cups of coffee or tea stains teeth like nothing else. The same goes for soda. You simply must give it up completely or restrict your intake to as little as possible. If you can't give it up, at least try using a straw to sip coffee or soda to avoid direct contact with teeth.

Floss

Most people don't think much about it. However, flossing is one habit that you must inculcate. It is one of the best ways to dislodge the food that you have eaten all day long — even if you rinse thoroughly, food particles get stuck between your teeth. It helps in cleaning the stains in the creases of your gums while preventing gum disease. Grab some floss and make it your nightly routine.



5 ways to thicken

Your eyelashes

Eyelashes frame our eyes, yet we rarely pay much attention to them. However, a new trend is emerging where women are increasingly concerned about the strength, length and thickness of their lashes. Dermatologist Dr Kiran Lohia, MD, also a Healthmeup expert tells us how we can get those lovely Sleeping Beauty lashes.

Always wash off your eye make up

While it may be tempting to leave our eye make up on after a long night, this habit can damage your lashes and the sensitive skin around your eyes. This is because the eye lashes become brittle and more prone to damage, as well as irritate the surrounding area. So, use a gentle



make up remover to get rid of the gunk and make sure you don't aggressively rub, pull or abrade your eyelashes in the process.

Give your lashes a breather

Eyelash curlers, lash extensions and excessive products can be very taxing to your eyelashes. They cause undue damage and stress, resulting in breakage and hair loss. So, give your lashes a break by avoiding these toxic practices when you can. Remember, your eyelashes need to recover; so letting them breathe naturally can benefit your eyes in the long run.

Eat healthy

Your diet plays an important role in maintaining the health of your lashes. Vitamins like Biotin are highly important for hair growth, as well as essential amino acids. Amino acids are an integral part of the hair shaft, so protein deficiencies can often cause hair loss. Look for a multivitamin or for a vitamin specifically



designed for hair growth. Make sure it contains biotin, and take it daily.

Stop rubbing your eyes

Most people rub their eyes, particularly when they feel sleepy, stressed, or their eyes feel itchy. While it may feel good at the time, this is a particularly nasty habit that can cause a multitude of problems, least of which is the loss of your eyelashes. The more you rub your eyes, the more your lashes will break and fall off, leaving you with stubby and thin eyelashes. So, always remember to keep your hands away from your eyes.

Look for prostaglandins

Recently, prostaglandins have been proven to be effective in increasing the length of your lashes. They take some time to work, but they are highly effective and have even been US FDA approved for the purpose of eyelash lengthening. So, ask your dermatologist about this prescription treatment to get your lashes looking naturally thick and luscious.



CJP announces 1-day mass hunger strike in solidarity with Sonam Wangchuk

The Cockroach Janta Party has been staging a sit-in at Delhi's Jantar Mantar for the past 25 days, demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the NEET paper leak.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) has called for a one-day mass hunger strike tomorrow in solidarity with activist and innovator Sonam Wangchuk, who has been on an indefinite fast for 18 days alongside those protesting over the NEET paper leak.

"Tomorrow, July 16th, join us for 1-day mass hunger strike in solidarity with Sonam Wangchuk and the students of this country," the party said in a post on X. The CJP, a satirical movement started

by Abhishek Dipke in May, has been staging a sit-in at Delhi's Jantar Mantar for the past 25 days, demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the irregularities in the NEET exam. Wangchuk joined the agitation on June 28 and has remained on an indefinite hunger strike since then.

CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke said Wangchuk's health had deteriorated sharply after more than two weeks without food. "Wangchuk has been losing muscle mass and is in immense

pain," Dipke said, adding that the activist has lost 8.5 kg since beginning his fast.

Wangchuk's prolonged fast has drawn appeals from across the political spectrum and civil society. AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, and several opposition lawmakers have urged him to call off the hunger strike while pressing the Centre to engage with the protesters. Actor Omi Vaidya of



'3 Idiots' fame, along with other celebrities and academics, have also expressed concern over his health and appealed for a resolution through dialogue.

Despite the appeals, Wangchuk has maintained that he will continue the fast until the government agrees to hold talks with the protesters.

Meanwhile, the CJP has stepped up preparations for its proposed 'Chalo Sansad' march on July 20, the opening day of the Monsoon Session of Parliament. The party has urged supporters to register for the march through its missed-call campaign.

Party spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka said more than 130,000 people have registered their support.

India through art of a remarkable early Victorian woman, now on display in Delhi

New Delhi. (Agency)

Almost 200 years ago, an aristocratic English lady of remarkable talents travelled across North India, recording her experiences in words and in art. Emily Eden, a correspondent of Queen Victoria and the sister of a Governor-General of India, sketched Indian princes, soldiers, and servants.

Her artworks featured a number of Indian cities – among them Calcutta, Lahore, Punjab, Simla, and Kabul. But she ignored Delhi – for she found “nothing to see” in the city that had then recently passed under the rule of the last Mughal king Bahadur Shah Zafar.

The art of Emily Eden is now back in the city that she barely found worth sketching. An exhibition titled Princes & People of India: Portraits by Emily Eden, featuring almost 30 hand-coloured lithographs and the Eden Family Archives, both now part of the DAG collection, is ongoing at DAG on Janpath until August 1. Eden travelled from Calcutta, the capital of British India until 1911, to Lahore in the company of her brother George Eden, the 1st Earl of Auckland and Governor-General of India from 1836 to 1842, and their sister Fanny.

The siblings began their journey in 1837, their 1,700-mile trip ending in the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Lahore. It was the intention of the Governor-General to cement an alliance with the founder of the Sikh Empire against the Barakzais of Kabul, and as a hedge against the expansionism of Russia's Tsar Nicholas I.

Shrine demolished for widening of Pitampura-Shalimar Bagh road in Delhi

New Delhi. (Agency)

In a crackdown against illegal constructions, the Delhi government on Tuesday demolished a shrine built on government land in the middle of a Pitampura-Shalimar Bagh road.

According to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), the action was part of the government's drive against illegal encroachments and aimed to remove obstacles delaying the road expansion project, which is expected to improve traffic flow on the busy corridor.

“The road-widening project is intended to provide a smooth and obstruction-free route for commuters travelling between Pitampura and Shalimar Bagh,” the CMO said. The demolition also forms part of a wider crackdown on unauthorised structures that hinder public infrastructure projects and affect road connectivity across the national capital.

The CMO said that the city government has adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards illegal construction and encroachments on government land.

Notably, the anti-encroachment drive has intensified in recent weeks. Since June 1, authorities have demolished 94 illegally constructed buildings and sealed 114 others for violations of building byelaws and fire safety norms.

The government said the crackdown gathered pace after the June 3 Malviya Nagar fire tragedy. Since then, 63 buildings have been demolished, with the largest single-day action recorded on June 3 when 22 structures were razed. Authorities have also sealed about 97 buildings during this period, including 79 properties in a single day on June 7.

Officials from the revenue department inspected 124 sites across 13 districts, taking action wherever violations were detected.

Plea in Delhi HC seeks ‘force-feeding’ of Sonam Wangchuk: ‘Treating him like terrorist’

New Delhi. (Agency)

With activist Sonam Wangchuk on a hunger strike at Jantar Mantar for 18 days now, a practising advocate has moved a PIL in the Delhi High Court alleging that the government is treating him like a “terrorist” and seems to be “apathetic” to the situation.

The advocate has sought the court's direction to the government to provide “full proper and necessary aids” to Wangchuk to stop his “deteriorating health and life-threatening conditions” and “force feed him”. The PIL, which was due to be heard on Wednesday by Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice

Tejas Karia, has now been posted for Thursday owing to a strike by lawyers. No lawyers from the Delhi or Central governments appeared before the court owing to a call to



lawyers to strike work by the Delhi High Court Bar Association (DHCBA), over an administrative decision to increase the pecuniary

jurisdiction of district courts in Delhi.

