

PM Modi Pushes To Cut Import Reliance To Shield India From Shocks

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is taking steps to reduce key imports into the economy in order to protect supply chains and ease pressure on the currency as geopolitical risks escalate.

Prime Minister's office ordered key ministries to identify categories of goods in which import dependence is high, and can be replaced by locally made products, according to officials familiar with the matter. The government is considering subsidies and other incentives to help boost domestic production, they said, asking not to be identified because the discussions are private.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is preparing a list of more than 100 products, including electronics, chemicals, key drugs, fertilizers, semiconductors, automobiles and machinery, which could be scaled up, the people said. The discussions are taking place across several ministries and a decision hasn't been finalised yet, the officials said.The latest

move to boost domestic manufacturing came on Wednesday, with PM Modi's cabinet approving a plan to increase financial support for chip and smartphone production by



another 1.9 trillion rupees (\$19.7 billion). It also approved a policy to raise local fertiliser production following shortages linked to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

India's manufacturing is heavily reliant on imported inputs, especially from China, making the industry vulnerable if supplies are restricted, as India's auto and tech industries have experienced over the past year. The Iran

war has only exposed India's dependency even further, with severe energy shortages and soaring import bills in recent months, which pushed the currency to record lows.

"Export controls are being used to deny critical components - from rare earths to semiconductors - to countries that need them. If this is the world we have to live in, where industrial policies are weaponised, self-reliance is the need of the hour," said Gaurav Kapur, economist with IndusInd Bank. India imported nearly \$775 billion worth of goods during the financial year ending March, with almost a fifth of that coming from China alone.

Building domestic capacity is now a key pillar of PM Modi's economic agenda, with an objective to narrow the trade deficit, preserve foreign exchange and position India as an alternative manufacturing hub to China. India's free trade agreements with partners such as the European Union are also expected to attract fresh investment and deepen the country's manufacturing base, economists said.

DK Shivakumar, Siddaramaiah, Hariprasad land in Delhi, Congress brass may finalise ministers' list

The Delhi visit effectively put the state government's routine on hold.

Bengaluru. (Agency)

Karnataka's much-delayed cabinet expansion entered a decisive phase with Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, former CM Siddaramaiah and KPCC president BK Hariprasad reaching New Delhi on Wednesday evening for crucial consultations with the Congress high command, which is expected to determine the composition of the new ministry.

The three leaders are scheduled to meet AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal and AICC General Secretary, Karnataka in-charge, Randeep Singh Surjewala late on Wednesday night and Thursday morning.

The meetings could culminate in the approval of the final list of ministers and the swearing-in is likely on Friday or Saturday depending on the availability of an auspicious time. It could even be held on Sunday or Monday.

Sources said Siddaramaiah was initially reluctant to leave for the national capital in the afternoon, prompting Shivakumar to personally visit him at his residence. They both later left together on a special flight around 7.30 pm. Hariprasad travelled separately on a commercial flight around 6 pm.The Delhi visit effectively put the state government's routine on hold. Thursday's cabinet meeting was postponed, the CM's programme in Malur, Kolar district, was cancelled, and the transfer list of senior government officials was deferred for about a fortnight.



Congress leaders meet to discuss strategy for Parliament monsoon session

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Senior Congress leaders held a meeting in New Delhi on Thursday to discuss the party's strategy for the upcoming Monsoon session of Parliament, which will begin on July 20.

Top Congress leaders, including party chief Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and other senior leaders deliberated on key issues to be taken up during the session. The meeting was held at the 10, Janpath residence of Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) chairperson Sonia Gandhi.

The Monsoon session of Parliament is starting on July 20 and is likely to continue till August 13.

Among other Congress leaders who attended the key strategy meeting included AICC general secretary K C Venugopal, Congress' chief whip in Rajya Sabha Jairam Ramesh, P Chidambaram, K Suresh, Naseer Hussain, Manickam Tagore, Kumari Selja, Tariq Anwar, Shashi Tharoor and Manish Tewari.

"Accidents Happen": Jagan Reddy As Close Aide's Son Arrested For Hit-And-Run

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

A political controversy has erupted in Andhra Pradesh following YSRCP president and former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's remarks on the deadly hit-and-run case involving the son of former minister Seediri Appalaraju. Appalaraju's 18-year-old son Aarav Varma was arrested in connection with the death of shepherd D Danayya in Srikakulam district on Monday.

Reacting to the incident, YS Jagan said it was unfortunate. He also stated that "accidents do happen" and that the accused was only an 18-year-old boy riding a bike.

YS Jagan also alleged that the case was being exaggerated and claimed that the government was attempting to frame the youth by invoking serious criminal charges. His comments, however, triggered criticism from opposition leaders, who accused him of ignoring the loss suffered by the victim's family. Police had arrested Aarav Varma after an investigation into the July 10 incident. The probe reportedly took a turn after CCTV footage allegedly showed Aarav riding the motorcycle that hit Danayya, contradicting an earlier claim by another person who had taken responsibility.

POLICE-BOOTLEGGER NEXUS EXPOSED IN KARJAN

LCB Accused of Leaking SMC Raid Locations; Mega Political Conspiracy Unearthed to Destabilize BJP Govt

MAHANAGAR METRO EXCLUSIVE

MAHANAGAR METRO

KARJAN/VADODARA: A massive administrative and political scandal has rocked Gujarat's law enforcement apparatus following an explosive investigative report by Mahanagar Metro. The exposé reveals a deeply entrenched nexus between high-ranking police officials and notorious bootleggers in the Karjan taluka of Vadodara district. Despite the state government's loud proclamations of a strict prohibition policy and Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghavi's claims of a "drug and liquor-free Gujarat," reality on the ground depicts a systemic breakdown of law and order. The investigation exposes how Karjan has been transformed into a "safe haven" for bootleggers and gamblers, operating right under the nose of the local police. At the center of this multi-million dollar illicit network is a suspended bootlegger turned police frontman (vahiwatdar), Hanubha Kamadiya alias Hanu Bootlegger, who has previously served jail time for liquor smuggling but now allegedly commands absolute control over the local police machinery.

The Extortion Cartel: Millions in Bribes Flow to Top Brass

According to highly placed intelligence sources, the extortion racket is masterminded by a corrupt triumvirate comprising Hanubha Kamadiya and Bhupatbhai Rabari (assigned to the Dabhoi beat), acting as the direct fronts or *vahiwatdars* for the Vadodara Local Crime Branch (LCB) Police Inspector (PI). The duo reportedly extorts millions of rupees monthly from bootleggers, gambling den operators, and illegal traders across the Vadodara district to line the pockets of top officials. Empowered by this institutional backing, local bootleggers operate without fear, leaving the local police paralyzed and unable to initiate raids due to the high-level political and administrative protection enjoyed by the cartel.

Cartography of Crime: Key Illegal Hubs Exposed



The illicit trade operates openly, frequently within walking distance of administrative headquarters. The key operational locations uncovered include:

Karamdi Village (2 km from Karjan Police Station): Over 15 illicit country liquor breweries operate openly, utilizing dangerous chemical compounds to manufacture toxic alcohol. Sources warn this poses an immediate threat of a major hooch tragedy (Latthakand).

Kulari Village: Near the new township water tank, a bootlegger identified as Nagin openly runs a widespread Varli Matka (illegal gambling) ring, drawing in local youth.

Sapa Village: A similar Varli Matka gambling syndicate operates unchecked within the new settlement area.

Seamdi to Ranpur Road: In a stunning revelation, Parth Shah—the Sarpanch of Ranpur village and President of the BJP Youth Wing (Yuva Morcha)—has been accused of spearheading a massive foreign liquor smuggling syndicate, using this transit route to stockpile massive consignments of contraband.

Kandari Village: Near the local transmission tower, an operative named Amit Vasawa openly distributes Indian-Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL). **Bariyavas Area:** An individual identified as Paresh Chunawada runs an open-air retail market for smuggled English liquor.

Institutional Sabotage: LCB Leaking SMC Raid Locations

The most damaging aspect of the exposé details how the state's apex enforcement body, the State Monitoring Cell (SMC) in Gandhinagar, is being systematically compromised from within. Whenever vigilant citizens register online complaints regarding these illegal dens, corrupt elements within the framework tip off the Vadodara LCB. Informants indicate that a constable attached to the SMC shares intelligence directly with the Vadodara LCB PI. The LCB *vahiwatdars* then text precise location coordinates via WhatsApp to the bootleggers with strict directives to close operations temporarily because the "SMC raid vehicle has departed." When *Mahanagar Metro* contacted the LCB PI to secure official comments on these allegations, the official evaded the press and refused to answer calls.

The Political Underbelly: A Conspiracy to Destabilize the State Government

Beyond financial greed, highly placed political sources indicate a much deeper, more sinister motive behind the absolute collapse of law and order in the Vadodara district. Intelligence suggests a deliberate political conspiracy aimed at fueling public outrage against the ruling establishment ahead of the upcoming Gujarat Assembly Elections. Elements within the administrative ecosystem, allegedly aligned

with disgruntled political factions, are utilizing the bootlegging network to engineer an atmosphere of lawlessness, effectively aiming to damage the ruling BJP government's clean governance narrative and orchestrate its electoral defeat.

High-Fidelity Accountability: Direct Questions to the Administration

The investigation raises sharp, uncompromising questions directed at the highest levels of the state administration:

- Why are Vadodara District Police Chief (SP) Sushil Agrawal and Karjan PI Patel maintaining absolute silence regarding the multi-million rupee extortion racket operated by their direct subordinates, Bhupat Rabari and Hanubha Kamadiya? Who protects these handlers, and how far up the chain of command do these illicit collections go?
- Why hasn't the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) initiated a forensic audit into the bank accounts, shell entities, and benami properties accumulated by the LCB PI and his designated frontmen?
- Why are the local Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) and Member of Parliament (MP) maintaining absolute silence as toxic, chemical-laced liquor dens put the lives of their constituents at immediate risk?
- Who will bear criminal liability if a catastrophic hooch tragedy occurs in Karjan due to these unregulated chemical liquor breweries? Will accountability stop at the local level, or will it reach the home department in Gandhinagar?

The unchecked operations of this corrupt syndicate threaten to permanently tarnish the clean-governance image of the Chief Minister. The citizens of Gujarat now look toward Gandhinagar to see if the state government will deploy its full enforcement weight to crush this nexus, or leave the populace at the mercy of an organized criminal-police cartel.