The bench posted the matter for hearing tomorrow, “having regard to the urgency” in the matter. The court directed the Registry to serve the order passed by the court today – that it will hear the matter tomorrow – to the Additional Solicitor General and Delhi government standing counsel on the civil side.

The petitioner, advocate R K Saini, in his PIL, claimed the “government is treating him like he is a hardcore criminal, terrorist or traitor to the nation”, adding that the “government seems to be (apathetic) to the situation”.

Indian sailor missing since Sunday in Hormuz strike is dead: Father-in-law

New Delhi. (Agency)

An Indian national who went missing after the commercial vessel GFS Galaxy was attacked off the coast of Oman has died, his father-in-law told international news agency Reuters on Wednesday.

Heramb Karmarkar, 30, was a marine engineer on the Cyprus-flagged container ship, which was attacked on Sunday. The vessel had a 24-member crew, including 11 Indians, and was hit by an “unidentified projectile,” according to Cyprus authorities. Iran said it had struck the

ship after it tried to pass through an unauthorised route despite warnings to correct its course.

Karmarkar's father-in-law, Vivek



Tandon, told Reuters that the company operating the vessel had informed him of his son-in-law's death. India's foreign ministry did

not immediately respond to a request for comment on Wednesday.

Karmarkar is the second Indian seafarer to be killed in the region in three days. Another Indian seafarer was killed on Tuesday after two vessels were attacked while transiting the Strait of Hormuz. After Tuesday's killing, New Delhi lodged a strong protest with Iran and summoned its deputy ambassador. Tehran says it has again closed the Strait of Hormuz after hostilities with Washington reignited last week, while US President Donald Trump says the waterway is open to all shipping traffic except that of Iran.

Before Tahir Hussain’s conviction, judicial panel visited scene of crime

New Delhi. (Agency)

On May 11, the lanes of Chand Bagh – one of the worst-affected localities during the 2020 Northeast Delhi riots – witnessed heavy police deployment. This is where Intelligence Bureau (IB) staffer Ankit Sharma was allegedly murdered in February 2020. His body was later recovered from the Khajoori Khas drain.

A judicial panel led by Additional Sessions Judge Praveen Singh of the Karkardooma Court arrived, accompanied by court staff, defence and prosecution counsel, local police and Crime Branch officers – who investigated the case – to visit the scene of the crime in order to verify the testimonies of witnesses.

Police officers said such visits before the pronouncement of a judgment are rare. “We had seen a similar development during the 2002 Gujarat riots. Judicial panels usually visit the site to understand the topography and verify witness testimonies,” an officer said.

The officer added that the judicial panel visited all the locations from where Sharma was allegedly picked up and dragged by the mob. The team also visited Gali 6 where Sharma lived in Khajuri Khas's E Block. The drain below the Chand Bagh Pulia, where his body was found, is around 200 m away from his street.

Hussain's house lies between Sharma's house and the drain. In his

order, the judge observed that one of the witnesses had never claimed that she saw the incident while standing inside the gate of Gali 6. The judge,



while referring to the testimony of the witness, said in his order: “...the fact that she is a witness to the riots of 25.02.2020 has not been challenged. What has been challenged is that, as she was inside the gate of her gali,

she could not have seen the Chand Bagh Pulia. It is contended that this fact was established during my visit to the scene of crime. However, it is to be noticed that the witness had never stated in her examination-in-chief that she had witnessed this incident from inside the gate of Gali 6.”

“Her statement that she had come up to the gate of her gali and then seen the incident cannot be interpreted to mean that she remained inside the gate. Her exact position near the gate, whether inside or outside, was never clarified. Nor did she depose that the gate of her gali remained closed throughout her visits. Rather, she stated that it was open and that only during her last visit did she find it closed,” the order added.

Mahindra Thar and XUV 3XO get costlier now - Details

MUMBAI. (Agency)

Mahindra has raised prices across its entire SUV lineup in July, with hikes going up to 2.7%. That includes the Thar and XUV 3XO, two of the brand's popular models. The Thar now costs up to Rs 37,000 more, while the XUV 3XO is up by as much as Rs 30,000. Mahindra points to rising production costs behind the move. It's not alone either. Honda, Kia, JSW MG Motor, and Toyota have all announced similar price hikes this month. Mahindra Thar price hike

This isn't the Thar's first price bump this year. It went up by as much as Rs 20,000 in January, then Rs 43,500 in April. Now in July, it's climbing again, this time by up to Rs 37,000. Starting from the base, the Thar AXT 2WD diesel 1.5 MT now costs Rs 32,500 more, bringing its starting price to Rs 10.32 lakh. Move up a notch, and the LXT 2WD 2.2-litre diesel MT gets pricier by Rs 29,500, while the LXT 2WD 2.0-litre petrol AT rises by Rs 27,000. That puts the LXT diesel 2WD MT at Rs 12.99 lakh, and the LXT petrol 2WD automatic now starts at Rs 14.76 lakh. Next up, the LXT 4WD 2.0 petrol MT costs Rs 33,000 more, taking it to Rs 15.59 lakh. The LXT 4WD 2.2 diesel MT rises by Rs 34,000, now priced at Rs 16.42 lakh.

The LXT 4WD 2.0 petrol AT climbs by Rs 36,000, landing at Rs 17.22 lakh. And right at the top, the LXT 4WD 2.2 diesel automatic sees the steepest hike of all, Rs 37,000, pushing its price to Rs 17.99 lakh.

Services index to help India's statistical system meet global standards

New Delhi. (Agency)

With the introduction of the Index of Services Production (ISP), India is advancing its statistical system with global standards, as services sector has become a key driver of economic growth and employment generation and the government aims to position the country as a world leader in services, targeting a 10 per cent share in global services by 2047. According to an official factsheet, the ISP is India's first high-frequency indicator dedicated to measuring services sector output. It tracks short-term changes in the volume of output produced by the formal services sector relative to a specified base year.

The services sector is the largest contributor to India's GDP, contributing over 50 per cent of the Gross Value Added (GVA) since 2013-14. In 2024-25, share of services GVA stood close to 52.9 per cent. The sector accounts for 30 per cent of total employment across India and generated 40 million jobs over the past six years. India's services exports maintained strong momentum in FY2026-27. In April-June 2026-27, services exports are estimated at \$103.41 billion, registering a 6.16 per cent annual growth.

According to the factsheet, as the services sector is central to India's growth, a dedicated short-term indicator to track its performance has become essential. The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) measures only industrial activity and does not capture short-term trends in the services sector. To address this gap, the Government has introduced the ISP, the statement added.

US Senators unveil bill for 100 per cent tariffs on India, four others for buying Russian oil

New Delhi. (Agency)

A bipartisan group of US Senators unveiled a bill that seeks to impose 100 per cent tariffs on five countries, including India and China, for purchasing oil from Russia. The bill, brokered by late Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, exempts 15 European nations that buy gas from Russia from the tariffs, arguing that the purchases amount to a fraction of their total requirement and the countries in question were taking steps to reduce dependence on Moscow. Apart from India and China, other countries that will be hit by the tariffs are Slovakia, Hungary and Azerbaijan. "It's been referred to as a triffs bill, but actually it imposes full blocking sanctions on wide swaths of the Russian economy, including its energy industry, financial industry, defence industrial base, oligarchs, business people, and Vladimir Putin himself," Richard Blumenthal, a Democratic Senator from Connecticut, told reporters here Tuesday evening. "It imposes tariffs that are targeted: narrowly limited to the five major purchasers - up to 100 per cent - with waiver authority that is narrowly tailored and constricted. And those five major purchasers, right now, of oil are China, India, Slovakia, Hungary, Azerbaijan," Blumenthal said.