News box

Hrera cautions homebuyers against dealing with unregistered brokers

Gurgaon.(Agency)

With thousands of property transactions being facilitated through intermediaries every month, the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (Hrera), Gurgaon, on Wednesday issued an advisory urging buyers to deal only with registered real estate agents. Dealing through registered agents provides buyers legal protection against fraud and unauthorised transactions. It also gives buyers access to grievance redressal mechanisms in case of future disputes. HRERA Gurgaon Chairman Arun Kumar said, "Homebuyers should always verify the registration status of the real estate agent before entering into a transaction. This step can protect buyers, strengthen accountability and promote transparency in the real estate sector."

The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016, clearly mandates registration of a real estate agent for any sale or purchase of property in a real estate project. It defines a real estate agent broadly to include property dealers, brokers, consultants and other intermediaries involved in facilitating property transactions. Any person operating as a real estate agent without registration is prohibited from advertising, marketing, facilitating or undertaking any property-related transactions. Buyers can verify an agent's registration status on the HRERA Gurgaon website using the registration number or the agent's details.

Axe attack on Municipal Corporation of Manesar team during drive to remove encroachers

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

A Municipal Corporation of Manesar (MCM) enforcement team was allegedly attacked with an axe during an anti-encroachment drive in Bhangrola village on Wednesday afternoon, leaving a home guard personnel injured. Police have registered an FIR at Kherki Daula police station. The incident occurred around 2pm when the team, accompanied by duty magistrate and sub-divisional officer (SDO) Shashikant, reached the village to remove encroachments from govt land as part of the civic body's ongoing enforcement drive.

According to MCM officials, a group of local residents, identified as Sevaram, Billu, Ishwar, Saurav, Gaurav, Deepak and others, opposed the demolition. Despite attempts by the duty magistrate to persuade them, the group allegedly abused and pushed members of the enforcement team before repeatedly attacking them with an axe. The home guard personnel is currently admitted to a hospital but is stated to be stable. MCM commissioner Pradeep Singh condemned the attack, saying assaults on govt employees and obstruction of official duty would not be tolerated and that those responsible would face action as per law.

Broken walkways, defunct fountains: Indirapuram's biggest park falls into decay

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Chandralekha (75) did not see the broken interlocking tiles on the pathways until she twisted her ankle and fell on the ground. At her age, she said, recovery is slow, made slower by the obesity she manages. She called her son, who drove over to pick her up. She has not been back to Swarn Jayanti Park since. Banku, another Indirapuram resident, still tries. Each evening, he pulls on a face mask before stepping into the park. "The pathway inside the park is mostly unpaved and raises a lot of dust," he said. Surrounded by more than 1,200 acres of dense urban sprawl, the park once served as a vital green lung in a locality known for high pollution levels. Residents of all ages came for morning and evening walks and exercise, while children would enjoy the swings and slides. There was even a fountain. There is little of that left now. The 25-acre park, the township's largest, fell into disrepair after years of administrative uncertainty over Indirapuram's civic handover. The protracted dispute between Ghaziabad Development Authority and Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation, residents say, left the park without a clear custodian and maintenance in limbo. Over the last few years, the walking track in the park has broken, the fountain has dried up, trees have died, and stray animals have taken over parts of the grounds. Loose power cables dangle from poles near the park entrance. The kiosks that once did brisk business have shut shop or are derelict. Ravindra Kumar, another senior citizen living at ATS Advantage society nearby, said he was a regular at the park till the strays drove him away. "It became part of the routine to visit the park every day. The ambience and the facilities were all up to the mark," he said. "But I read visiting the park of late." One morning, he had reached before dawn, as was his habit, only to be chased by a pack of strays. "I ran for my life as fast as my legs could carry me," he said.

POLITICAL TEMPERATURE SOARS IN VADODARA APMC ELECTIONS: Farmers Fuming Over Controversial Former MLA Satish Patel's Candidacy Amid BJP's 'One Person, One Post' Rhetoric

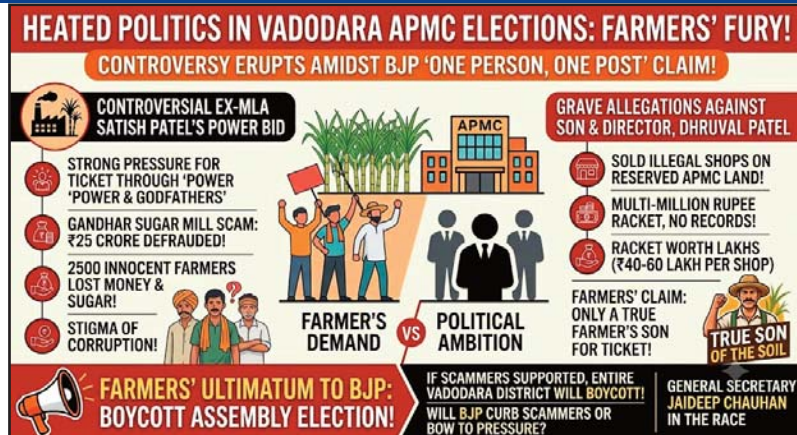
25 Crore Sugar Mill Scam and Illegal Land Grabs

VADODARA/KARJAN: (By PAWAN MAKAN)

The official announcement of the Vadodara Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) elections has triggered a massive political storm in the region. While the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) heavily promotes its disciplined "one person, one post" organizational policy, ground realities tell a completely different story. The entry of controversial former Karjan MLA Satish Patel into the APMC electoral race has sparked intense resentment among local farmers. Allegations are flying thick and fast that Patel is leveraging powerful political "godfathers" and administrative influence to strong-arm the party leadership into securing his ticket at any cost.