Top 10 changes as India-UK FTA kicks in: Cheaper cars, whisky and zero-duty exports

New Delhi. (Agency)

India's long-awaited free trade agreement (FTA) with the United Kingdom comes into effect today, marking one of the country's biggest trade reforms in recent years. Officially called the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), the deal was signed in July 2025 after 14 rounds of negotiations. While consumers are likely to notice cheaper British products such as Scotch whisky, chocolates and premium cars over time, the agreement's biggest gains are expected to come from greater market access for Indian exporters, professionals and businesses. The agreement gives Indian exporters

zero-duty access on nearly 99% of tariff lines in the UK while India will reduce or eliminate duties on 90% of tariff lines for British goods over a phased period. Spread across 30 chapters, the pact also covers digital trade, financial services, intellectual property, innovation, government procurement and the movement of professionals. Here are the top 10 changes that come with the India-UK FTA.

SCOTCH WHISKY AND GIN WILL GRADUALLY BECOME CHEAPER

One of the biggest consumer-facing changes is lower duties on British alcoholic beverages. Import duty on Scotch whisky will fall

from 150% to 75% immediately and will reduce further to 40% over the next 10 years. Gin will receive similar tariff benefits. This does not necessarily

premium British spirits are expected to become more affordable in India. **BRITISH CARS WILL COST LESS, BUT NOT IMMEDIATELY**



mean prices will fall overnight, as retailers and importers will decide how much of the duty reduction is passed on to consumers. But over time,

The FTA also opens the door for cheaper British automobiles. Import duties on fully built UK vehicles, currently as high as 110%, will gradually decline to 10% over a 10-year period under a quota-based system. Electric and hybrid vehicles will also receive preferential access, but only through quotas designed to protect India's domestic automobile industry during its transition to electric mobility.

Dalal Street opens in green as banks lead gains, crude stays above \$85

New Delhi. (Agency)

Benchmark stock market indices opened higher on Wednesday, led by strong buying in banking and financial stocks after softer-than-expected US inflation data boosted investor sentiment and lifted Asian markets. However, gains remained capped amid continued geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and weakness in IT shares. The S&P BSE Sensex rose 530.01 points to 77,584.95, while the NSE Nifty 50 gained 145.10 points to 24,197.15 as of 9:30 am. The rally came after US inflation eased more than expected, reducing concerns over further interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve and improving risk appetite across global markets.

However, investors remained cautious as tensions between the US and Iran continued to simmer, with the two countries exchanging strikes and battling for control of the Strait of Hormuz. Brent crude remained elevated at \$85.63 per barrel, up 1.06%, while WTI crude traded at \$79.85, up 0.64%. The rupee opened largely unchanged at 96.1725 against the US dollar, compared with its previous close of 96.20.

BANKING, FINANCIAL STOCKS LEAD GAINS

The broader market also traded firmly in the green. The Nifty 100 gained 0.62%, Nifty 200 rose 0.61%, Nifty 500 climbed 0.62%, while the Nifty Midcap 100 advanced 0.57%. The Nifty Smallcap 100

outperformed with a gain of 0.82%. Meanwhile, India VIX fell 3.74%, signalling easing market volatility. Among sectoral indices, Nifty Financial Services Ex-Bank gained 1.24%, followed by Nifty Private Bank (1.11%), Nifty Financial Services (1.10%), Nifty PSU Bank (1.05%), Nifty Realty (0.91%), Nifty Oil & Gas (0.68%) and Nifty Auto (0.65%). On the other hand, Nifty IT slipped 0.24%, Nifty Media fell 0.30% and Nifty Metal edged down 0.18%. Among Sensex constituents, Bajaj Finance emerged as the top gainer, rising 2.46%. Axis Bank climbed 1.92%, InterGlobe Aviation gained 1.76%, UltraTech Cement rose 1.44%, Reliance Industries added 1.24% and ICICI Bank advanced 1.21%.

Inside Fairfax's proposed \$5.5 billion IDBI Bank acquisition and what's at stake

New Delhi. (Agency)

The government's long-delayed plan to privatise IDBI Bank may finally be nearing a breakthrough. Canadian investor Fairfax Financial Holdings, founded by Indian-born billionaire Prem Watsa, has emerged as the frontrunner in the race to acquire a controlling stake in IDBI Bank, according to multiple media reports. If the proposed transaction goes through, it could be worth around \$5.5 billion-\$5.7 billion, making it one of the largest foreign investments ever in an Indian bank and one of the government's most significant privatisation deals in recent years. It may be noted that the deal is still under evaluation and no final

decision has been announced. Yet the interest it has generated goes far beyond the sale of a single bank. It is a story about India's



privatisation push, IDBI Bank's remarkable turnaround and growing global confidence in the country's financial sector. **WHAT IS THE PROPOSED DEAL?**

The government and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) are seeking to sell a combined 60.7% stake in IDBI Bank. The central government currently owns about 45.5% of the lender, while LIC holds nearly 49.2%. Together, they control close to 95% of the bank. After a lengthy bidding process, two contenders remain in the race: Fairfax Financial Holdings and Dubai-based Emirates NBD. Fairfax has emerged as the frontrunner after revising its financial offer. Government officials are currently evaluating the bids and discussing the next steps in the transaction.

China's economic growth slows to weakest pace in three years despite export boom: Here's why

New Delhi. (Agency)

China's economy lost pace in the April-June quarter, despite rising exports as weak domestic demand and investment dragged growth to its slowest pace in more than three years. Official data released on Wednesday showed that the economy expanded at an annualised 4.3%, down from 5% in the January-March quarter and below forecasts. Exports continued to be a bright spot for the economy with the customs data showing that outbound shipments rose 17.6% in the first half of the year compared with the same period a year ago, while exports climbed 27% in June. Growth was supported in part by the artificial intelligence boom and strong overseas demand for Chinese electric vehicles. China has also largely avoided the broader economic fallout from the Iran war, even as higher

energy prices added to inflationary pressures globally. Stronger overseas demand has not yielded economic recovery at home as consumer spending and investment remained weak, reducing the overall impact of export-led manufacturing on growth. Economists have said that the economy is becoming increasingly uneven as government support and private capital continue to flow into advanced sectors such as artificial intelligence, robotics and semiconductor manufacturing, while lower-value manufacturing and service industries that generate large numbers of jobs continue to lag. The country's push into high-tech manufacturing has driven strong growth in exports of electric vehicles, computer chips and other electronic products, backed by significant government support as advanced technology remains a key policy

priority. Last year, China recorded a global trade surplus of \$1.2 trillion, the highest on record. The surplus has drawn criticism from policymakers in



other countries, who argue that generous state subsidies have resulted in excess manufacturing capacity, with surplus goods being exported to overseas markets. Meanwhile, the growing adoption of artificial intelligence and robotics has raised concerns within China over whether enough new jobs will be created to

sustain economic growth over the longer term. Household spending has remained under pressure as families continue to hold back on major purchases amid the prolonged downturn in the property market and uncertainty over wages and employment. Mao Shengyong, deputy head of China's National Bureau of Statistics, said that the gap between supply and demand continues to pose a challenge. "Given the increasingly unstable and uncertain global situation, the imbalance between strong supply and weak demand remains acute," he told reporters. Mao said that as China continues to pursue "higher-quality economic growth" through high-tech manufacturing, efforts will also focus on building a stronger domestic market and supporting stable employment. Wei Li, Head of Multi-Asset Investments at BNP Paribas Securities (China),

Haryana police issues 2,671 challans in Gurugram, collects over Rs 25 lakh in fines during June crackdown

Panchkula.(Agency)

Haryana Police has intensified its enforcement against traffic violations in Gurugram, issuing 2,671 challans and imposing fines exceeding Rs 25 lakh during June as part of a special drive to improve road safety and ensure greater compliance with traffic rules.

A spokesperson of Haryana Police said that Traffic Police Gurugram issued 1,847 challans against motorists found indulging in triple riding between June 1 and June 30, 2026, imposing fines totaling Rs 18.47 lakh.