The Shadow of a ₹25 Crore Sugar Mill Scam

The primary source of the farmers' outrage stems from grave corruption allegations dating back to Satish Patel's tenure as an MLA. Serious charges were leveled against him regarding a massive ₹25 crore scam at the Gandhar Sugar Mill in Karjan Taluka. To this day, Patel stands accused of procuring sugarcane from nearly 2,500 innocent local farmers, processing it into sugar, and pocketing the proceeds from market and government sales—



leaving thousands of impoverished farmers financially devastated and running from pillar to post for their dues. Farmers are now vehemently questioning the rationale behind handing over the reins of a critical agricultural body like the APMC to the alleged mastermind of this major agrarian scam.

Allegations Against Son Dhrupal Patel: The Illegal Land & Shops Racket

Compounding the controversy, Satish Patel's son, Dhrupal Patel—who currently serves as an APMC Director—is also facing severe scrutiny. His tenure has been marred by allegations of illegal encroachment and land grabbing. Reports suggest that prime APMC land, originally reserved for farmers' crops and public utilities, was illegally cleared to construct shops. These

unauthorized commercial units were reportedly sold off-the-books for astronomical sums ranging between ₹40 lakh and ₹60 lakh each. Locals point out that these multi-million rupee transactions find absolutely no mention in the official APMC accounting ledgers, raising suspicions of a massive black-money racket.

The Rise of Jaideep Chauhan: Farmers Demand a 'Son of the Soil'

In the midst of this brewing anger, Vadodara District BJP General Secretary Jaideep Chauhan has emerged as a formidable contender for the seat, escalating internal party friction. With tensions boiling over in the Karjan belt, local farmers have launched a fierce vocal campaign. Their demand is clear and uncompromising: the Vadodara

APMC should not be led by wealthy industrialists, corporate giants, or tainted politicians. Instead, they demand a ticket for a genuine "son of the soil"—a farmer's son who understands their struggles firsthand and will champion their rights. The farming community has made a firm declaration that this time, their loyalty lies with an honest farmer's representative rather than blind party affiliation.

An Ultimatum to the BJP: Boycott of Assembly Elections Looming

Furious farmers have issued a direct and chilling warning to the ruling BJP. They have made it clear that if the party decides to field or support Satish Patel, his close associates, or any individual linked to the sugar mill scam, the consequences will be severe. The farmers' unions have officially declared that if the BJP continues to shield and promote corrupt elements, the entire farming community of Vadodara district will unite to completely boycott the party in the upcoming Gujarat Assembly Elections. All eyes are now on the BJP leadership in Gandhinagar. It remains to be seen whether the party will stand by its anti-corruption rhetoric and deny tickets to tainted leaders, or buckle under heavy political pressure.

THE 'WHITE-COLLAR' PREDATOR OF KARJAN

The Dark Saga of Ex-MLA Satish Patel's Multi Crore Scams and Harassment of Farmers!

VADODARA/KARJAN: (By PAWAN MAKAN)

1. The ₹25 Crore Gandhara Sugar Mill Scam: Sugarcane Taken, Sugar Sold, but Farmers Left in Tears

Cooperatives are meant for the welfare of farmers, but the story at the Gandhara Sugar Mill in Karjan Taluka is the exact opposite. Former MLA and then-Chairman of the mill, Satish Patel, is accused of leveraging his political power to orchestrate a massive scam worth approximately ₹25 crore.

According to sources, sugarcane cultivated through the blood and sweat of around 2,500 innocent local farmers was procured. This sugarcane was processed into sugar and successfully sold to the market and the government. However, when the time came to pay the poor farmers their rightful dues, Satish Patel washed his hands of the matter. Today, these farmers are still running from pillar to post, begging for their hard-earned money.

2. Fraud in Karjan Cotton Department: Illegal Shops Built on Cotton Storage Land!

Satish Patel's alleged irregularities do not stop there. As the Chairman of the Karjan Cotton Department, Patel allegedly bypassed all rules and regulations to execute another massive racket. The land specifically allocated for safely storing the farmers' cotton crops was illegally converted into commercial shops. These shops were then sold off illicitly, lining his pockets with crores of rupees. Furthermore, severe allegations suggest he was involved in a staggering ₹400 crore mega-



scam during his tenure as an APMC Director.

3. Illegal Construction at Son Dhrupal Patel's School: Collusion with Municipality President?

Intoxicated by power, the family allegedly left no stone unturned in flouting Karjan Municipality's regulations. Satish Patel's son, Dhrupal Patel, runs the 'Karjan Public School' in the taluka. Complaints were raised regarding large-scale illegal constructions within the school premises, prompting the Karjan Municipality to issue a formal notice.

However, shockingly, no concrete action has been taken since the notice was served. Internal whispers suggest a deep collusion between Karjan Municipality President Ilaba and Satish

Patel, resulting in the legal files being buried and shielding the school from any punitive action.

4. The Tragic Suicide of Pinakin Patel: 'Ruthless Extortion' and a Heartbreaking Suicide Note

The darkest and most agonizing chapter of these alleged scams is the loss of an innocent farmer's life. A local farmer named Pinakin Patel had lakhs of rupees stuck in the sugar mill scam. Driven to desperation by extreme financial distress, Pinakin borrowed money on interest from Satish Patel.