The spokesperson said triple riding significantly increases the risk of road accidents and appealed to motorists to strictly follow traffic rules for their own safety and that of other road users.

In another enforcement drive, 824 auto-rickshaw and taxi drivers were challaned for operating their vehicles without the prescribed grey uniform, with penalties amounting to Rs 6.78 lakh. The spokesperson said despite repeated awareness campaigns, several drivers continued to violate the mandatory uniform rule, prompting strict action under the Motor Vehicles Act.

Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 3.0 plantation drive held at Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly

Raipur .(Agency)

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai planted a Rudraksha sapling on Tuesday during a large-scale plantation drive organized at the State Legislative Assembly premises under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 3.0' campaign during the monsoon session.

Addressing the programme, the Chief Minister said the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign, launched at the call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has grown into a nationwide people's movement. He said the campaign is not merely about planting saplings but also about expressing gratitude towards mother Earth, nurturing sensitivity towards nature and strengthening the collective responsibility of safeguarding the environment for future generations.

CM Sai said planting a sapling in the name of one's mother creates an emotional bond that inspires people to nurture and protect it. He said this emotional connect has made the campaign sustainable, impactful and driven by public participation. The Chief Minister described the initiative by MLAs to plant saplings in their mothers' names as highly inspiring. He said the message from the Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly would create greater awareness about environmental conservation across the state.

Vijay govt's major push, to install 20k EV chrging stations by 2031 across TN

CHENNAI.(Agency)

In a major boost to EV charging infrastructure, the TVK government headed by Chief Minister Vijay has stepped up efforts to build a large-scale electric vehicle (EV) charging network, with the State government unveiling key policy initiatives aimed at accelerating infrastructure rollout and attracting private investments.

As part of its broader vision, the government is targeting the installation of 20,000 public EV charging stations by 2031, positioning Tamil Nadu as a leader in sustainable mobility.

According to an official release, a high-level review meeting chaired by the Chief Secretary assessed the current status of EV charging facilities. This was followed by a technical committee meeting led by Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (TNPDC), in collaboration with ITDP India and Guidance Tamil Nadu, to address bottlenecks and propose reforms.

The committee announced three major initiatives to ease entry barriers for EV infrastructure developers.

In a first, FIR for illegal occupation of EWS house in Ahmedabad

The FIR against an individual was registered at the Satellite Police Station in the city.

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

For the first time, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) records show an FIR registered for illegal occupation of a house built under an Economically Weaker Section (EWS) housing scheme.

The FIR against an individual was registered at the Satellite Police Station in the city. According to the chairman of Housing Improvement and EWS Housing Committee of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) Darshan Shah, Jiva Dohsa na Chhapra (The Jai Jogmaya Co., Ltd.) was vacant for a long time. During this time, four people illegally occupied four vacant houses there.

"When brought to their notice, the estate department and housing project department of AMC removed all illegal occupants from the place. While three of them did not return, one kept coming back to live illegally in House No. 207, Block No.-C," Shah stated. The individual was even warned with a police complaint under the



provisions of Section 223 of the Indian Penal Code. "Police have registered a case. Goods seized, and the accommodation re-sealed," the municipal corporation stated in a release.ENS

Civic body launches pilot project to cut noise pollution in Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad .(Agency)

THE AHMEDABAD Municipal Corporation (AMC) has launched a technology-based pilot project to control noise pollution caused by excessive use of vehicle horns in Ahmedabad city.

Under the project, IoT-based YHonk devices developed by a startup, YHonk Technology Private Limited, will be installed in select vehicles. "Data on vehicle horn usage will be collected and analysed with the help of smart noise sensors embedded in the device. By analysing honking patterns, frequencies and trends, the report enables a data-driven understanding of indiscriminate honking, paving the way for targeted interventions and sustainable noise reduction strategies," AMC authorities said



project, YHonk Technology will install the device free of cost in 300 vehicles of different types under the AMC limits. Based on the

data collected, necessary guidance and training will also be provided to drivers, so that unnecessary use of horns can be reduced.

"Based on the results of this project, necessary planning and measures will be taken to control noise pollution in the city more effectively," an AMC official stated. According to Ahmedabad-based YHonk Technology, the device detects and identifies vehicular honking, thereby facilitating stakeholders to either reward or penalise drivers. The system also has features such as setting a cut-off based on a honk limit on the lines of the universally accepted 'polluter's pay principle'. Since measuring honking alone isn't the solution, the ecosystem is designed to reshape driver behaviour, encouraging responsible honking through feedback, restrictions, and incentives.

Technopark-based HEX20 launches 2nd satellite for Taiwan, eyes 6 more space missions

Thiruvananthapuram.(Agency)

Technopark-based spacetechnology startup HEX20, which built India's first private-sector rideshare satellite, has successfully launched its second satellite, KOYO (Kinetic Optical Yaw Observer), for Taiwan's National Central University, marking another milestone in the company's growing global space mission portfolio.

The satellite was launched aboard SpaceX's Transporter-17 mission and was deployed into orbit about an hour after liftoff. Around 40 minutes after deployment, HEX20 received the satellite's first beacon signals, which were successfully decoded by the SatNOGS amateur satellite community, confirming healthy initial operations.

The achievement comes a year after HEX20 launched 'Nila', Kerala's first private-sector satellite, in partnership

with Space Exploration Technologies Corporation (SpaceX). HEX20 Chief Executive Officer Amal Chandran said KOYO strengthens the company's position as a trusted global satellite mission partner, adding that each successful mission expands its flight heritage, enhances platform maturity, and reinforces its capability to deliver end-to-end satellite missions with speed, reliability and engineering excellence.

He said the company remains committed to enabling governments, research institutions and commercial organisations to transform ambitious ideas into successful space missions. Chief Technology Officer and Co-Founder Anurag Reghu said KOYO has been performing as designed in orbit, with more than 1,500 beacon packets decoded and over 75 commands successfully transmitted from the ground during the

commissioning phase. Payload operations are scheduled to begin sequentially during the second week. The satellite carries advanced payloads from multiple international partners, including Aegiverse's Fiber Optic Gyroscope (FOG) from Taiwan, Amplified Space's configurable power system from the United States, a digipeater for the amateur radio community from Taiwan, and ET Space Power's solar cells, integrated into a HEX20-built solar panel. Reghu said the solar cells have performed according to specifications. He added that KOYO has also successfully space-qualified several HEX20-developed technologies, including a new solar panel deployment mechanism with a novel feedback system, hinge design, deployable monopole rod antenna, and further validated the company's AX CubeSat platform.

Kerala's first export consignment to UK under India-UK FTA flagged off from Kochi

Kochi.(Agency)

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), Regional Authority, Kochi, has flagged off the first export consignment from Kerala to the United Kingdom under the India-UK Free Trade Agreement (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement-CETA) from the Cochin Port Authority, marking the State's formal entry into exports under the landmark trade pact.

On the occasion, the DGFT presented a Letter of Recognition to the exporting firm in acknowledgement of becoming the first exporter from Kerala to ship goods to the United Kingdom under the India-UK CETA. The flag-off marks the commencement of exports from Kerala under the newly signed India-UK Free Trade Agreement, which is expected to significantly improve the competitiveness of Indian exporters while creating fresh opportunities for key sectors in the State, including marine products, spices and processed food products. The agreement is also expected to boost bilateral trade, attract investment, generate employment and further strengthen India's global trade footprint.

After July 7 deluge, one billion litre water pumped out of Surat basements

On July 7, the city recorded up to 14.5 inches of rain, which flooded its Mithi and Bhedwad creeks and forced mass evacuations.

Surat.(Agency)

More than 1.1 billion litres of water were pumped out of the basements of high-rise apartments and commercial complexes in the three days since floodwaters receded in Surat, civic officials said on Tuesday. This amount of water can fill 400 Olympic-size pools.