On one hand, his rightful money was trapped in the sugar mill; on the other, Satish Patel allegedly unleashed a ruthless (Pathani) extortion campaign to recover the interest on the loan. Mentally shattered by the relentless harass-

ment and threats, Pinakin Patel tragically chose to end his life. Before his death, he left a suicide note that explicitly stated: "I am committing suicide due to the harassment and extortion by Satish Patel."

At the time, the suicide note went viral across media and social platforms. Tragically, because Satish Patel was a sitting MLA of the ruling party, his wealth and political clout were allegedly used to hush up the matter, leaving the grieving family with nothing but empty condolences instead of justice.

5. The 'Annadatas' Ruined: Cotton Farmers Left in Destitution

According to shocking intelligence from local sources, Satish Patel's anti-farmer actions have driven hundreds of Karjan farmers into complete bankruptcy. Farmers who once lived proudly on sugarcane cultivation have lost their livelihoods. The crisis has now spiraled, dragging the region's cotton farmers into a deep financial abyss as well.

There is massive outrage among the local populace. They warn that if immediate and strict legal action is not taken to put such power-hungry, anti-farmer leaders behind bars, the debt-ridden farmers of Karjan will be forced into mass suicides in the coming days.

The burning question remains: Will the government order a fair and independent probe into the scams of this 'white-collar' former MLA to deliver justice to the victimized farmers? Or will this dark syndicate continue to thrive on the back of money and power? Only time will tell.

11-yr-old girl hit-and-run case solved; accused arrested from UP

Srinagar. (Agency)

Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday said that it solved the fatal hit-and-run case involving an 11-year-old girl in Kulgam by arresting the accused from Uttar Pradesh and seizing the offending Grand Vitara vehicle. The accused was identified as Arun Gupta a resident of Behrinbagh, Barabanki district of Uttar Pradesh.

Police said the case relates to an accident on July 10 near KP Colony in Vessu, Kulgam where an unidentified vehicle hit an 11-year-old girl. She was shifted to Government Medical College (GMC), Anantnag, but later succumbed to her injuries.

Police registered case at Police Station Qazigund under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and constituted a special investigation team.

During the investigation, the team analysed CCTV footage, examined evidence and developed technical leads, which helped identify the accused and trace the vehicle. Acting on the leads, a police team travelled to Uttar Pradesh, where the accused was arrested with the assistance of the local police. The vehicle involved in the accident was also seized.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kulgam said the arrest demonstrates that offenders cannot evade the law by crossing state boundaries and credited the success to technical investigation and coordinated police action.

Govt's failure to revise rates will cost Kashmir its short working window: Sajad Lone

Srinagar. (Agency)

Peoples Conference President and MLA Handwara Sajad Lone on Thursday accused the Jammu and Kashmir Government of jeopardising Kashmir's already short working season by failing to revise contractor rates, saying the resulting deadlock has brought road macadamisation and other developmental works to a standstill. Lone said contractors have been demanding a revision in rates to offset rising input costs, but the Government's refusal to do so has stalled the execution of development projects across the Valley.

He urged the administration to resolve the dispute without delay.

In a statement, Lone pointed out that Kashmir's short working season for undertaking developmental works, especially road-related projects & macadamisation, is being further constrained by external economic pressures. He noted that global market disruptions inevitably trigger price volatility, and that the ongoing Iran-US conflict has disrupted supply chains, including petroleum-linked inputs, driving up the cost of materials essential for road works. Despite the Government having earmarked funds under various R&B and other development schemes, Lone said execution on the ground is yet to commence even as the season is already well into July.

Tanda medical college launches first dedicated nels course for paramedics

Dharamshala. (Agency)

Dr. Rajendra Prasad Government Medical College (Dr. RPGMC), Tanda, has launched its first dedicated National Emergency Life Support (NELS) Course for paramedics, marking a significant milestone in simulation-based medical education.

The three-day programme, which concluded on Thursday, is being conducted under the NELS Centre at Dr RPGMC, Tanda, using the institute's NELS Skill Centre and High-Fidelity Simulation Laboratory, regarded as one of the leading simulation facilities in North India.

The programme was inaugurated by Principal Dr. Milap Sharma in the presence of Dr. Shelly Rana, Head and Nodal Officer of the High-Fidelity Simulation Laboratory, Additional Director Dr. Ankush Sharma, the Nursing Superintendent, the Matron, NELS faculty members, invited delegates, faculty and B.Sc. Paramedical students.

Amritsar Airport dispatches India-UK CETA garment shipment to Birmingham

This initial shipment represents a massive validation of regional infrastructure and a boost for the local economy in Punjab.

Amritsar. (Agency)

The first-ever export consignment of ready-made garments under the newly enacted India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) was successfully flagged off today from Sri Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport in Amritsar. The special commercial shipment was dispatched directly to Birmingham, United Kingdom, aboard a scheduled Air India flight.