On July 7, the city recorded up to 14.5 inches of rain, which flooded its Mithi and Bhedwad creeks and forced mass evacuations. It has not rained here since. The civic officials took up cleaning of streets and localities in Varachha, Udhna, Limbayat, Sachin and Punagam, all of

which are in East Surat and were badly affected by the swollen creeks. At least 34 bodies of people missing after the torrential rain have been found since. Dozens of market and residential complexes had been inundated by floodwater. According to Surat Municipal Corporation, water had accumulated at 430 locations-192 residential societies, 117 public spaces, 102 high-rise towers, and 19 other properties-in the city.

SMC Additional City Engineer MD Chavda said: "Over 254 pumps and other machinery were used for the dewatering. Over 111.14 crore litres (roughly one billion litres) were removed from several

properties. The areas were cleaned later." 991 suffering from skin diseases



SMC's health wing said it conducted 15 health camps in the affected areas over the last four days. The teams include medical officers, dermatologists, paramedical staff, laboratory

technicians, and pharmacists.

Till Monday evening, as many as 4,529 people attended the camps. Among them, 991 people were diagnosed with skin diseases, 404 people with fever, 400 with breathing problems, 264 with common cough and cold, and 82 with diarrhoea. As many as 2,020 others complained of other medical problems. Fourteen of them were admitted to SMC hospitals. Surat Municipal Corporation Medical officer Dr. Pradeep Umrigar said, "The cause of skin diseases could be exposure to contaminated water for a longer period... The highest number of skin disease cases were found in Udhna A zone.

NEWS BOX

IND vs ENG: Sundar credits coach Gambhir for unlocking his batting potential

New Delhi. (Agency)

Washington Sundar credited India head coach Gautam Gambhir for helping him understand his batting better after producing a composed, unbeaten half-century in India's six-wicket win over England in the first ODI at Edgbaston on Tuesday. Sundar walked in at No. 5 after captain Shubman Gill retired hurt on 80, with India still needing 110 runs to chase down 259. The all-rounder responded with an unbeaten 52 and shared a match-winning 102-run stand with Player of the Match Axar Patel as India took a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. Batting at different positions has become a familiar challenge for Sundar. In T20Is, he has often been used as a finisher, while in Tests he has batted as high as No. 4. Against England, he once again adapted to a new role and played a crucial hand in India's successful chase. Speaking after the match, the 26-year-old said he enjoyed the responsibility



of adjusting to different situations. "The fact that I play different roles is exciting. Not many people get to play different roles. I get to play those different roles and be in those different situations. Obviously, I try my best to help the team win. As I said, it is exciting to be in different situations and different phases of the game," Sundar said.

GAMBHIR AND NEHRA BACKED MY GAME

Sundar said Gambhir's backing since taking over as India's head coach in July 2024 had given him greater clarity about his batting. He also acknowledged the influence of Gujarat Titans coach Ashish Nehra in his development. "Gauti bhai always made me understand what exactly I could do with the bat, especially, and made me understand my game as well.

Spain have found their 2010 World Cup spirit: De La Fuente after France win

New Delhi. (Agency)

Spain coach Luis de la Fuente believes his side have rediscovered the spirit that carried La Roja to their maiden FIFA World Cup title in 2010 after brushing aside France to reach the final of the 2026 tournament. Spain outclassed the tournament favourites France 2-0 in Dallas on Tuesday to book just their second-ever World Cup final. Speaking after the victory, De la Fuente hailed the unity, humility and selflessness within his squad, saying the current group reminds him of the team that conquered the world in South Africa 16 years ago. "The message was that we were up against one of the best teams in the world, but that they were up against the



best team in the world," De la Fuente said. "These players show commitment, solidarity and talent. They make the difficult look easy. They have talent and the right attitude towards life and sport." The Spain boss said what pleased him most was not just the performance on the pitch but the culture his players have built behind the scenes.

"I see a happy dressing room and a nation behind us. We've recaptured the spirit of 2010," he said. "The character of this team is evident in the fact that those who didn't play have stayed behind to train after the match." Spain's tactical masterclass completely neutralised France's star-studded attack, which had scored 16 goals before the semi-final. Kylian Mbappe, Ousmane Dembele and Michael Olise were all kept quiet as France failed to register a shot on target until after the 80th minute.

Teenage swagger: At 19, Lamine Yamal walks the talk, escapes the trolls in style

Lamine Yamal's pre-match swagger was vindicated as Spain beat France 2-0 in the World Cup semi-final. His sharp display and Spain's control left the pre-tournament favourites chasing shadows.

New Delhi. (Agency)

There is a notoriously perilous boundary in modern football between teenage confidence and public humiliation. When a 19-year-old winger, entering the biggest match of his life with an injury-hampered build-up and a distinct lack of match-sharpness, decides to taunt the pre-tournament favourites, the digital executioners usually sharpen their knives. On the eve of Spain's World Cup semi-final against France, Lamine Yamal invited danger. He sat in his press conference and coolly reminded the world that Spain, as reigning European

champions, feared absolutely nobody. Days earlier, he had dismissed the mounting pressure over his lack of tournament goals with a sarcastic shrug. Then came the ultimate digital wager: an Instagram post showcasing a photo from the UEFA Nations League semi-final, where Spain had thumped France in a 5-4 thriller. Had Luis de la Fuente's side faltered at AT&T Stadium, the subsequent social media trolling would have been merciless, a permanent stain on a burgeoning career. Instead, Yamal walked the talk. By the time the final whistle blew on a commanding 2-0 victory, the Barcelona prodigy had not only validated his arrogance; he had repositioned Spain onto the precipice of international football's ultimate prize. What made Yamal's individual triumph so profound was the collective matrix that supported it. France arrived in Texas armed with arguably the most

lethal, athletic frontline in world football, spearheaded by Kylian Mbappe. Yet, Didier Deschamps' men spent the evening reduced to the agonising role of



spectators. Spain not just beat France, the Euro champions monopolised them out of existence. From the opening sequence, the Spanish midfield engine operated with a telepathic fluency rarely seen in the fragmented ecosystem of international football. De la Fuente's side functioned with the microscopic spatial awareness of an elite club side. They

compressed the pitch, suffocated passing lanes, and systematically starved the French forwards of the one basic oxygen tank they required: possession.

When France did rare custody of the ball, they found themselves trapped in a labyrinth. Spain's counter-pressing was immediate and relentless. Mbappe was isolated, doubled up on by a disciplined Spanish rearguard, and rendered entirely anonymous. By the end of the ninety minutes, a French side built to destroy defences had managed a pitiful two shots on target.

YAMAL COMES UP WITH A BETTER SHOW

On the right flank, Yamal provided the perfect tactical outlet. Even at less than 100 per cent physical capacity following his recent injury struggles, his decision-making possessed cultured maturity that belied his age. He did not overplay; instead,

Lionel Messi's perfect-record referee to officiate Argentina vs England semi-final

New Delhi. (Agency)

Lionel Messi will have a familiar referee in charge when Argentina face England in the FIFA World Cup semi-final on Wednesday, with FIFA appointing Ismail Elfath to officiate the blockbuster clash in Atlanta.

The appointment has drawn attention because Messi has never failed to win a match involving Elfath. Teams featuring the Argentina captain have won all five games in which the Moroccan-American official has served either as the referee or in another officiating role. The statistic quickly sparked discussion on social media, with some England fans questioning FIFA's decision. However, there is no evidence to suggest Elfath's appointments have had any influence on the results.