The landmark departure ceremony was attended by a cohort of senior officials, including Aditya Singh Chauhan (Deputy DGFT), Gaurav Gupta (Assistant Director), A K Sharma (Airport Director), Varun (CSO, Airport), Azad Singh (Station In-charge, Cargo, Amritsar) and Rishabh (Import-Export Executive, Amritsar Cargo). According to PIB, the

operationalisation of the India-UK CETA tariff has been slashed to zero per cent. This agreement effectively lowers production premiums, a change projected to trigger a rapid surge in demand and dramatically expand the market share of Indian apparel across high-street and digital retail spaces in the United

Kingdom. This initial shipment represents a massive validation of regional infrastructure and a boost for the local economy in Punjab. By clearing and routing international cargo directly from the Amritsar Cargo Terminal via Air India, regional manufacturers and exporters no longer have to rely on congested logistics hubs in distant metropolitan cities like New Delhi or Mumbai. This logistical independence translates directly into monumental savings in transit time, fuel consumption, and overall supply chain expenses.

Consequently, the inaugural flight to Birmingham establishes Amritsar as a vital international trade gateway, enabling local businesses to participate seamlessly in the global economy.



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Sumul Dairy polls: 7 out of 9 seats see '100% polling'

The 16 seats have 1,003 registered voters, who are presidents of milk committees in 16 talukas in Surat and Tapi. In a BJP-led board, the Congress won three seats — from Nizar, Uchhal and Vyara — in the last elections.

Surat. (Agency)

Elections for nine seats of the Sumul Dairy board were held peacefully on Wednesday. While the board has 16 seats for which elections are held, candidates backed by the BJP won seven of them uncontested. As many as 21 candidates were in the fray for the nine seats, for which ballot voting was held in nine talukas of Surat and Tapi districts. The results will be announced on July 17.

The 16 seats have 1,003 registered voters, who are presidents of milk committees in 16 talukas in Surat and Tapi. In a BJP-led board, the Congress won three seats — from Nizar, Uchhal and Vyara — in the last elections. The polling was held from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm under strict police arrangements. The Board is witnessing a direct contest between the BJP and Pashu Palak Hit Rakshak Samithi,

which comprises BJP rebel leaders and Congress leaders, for the first time. The BJP's group is called Sahkar Panel. Sources said that on Wednesday, polling



was held for Olpad, Mandvi, Mahuva, Umarpada, Nizar, Kukarmunda, Vyara, Songadh, and Dolvan seats. Except for Olpad and Umarpada, all other seats recorded 100 per cent voting. Out of the 42 voters in Olpad, only 39 were allowed to vote, as three others failed to fulfil the

voting criteria. In Umarpada, which has 60 voters, one voter did not turn up at the polling station. Similarly, the seats that saw cent per cent voting are Mandvi (129 votes), Mahuva (65), Nizar (51), Kukarmunda (43), Vyara (90), Songadh (175), and Dolvan (52). Surat Choryasi, a BJP MLA who won Choryasi seat uncontested, said, "We are sure that we will win the election as farmers who supply milk to us are satisfied with the prices they get given. Not a single complaint from them has come in the last decade. We also have plans for expansion to other states."

Outgoing vice-chairman Raju Pathak said, "We have already won the election, and the fight is to give a clean sweep to Congress. The counting will be done at the Sumul Dairy banquet hall on July 17 in the presence of Prant Officer Neha Savani."

India-UK trade deal kicks in: 4 jewellers send 1st consignment of exports from Surat Diamond Bourse

Surat. (Agency)

Four jewellers exported their first consignment of jewellery from Surat on Wednesday, when the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (Free Trade Agreement) became operational.

The four jewellers reached the Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council office at the Surat Diamond Bourse building complex on Wednesday afternoon to send their first consignment to different cities in the United Kingdom. The jewellery exports from Surat Gaurav Jewellers, Roy Diamonds, Shish Jewels, Parvati Jewels

LLP — are part of the inaugural \$10 million jewellery shipment comprising gold jewellery, diamond jewellery, silver jewellery and platinum jewellery. The India-UK CETA ushers in a new era for India's gem and jewellery industry by providing zero-duty access to the UK market from the day the agreement enters into force and eliminating UK import tariffs of up to 4 per cent. The agreement gives Indian exporters a significant competitive advantage in the UK's \$4 billion jewellery import market, paving the way for enhanced exports, investment and employment. As per the data received from DGCI & S (Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics), the India's export to UK in

Gems and Jewellery, polished natural diamond \$44.51 million in 2023, which grew to \$170.19 million in 2024 and \$151.19 million in 2025. While in Polished Lab Grown Diamonds, the exports in 2023 was \$6.26 million, which rose to \$26.06 million in 2024 and \$27.58 million in 2025. Similarly the exports of gold jewellery in 2023 was \$70.81 million, \$328.44 million in 2024 and \$394.14 million in 2025. India also exports silver semi-manufactured jewellery and imitation jewellery, along with other types of jewellery. India's total gems and jewellery exports to the UK in 2023 stood at \$164.77 million and in 2024 it was \$941 million, in 2025 it was \$754.11 million.

Punjab police resort to lathi-charge, teargas, and water cannons to disperse protesting MGNREGA workers

According to protesters, 10 of them suffered injuries in the police action and were admitted to the Khanna Civil Hospital and private hospitals.

Police officers, including Khanna DSP Vinod Kumar, also sustained injuries during the clash.

Ludhiana. (Agency)

A protest by MGNREGA employees demanding regularisation of their services and release of eight months' pending salaries turned violent in Khanna on Wednesday when police used lathi-charge, tear gas and water cannons to stop demonstrators marching towards the residence of Punjab Rural Development and Panchayat Minister Tarunpreet Singh Sond. According to protesters, 10 of them suffered injuries in the police action and were admitted to the Khanna Civil Hospital and private hospitals. Police officers, including Khanna DSP Vinod Kumar, also sustained injuries during the clash. The employees, who had gathered at Prem Bhandari Park in the morning, marched towards the minister's residence on Amlah Road to submit a memorandum seeking the regularisation of over 2,000 contractual MGNREGA staff by merging

them into the Department of Rural Development and Panchayats and the release of salaries pending for the last eight months. Police had erected barricades near the minister's residence. As protesters attempted to move past them, police resorted to lathi-charge, fired tear gas shells and used water cannons to disperse the crowd.

Police said force was used after protesters tried to breach the barricades and advance towards the minister's residence. Additional personnel were deployed and the situation was later brought under control. The Pendu Mazdoor Union, which extended support to the protest, condemned the police action. State president Tarsem Peter alleged that protesters were peacefully proceeding to submit their memorandum when they were stopped and assaulted. He claimed several women protesters were injured and alleged that

police manhandled them during the clash. The union said Fatehgarh Sahib resident Sudagar Singh suffered fractures in both legs and was referred to a hospital in Mohali due to the seriousness of his



injuries. Tarsem Peter demanded that the Punjab government provide free medical treatment and compensation to all injured workers.

In a separate incident after the protest, a canter carrying MGNREGA workers back to their villages overturned following a head-on collision with another vehicle

near Bija village. One worker, identified as Sukhdev Singh, was killed, while several others were injured and admitted to nearby hospitals.

The police action triggered sharp political reactions. Punjab Congress president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring condemned the use of force against the protesting workers, alleging that the Bhagwant Mann government had "turned Punjab into a police state".

He said the MGNREGA workers were holding a peaceful 'dharna' and chanting 'Satnam Wahe Guru' (Sikh religious chant), yet the police resorted to "brutality". He questioned the use of water cannons, teargas shells, and lathi-charge against protesting MGNREGA workers.

"Is this how a common man's government deals with its people?" Warring demanded suspension of police and administrative officers who resorted to "unprovoked" lathi-charge on MGNREGA workers.

Stopping cycle of violence behind bars

Sri Lanka's latest crisis has come in the form of prison violence that killed at least 29 people and injured more than 100 people, highlighting serious systemic issues and a failure to contain an explosive recurring situation. On July 5, violent clashes broke out between rival factions of remand and convicted prisoners at the Negombo prison, purportedly linked to the drug trade, initially leaving two inmates dead and dozens injured. Tensions escalated the next day, with prisoners holding a rooftop protest and some rushing towards the gates, when clashes erupted between inmates and prison officers. With one of the highest records of casualties, last week's prison violence was unprecedented.

While the aspect of violence continues to dominate the headlines, the spotlight should also fall on the highly problematic prison system itself. What began as a clash between rival inmate groups eventually turned into one of the bloodiest episodes in the prison industry, leaving eight prison staff and 21 inmates dead. Many of the injured prisoners were transferred to other facilities amid fears of further unrest. This outcome is also the result of a weak criminal justice system and delayed prison reforms. Sri Lankan prisons are known for their appalling conditions, where inmates sleep in shifts and sanitation facilities are poor. The statistics tell their own story. The department of prisons manages 60 institutional establishments including four maximum security prisons, 18 remand prisons and 10 open work camps. According to the World Prison Brief, the official capacity of the prison system is 13,241 whereas the actual number of inmates is 40,034, with an occupancy of 215.6 percent. Out of this, nearly three fourths are pre-trial detainees, while women and foreigners constitute 5.3 percent and 1.4 percent of the total prison population. Naturally, the investigations have now been expanded beyond the series of incidents to the broader questions of prison management, overcrowding, use of lethal force and allegations of transferred inmates being subjected to torture—issues the rights community and Sri Lanka's Human Rights Commission have again reiterated. The Negombo bloodshed therefore is best not treated as an isolated incident but one that epitomises a grave problem of a prison system weighed by administrative and structural failures. In that, what is also undeniable is the proliferation of narcotics and small arms within cells—questions the authorities must find answers to. Three out of every four prisoners being unconvicted and remand prisoners awaiting trial is a situation of justice delayed. Many others are minor offenders arrested over petty theft, for possessing lesser amounts of narcotics or for failing to pay bail amounts.

Sri Lanka's caseload is high and the courts are crippled by administrative delays, throwing suspects into a legal limbo and extending their stays from months to years at times. What is worse is the non-segregation of minor offenders from hardcore criminals, especially as a means of preventing possible crime. There is also the question of treatment of prisoners—as an inconvenience or a threat to security—instead of dealing with the core problems of overcrowding, weak resourcing, availability of drugs and weapons and the treatment of prisoners. It does not help to have the Cabinet spokesperson Nalinda Jayatissa rejecting comparisons between the Negombo violence and the deadly prison riots in 2012 or 2020, pushing the argument that the Negombo unrest is different as prison officers were made direct targets of coordinated inmate attacks. While probing the recent violence at speed, authorities must also find a solution to keep the unconvicted prisoners separated from convicted ones.