Elfath, 44, will oversee his fourth match of



Stop Messi at all costs England coach Tuchel considers master plan for semi-final

New Delhi. (Agency)

England manager Thomas Tuchel has revealed he is weighing an old-fashioned man-marking approach to neutralise Lionel Messi when England face Argentina in Wednesday's FIFA World Cup semi-final. Messi, who shares the tournament's scoring lead with Kylian Mbappe on eight goals, is set to play against England for the first time in his glittering career at Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium. The winner of the last-four clash will meet Spain in the World Cup final on Sunday. I was thinking about this, if we do a proper old-school man-mark on Messi," Tuchel said at his pre-match press conference on Tuesday. "I'm not sure if we follow through with this idea, but it crossed my mind. I think everyone knows the spaces where he wants to show up. It's

just like, you analyse the matches, you feel he just sees stuff earlier than anyone else on the field." Messi has combined his eight goals with two assists during Argentina's run to the last



four. "It's just like the ball drops to him, he finds the gap, he makes himself the space for his left foot and then executes the solution on the very highest level," Tuchel said. "I think we found some patterns in their game, of course, but if we close the patterns, he will find a new one or create a new one." It is his super

strength. It is an exciting setup. It is very unique to play against the reigning champions, it is very unique to play against Leo Messi and his team. It is unique to play with England against Argentina. It is just a big match in every department."

TUCHEL PLAYS DOWN ENGLAND-ARGENTINA RIVALRY

Tuchel confirmed England have a near full-strength squad for the semi-final, with only Jordan Henderson ruled out because of a broken arm, while Jarell Quansah will miss the match through suspension. The German also refused to use the long-standing rivalry between England and Argentina as extra motivation, insisting his players were focused only on securing a place in the final. "We don't use it as fuel," Tuchel said. "We know why we're here. We know what we want. We were never shy of expecting that from us, of saying it, of dreaming it.

How Pedri and Lamine Yamal manifested Spain's World Cup final into existence

CHENNAI. (Agency)

Some posts disappear into the Instagram archive within days. Others come back at exactly the right time.

Just over a year ago, Spain had walked off the pitch after losing the UEFA Nations League final to Portugal. It was a painful night, but Pedri's mind already seemed elsewhere. Instead of dwelling on the defeat, the Barcelona midfielder posted a photo with Lamine Yamal and Nico Williams. The caption wasn't emotional or inspirational. It simply read: 19.07.26. Most fans understood the reference immediately. That was the date of the FIFA World Cup final in New



York. It felt optimistic, maybe even a little cheeky. Spain still had an entire qualifying campaign and a World Cup to navigate before they could even think about playing on that day. Then Lamine Yamal reposted it on his own Instagram story. It wasn't just Pedri putting a date out into the universe. Spain's new generation had quietly set themselves a

target long before anyone was talking about them as favourites. Now, thirteen months later, that screenshot is everywhere again. Spain's commanding 2-0 win over France has officially booked them a place in the World Cup final on July 19. The date that once looked like wishful thinking has suddenly become part of Spain's story.

HOW DID YAMAL, PEDRI PREDICT WORLD CUP RUN?

Spain's young generation had already shown its potential by winning Euro 2024, and despite the Nations League heartbreak, the squad never appeared to lose confidence in where it was heading.

World Cup: Atlanta beefs up security ahead of England-Argentina semi-final

The Atlanta Police Department (APD), in a statement on Tuesday, said it had enhanced security measures for Wednesday's FIFA World Cup 2026 semi-final between England and Argentina at Atlanta Stadium, deploying additional personnel and resources to ensure the match passes off safely.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Atlanta Police Department (APD) has confirmed enhanced security arrangements for Wednesday's FIFA World Cup semi-final between England and Argentina, with authorities preparing for one of the tournament's most high-profile and potentially

sensitive fixtures.

While the World Cup has largely passed without the crowd trouble that marred editions in the 1980s and 1990s, officials are leaving little to chance for the final match to be played at Atlanta Stadium.

APD STRENGTHENS SECURITY PRESENCE

In a statement on Tuesday, the APD said it had raised its public safety and security posture across the city ahead of the semi-final. "The Atlanta Police Department has enhanced its citywide public safety and security posture," the statement read. Additional personnel and resources are already deployed and will continue to be strategically assigned ... to help ensure a safe and enjoyable

experience for everyone."

The department said the measures were



part of its ongoing assessment of security requirements for World Cup matches in Atlanta. "Adjustments are a routine part of managing an event of this magnitude and are intended to ensure a safe and

enjoyable FIFA World Cup experience," the statement added. The APD also said it had worked closely with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other public safety agencies during the planning process, but would not disclose operational details. 1,600 OFFICERS DEPLOYED Argentina Security Minister Alejandra Monteoliva said enhanced security measures had been discussed during a meeting in the United States on Monday. She said around 1,600 police officers would be deployed for the semi-final and confirmed that, for the first time at this World Cup, England and Argentina supporters would enter the stadium through separate gates. ly kept apart.

'Only You Can Make People Aware':

Ayesha Khan

Appeals To Media Over Sonam

Wangchuk's CJP Protest

Actor Omi Vaidya, known popularly for his role as Chatur Ramalingam in Aamir Khan's film 3 Idiots, took to his social media and dropped a video extending his support to environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk amid his ongoing indefinite hunger strike in Delhi. Following his post, Dhurandhar actor Ayesha Khan took to her Instagram and reshared his video, revealing that she was totally unaware of the protest.

Taking to her Instagram, she sought help from famous paparazzi accounts and media pages to give more coverage to the ongoing CJP protest in Delhi and voiced her concern about Sonam Wangchuk's deteriorating health.



Sharing Vaidya's post, Ayesha wrote, "I request the paps and the media to highlight this news; only you can make people aware of what's happening in the country. It's so unfortunate that I had no idea about this too. We are so lost in glamour, beauty, and controversies that we often end up being avoidant of the things that actually need our attention."

Omi Vaidya's Appeal Amid Sonam Wangchuk's Hunger Strike

"I don't want Phunsukh Wangdu to die," Omi Vaidya said

in his video message, referring to Sonam Wangchuk, the real-life inspiration behind the much-loved character from 3 Idiots. "Hello, idiots. Yeah, this is only idiot, Chatur from 3 Idiots and Sadiq from The Office, and I have an important message for you. And I don't really do this very often, so please listen up. Did you know that Phunsukh Wangdu from 3 Idiots, the character that Aamir Khan plays, is actually based on a real-life Ladakhi engineer, innovator, educator, and reformer named Sonam Wangchuk? I have met this guy. He has done some incredible stuff in his life, and he seems pretty humble too, you know," said Omi Vaidya.

Ranveer Singh To Begin Pralay Shoot In August?; Varun Badola Calls Satluj Ban 'Robbery Under Broad Daylight'



Ranveer Singh has a lot to look forward to, both personally and professionally! While the actor continues to ride high on the success of the Dhurandhar franchise, exciting developments are also unfolding in his personal life as he prepares to embrace fatherhood once again with wife Deepika Padukone. On the professional front, Ranveer is gearing up for his next major project, Pralay. According to reports, the actor is set to begin shooting for the Jai Mehta directorial next month, that is, in August. Ranveer is expected to continue filming Pralay until Diwali, following which production will reportedly take a pause as Ranveer will take a paternity break, reports Variety India.

The row surrounding Diljit Dosanjh starrer Satluj is intensifying. As per a latest update, the Honey Trehan directorial is no longer available for international viewing on Zee5. Alternatively, it was recently screened in Jammu for local communities with the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee stating that more screenings will be hosted in gurudwaras.

Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda are set to share screen space in the upcoming film Ranabaali, marking their first on-screen collaboration after marriage. Naturally, fans have been eagerly waiting for every update about the much-anticipated project. Now, much to their fans' delight, Rashmika has shared a glimpse of Vijay from Ranabaali sets.

She wrote that she was unsure whether she was allowed to share the glimpse, but couldn't contain her enthusiasm after seeing that the team was creating something 'extremely scary'. Television actor Kushal Tandon has been in the headlines for quite some time following Shreya Kalra's accusation that he slid into her DMs while dating Shivangi Joshi. Now, amid this, Kushal, who is in Alliance, spoke about how his world revolves around his partner when he is in a relationship.

Zeenat Aman Supports Sonam

Wangchuk's CJP Hunger Strike: 'I Implore Indian Government To Open Dialogue'



Veteran actress Zeenat Aman has extended her support to educator and climate activist Sonam Wangchuk. In her Instagram post, she expressed concern over his indefinite hunger strike and urged the Indian government to initiate dialogue over the issues he has raised. As Wangchuk's hunger strike entered Day 17 on Tuesday, concerns over his declining health grew among supporters. Zeenat Aman wrote that those in positions of power have a responsibility to respond to peaceful protests with discussions. The protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar was started by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) who are demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the irregularities and paper leak allegations linked to the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)-UG conducted on May 3.

Taking to social media, Zeenat Aman wrote, "My thoughts today are in the country's capital city where @wangchukworld world is entering the 17th day of his indefinite hunger strike. I read in a news article that Mr. Wangchuk "...has started losing muscle mass and is in immense pain." And that, when asked to end his fast, he replied "Don't ask me to end my fast. Ask the government why they won't even have a dialogue."

"Mr. Wangchuk is the founder of SECMOL, the inventor of the ice stupa, a harbinger of educational reform in Ladakh, a dedicated environmental and community activist, and the inspiration of that much loved Bollywood character "Phunsuk Wangdu" played so compellingly by Aamir Khan in 3 Idiots. By all accounts Mr. Wangdu is a brilliant and conscientious man, one that has been recognised globally for his social impact with umpteen prestigious awards," she further added.

Zeenat Aman Urges Government to Open Dialogue

She urged the government to address the matter through peaceful dialogue. "With respect to Mr. Wangchuk's wishes, I implore the Indian government to open dialogue on this matter that concerns the future of all India. We must not become a society that sits back and watches one of its greatest minds be sacrificed. India has a long history of peaceful protest; those who wield power are obliged to meet such protest with peaceful dialogue."

Zareen Khan

Gets Angry, Slams Paparazzi For Inappropriate Comment: 'Faltugiri Ki Baatein Nahi Karna'

Bollywood actress Zareen Khan recently slammed a paparazzo after an interaction at a store launch took an uncomfortable turn. A video of the incident, which has gone viral on social media, shows her firmly reprimanding the photographer for an inappropriate remark made during the event. She made it clear that she wouldn't tolerate such comments, and told them to stay within

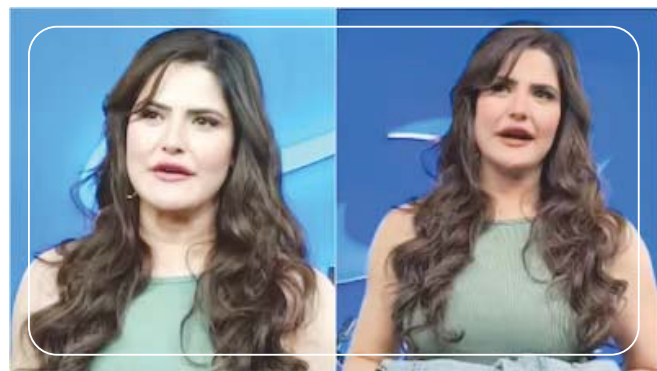
The exchange prompts an immediate reaction from Zareen, who appears visibly upset. She can be heard saying, "Faltugiri ki baatein nahi karna mere saath, because I am not the one who is gonna take that sh*t, okay? Hadd mein rehna, sab ke sab. (Don't talk such nonsense with me because I'm not someone who's going to tolerate that, okay? Stay within

your limits—all of you)." **Netizens React**

Her response quickly went viral online, with many social media users praising her for standing up for herself and calling out behaviour that crossed professional boundaries. "Fair enough! She is right," wrote one netizen while another one commented, "How can paps even speak

like that?" A third comment read, "Sahi jawaab diya hai." **Zareen Khan Explains Her Break From Films**

Zareen, who was last seen in the 2021 film Hum Bhi Akele Tum Bhi Akele, was also asked about her break from films.



their limits.

Zareen Khan Loses Cool At Paparazzo Over Inappropriate Remark

In the video clip shared by Viral Bhayani, Zareen is seen holding an outfit while posing for the cameras at the event. A paparazzo then asks her to try on the outfit, to which she replies, "Tum logo ke saamne? Wo nahi ho raha (In front of everyone? That's not happening)."



CMYK

NEWS BOX

One dead, two missing from pontoon boat near Alcatraz Island off San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO.(Agency)

One person died, two people were missing and 16 others from a pontoon boat were rescued Tuesday afternoon from the waters off San Francisco, authorities said.San Francisco Fire Chief Dean Crispen reported the toll and said crews that arrived on the scene near Alcatraz Island found a three-deck pontoon vessel that was carrying 19 people."It was a vessel that was capsized and mostly under the water," Crispen said.The boating mishap was initially reported as a fire, "but we now don't have any evidence of that," Crispen said.Some of the people were injured from falling into the water, but there were no reports of burns, Crispen said. The person who died was plucked from the water along with the 16 but died later.

Crews continued to search the water for the missing with divers, helicopters and 11 vessels, he added: "Right now we are in full rescue mode.All those rescued were taken to Gashouse Cove Marina, a small craft harbour in San Francisco.Fire Lt. Mariano Elias said the vessel, described as a "pontoon pleasure boat," was about 600 yards (about 550 meters) from Alcatraz and the emergency call came in just after 3:30 p.m., he said.Crispen said the boat was believed to have launched near the St. Francis Yacht Club in San FranciscoVideo imagesfrom a local Fox station showed a Fire Department boat deployed to rescue people who had been on the vessel, which was largely submerged with objects floating nearby."Live video from the scene showed a man and a woman wrapped in blankets and sitting near an ambulance.

Nepal jails ex-ministers over Bhutan refugee scam

NEPAL.(Agency)

Nepal jailed two former ministers and more than a dozen other people for scamming citizens with the false promise of resettling them abroad as refugees, a court official said Wednesday. More than 100,000 ethnic Nepalis fled Bhutan in the early 1990s following a shift in nationality laws, and many found new homes in the United States, Europe and elsewhere via a third-country resettlement programme.The racket, involving senior officials, preyed on Nepalis who missed out on the scheme after it ended in 2018, promising to pass them off as refugees to qualify for resettlement in exchange for large sums of money.Former deputy prime minister Top Bahadur Rayamajhi was jailed for four years and fined 40,000 rupees (\$260) on Tuesday, according to the Kathmandu district court's information officer Shiva Khatiwada.Former interior minister Bal Krishna Khand was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and fined 20,000 rupees.The district court also convicted and sentenced 14 others, while seven defendants were acquitted, Khatiwada told AFP.Bhutan introduced a "One Nation, One People" policy in 1985, which stripped citizenship rights from the Nepali-speaking minority known as Lhotshampa and labelled them immigrants.

'Death Row Can Be Revised': Bangladesh 'Welcomes' Sheikh Hasina's Return Plan

Dhaka.(Agency)

Bangladesh has "welcomed" its deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's plans to return to Dhaka, saying she must face justice as a death penalty convict. Hasina, 78, has been living in India after fleeing Dhaka following the collapse of her government in August 2024 in the face of a massive anti-government agitation. Last week, sources close to Hasina said she was preparing to voluntarily return to Dhaka by the end of this year to revive her Awami League party. What Bangladesh Said Reacting to the development, Zahed Ur Rahman, an advisor to Bangladesh Prime Minister Tariq Rehman, challenged Hasina to bring the best lawyers in the world to Dhaka to defend herself against the alleged "crimes against humanity" charged over her government's brutal crackdown on student-led protests in 2024. "We welcome her announcement as we want to ensure justice," Rahman said at a media briefing, adding that the "people of the country want her death penalty to be upheld for the crimes she committed, and in that case her capital punishment will be executed as the people want to see that.""Let her bring the best lawyers in the world," he was quoted as saying by the Daily Star.

Death toll from Bangkok pub fire rises to 32 as two more die in hospital

More than 70 injured in Thailand incident; 30 remain hospitalized, including 15 in intensive care, officials said.

BANGKOK.(Agency)

Two people injured in a huge fire at a Bangkok music bar have died, bringing the death toll to 32, officials said Wednesday.More than 70 people were injured and 30 people remain hospitalized, with 15 of them in intensive care units, according to the Erawan emergency services center in Thailand's capital.The blaze at the Rong Beer Na Ladprao bar was the city's



deadliest in 17 years. It broke out late Sunday in a northern part of the city, and firefighters needed half an hour to bring it under control.An investigation

into the cause of the fire and whether the bar was following safety regulations is ongoing. Most of the people who were killed were found trapped in windowless bathrooms where they may have sought to escape the flames, police said.Survivors and relatives of the deceased visited a police station near the scene on Wednesday to seek compensation, gather belongings and share statements about the blaze.Former patrons of the bar and other mourners visited the site Tuesday, adding to the growing pile of flowers leaning on the guardrails cordoning off the location of the blaze.Handwritten messages in Thai and other languages, including Korean, were left alongside white flowers.

Former UK politician and TV personality Ann Widdecombe killed in targeted attack

LONDON.(Agency)

Former politician and reality TV contestant Ann Widdecombe was killed in a "targeted attack," though the motivation is still under investigation, British counterterror police said Tuesday.A 28-year-old man arrested on suspicion of murder and terror crimes remains in custody on an extended detention warrant under the Terrorism Act that allows police to question him for up to another week."It is clear that this was a targeted attack," Laurence Taylor, head of National Counter Terrorism Policing told reporters. "We are still working to understand the extent of any planning or preparation, and the motivation

that sits behind that attack."The death of Widdecombe, 78, a former member of Parliament, shocked the British political establishment, where she was long known for blunt-spoken socially conservative views opposing abortion and the expansion of LGBTQ+ rights. Counterterrorpolice took over the investigation Monday after new evidence was discovered. Devon and Cornwall Police have been criticized for originally saying the killing was not believed to be a terror-related crime and there was nothing to suggest it was politically motivated.Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner Alison Hernandez defended her agency Tuesday, saying new information often changes the

nature of a fast-paced investigationPolice believe Widdecombe was attacked on Wednesday just past noon. She failed to show up for a scheduled TV interview about an hour later and was found dead the next day in her isolated rural home in a village in southwest England.Police did not disclose a cause of death, saying only that she had sustained "serious injuries." Taylor called it a "brutal attack on a 78-year-old lady in her own home."The suspect was arrested Saturday in South Yorkshire county in northern England, more than 200 miles (320 kilometers) from the village of Haytor on the edge of Dartmoor National Park, where Widdecombe died..

Australia to enact new AI laws, regulate data centres, energy use and copyright protection

SYDNEY.(Agency)

Australia will enact laws to regulate how artificial intelligence data centres use power and water, and to protect creative copyright, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Wednesday.In a landmark speech setting out his government's policies, Albanese sought to allay public concern over AI, saying it could be adopted in a way that enhanced the national interest.The centre-left leader said he would meet Australia's state and territory leaders next month to discuss the proposed new laws, which would be introduced next year to build trust in AI and protect national security.Australia had led other countries in imposing limits on social media use for children, but the challenge to shape AI in Australia's interest was greater and demanded action now, he said. "If we hang back and stand still this will just run right over the top of us," he said in the speech at the University of Sydney."Our great country can be much more than a data warehouse for AI products made overseas."Albanese's announcement comes after it emerged this week that US startup Anthropic has lobbied Australian officials to change copyright laws to assist the training of AI models.Musicians, writers and publishers have urged the government to resist such pressure and protect their work.australian creative content was not "up for grabs", Albanese said."No company should use Australian books, music, art or news to build or train AI without the artist's control... anything less is theft," he said.The new standards would set clear legal obligations for large data centres, requiring them to put more power into the electricity grid than they take out, minimising water usage and ensuring they don't compete for land with housing.Investment in data centres was the largest contributor to the country's economic growth in the three months to March, according to government figures.Albanese said the government had not yet seen the impact of AI on the Australian jobs market."We should not treat AI as a threat to good jobs. We should use it as an instrument to create them," he said.The government will elevate its response to artificial intelligence with a dedicated office in his department to oversee policy."Getting this right will enhance our appeal to international investors, by delivering greater clarity and speed for approvals, and a streamlined process for verifying compliance," he said.

Iran says Hormuz to remain closed till US ends 'acts of aggression'

BOSTON.(Agency)

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said Wednesday the Hormuz strait would remain closed until the United States ends its "acts of aggression" while warning that other regional oil export routes could also become targets. Fighting between the United States and Iran, which began late February, has hampered energy supplies through the Strait of Hormuz, a key transit route for oil and gas shipments from the Gulf. The Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) said they carried out attacks on US military facilities in Bahrain and Kuwait following American strikes on Iranian territory, according to statements by Iranian state television IRIB."The enemy should know that now that its maritime raiders have blocked the

Indian Ocean route for oil and gas exports to the world -- thereby endangering the interests of America's economic rivals -- it should also expect the closure of other oil and gas export routes that



serve the interests of the United States and its allies," the statement said.They did not elaborate on which routes could be affected. "Oil and gas exports from the region will either be available for

everyone or for no one," they added.In a separate statement, the Guards said, "The retaliatory operations of the fighters will continue, and the Strait of Hormuz will remain closed until the United States ends its acts of aggression."This comes after the US military on early Wednesday reimposed a blockade on Iranian ports over Tehran's attacks on ships trying to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, sparking new strikes on nations hosting American forces as an interim deal to end the war further unraveled.The US first imposed the blockade in mid-April and then lifted it in mid-June, a day after signing the interim deal that set a 60-day period for negotiations over issues like Iran's nuclear program, but talks have stalled.

Former Obama counsel Kathryn Ruemmler to testify in Epstein probe

Ruemmler is the latest high-profile figure to face the House Oversight Committee's probe into powerful people linked to Jeffrey Epstein.

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

Kathryn Ruemmler, the former top lawyer at Goldman Sachs who was White House counsel to President Barack Obama, is set to face questioning before a House committee Wednesday about her relationship with Jeffrey Epstein.Ruemmler is the latest prominent figure called before the

House Oversight Committee as lawmakers investigate the network of powerful people connected with Epstein. The bipartisan inquiry has already included testimony from more than a dozen high-profile witnesses, including Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and former President Bill Clinton, as lawmakers examine how Epstein's wealth and influence may have helped shield him from scrutiny.Thousands of documents released by the Justice Department showed that Ruemmler and Epstein had an extensive relationship. The files included personal emails, social plans and gifts that extended beyond formal legal work.Ruemmler served as White House counsel under Obama from 2011 to 2014 and was briefly considered for

attorney general. She served as Goldman Sachs' general counsel for the past six years before announcing in



February that she would step down amid backlash over her correspondence with Epstein.The released documents showed that the two were close years after Epstein's 2008 conviction on sex crimes, when he

became a registered sex offender. She tried to downplay her relationship in more recent statements, calling him a "monster." But documents showed she had called Epstein "Uncle Jeffrey" in emails and said she adored him.Although she said she would step down on June 30, she remains employed by Goldman Sachs.Ruemmler is the 17th person to testify as part of their broader investigation. Billionaire investor Leon Black was subpoenaed last month after lawmakers said he refused to answer some questions about his yearslong relationship with Epstein.A spokesperson for the committee said that Black's attorneys have confirmed his appearance for a formal deposition on Sept.