China's hydel project bodes ill for India

New Delhi needs to build a well-reasoned case against the Medog dam system

IN 2024, China announced that it was commencing the construction of Medog, the world's largest hydropower project, on the Brahmaputra river, which flows from Tibet into India's North-East. This would generate three times the power of the Three Gorges project on the Yangtze river in central China. It is slated to deliver 300 billion kWh of power annually. SouthAsians & Diaspora Though it is billed as a run-of-the-river project, it carries the potential of affecting the flow of water downstream. This has been the experience with the series of run-of-the-river dams China has built upstream on the Mekong river. Beijing has regularly used its operational control to hold back water during the critical dry seasons to top up its own reservoirs and generate power at the expense of the downstream countries — Thailand, Laos and Cambodia.

For Medog, China is constructing a cascade system of five dams and massive 20-km-long diversion tunnels bored through a terrain characterised by an unstable geology. It can, therefore, have the ability to significantly vary the flows across seasons even if the annual flows remain unaffected. It has been argued that 70% of the water flows of the Brahmaputra are derived from sources south of the border and rainfall. However, dry-season flows could be affected significantly by upstream activity. Of much deeper concern is the very real possibility of a seismically induced series of colossal landslides and collapse of dam structures that would inevitably have an impact downstream. China's own geologists have warned that the Medog project sits astride a major seismic fault line, known as the Paizhen Fault. The Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on July 9 that Chinese scientists have warned that a fracture in the earth's crust in the eastern Himalayan region would significantly affect the integrity of the massive hydropower project's infrastructure.

The warning is not mere speculation. In 2017, a major earthquake measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale rocked Milin (Tibet), which sits at the northern end of the Paizhen Fault. Experts say that the danger is not so much that India would be hit by a gigantic wall of

water from an upstream collapse of the dam structures. What may happen is that the landslides and collapsing infrastructure would, in the first instance, block the narrow river gorges, forming massive artificial lakes. Subsequently, the banks of loose debris and mud will break, in the manner we have seen with the glacial lake outburst floods (GLOF) in the Himalayas, causing flashfloods of mud, rocks and water surging downstream into Arunachal Pradesh and the densely populated Assam plains. One can imagine what a catastrophic situation



India will face — and neighbouring Bangladesh as well. SouthAsians & Diaspora

It was reported that India issued a demarche to China in December 2024 soon after the Medog project was announced, urging the neighbour to ensure that the established rights and interests of lower riparian states were not compromised. But China's record as an upper riparian state is not at all encouraging, as one has witnessed in the case of the Mekong river. It is unlikely that mere demarches will yield any result. In 2022, China stopped sharing hydrological data on the Brahmaputra, ignoring an arrangement which had been agreed upon by both countries. It has not been resumed. China uses data sharing as a diplomatic weapon. This needs to be called out. There may be no alternative to India making this an international issue, perhaps taking it to the UN

Security Council.

The recent limited improvement of relations between the two countries should not inhibit strong diplomatic action at the bilateral and multilateral levels. Indian experts should be assembled by the government to build a well-reasoned and compelling case why this project poses a threat to the downstream populations and the fragile ecology of the eastern Himalayas. The growing impact of climate change on the hydrology of the region needs to be factored in. There should also be a careful examination of the issues involved under international law governing cross-border rivers.

One should examine the implications of India having suspended its observance of the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), which governed the sharing of the waters of the Indus and its tributaries between India and Pakistan. Here, India is an upper riparian country, but so is China since the Indus originates from the Tibetan plateau, just as the Brahmaputra does. Even if the IWT is suspended by India, that does not deprive Pakistan of its rights as a lower riparian state under international law.

A Chinese commentator warned India that if it was contemplating any action on the Indus that affected the lower riparian interests of China's "iron brother Pakistan", then it should not forget that it

was an upper riparian state in respect to the Brahmaputra in the east. One should not take this warning lightly. But if India decides to make an international issue of the Medog project, it should consider how much traction it would have if it coincidentally maintains its stand on the IWT. There would inevitably be accusations of double standards.

While geopolitics makes the sharing of cross-border river waters a complex and divisive issue, there is no long-term solution possible unless rivers are treated as living natural assets that cannot be chopped up as pieces of private property. They can only deliver benefits to humanity if they are cherished and nurtured through collaboration among states that enjoy their bounties. Our planet has an ecological integrity that we violate at our own peril.

Toxic legacy : Hundreds of sources still choke Punjab rivers

The community-led restoration of the Kali Bein is proof that determined action can heal even severely degraded water bodies

THE Punjab Pollution Control Board's admission before the National Green Tribunal that 800 pollution sources continue to choke the state's rivers is a damning indictment of environmental governance. It confirms what repeated surveys and court interventions have long suggested: the crisis is not one of awareness, but of action. For years, governments have announced action plans, built treatment plants and constituted committees. Yet untreated sewage and industrial effluents continue to flow into the Sutlej, Beas and their tributaries, while existing infrastructure remains underutilised or poorly maintained. The consequence is a slow-moving public health disaster. Heavy metals and toxic chemicals have entered the food chain, tainting groundwater and casting a long shadow over the state's much-discussed cancer belt. GeographicReferencePunjab's rivers once sustained

the Green Revolution. Today, they are paying the price for unplanned urbanisation, weak enforcement and a



culture of impunity. The periodic censure of civic bodies by the NGT underscores a larger truth:

environmental governance cannot succeed when responsibility is diffused and penalties are treated as a routine cost of doing business. The state has shown that revival is possible. The community-led restoration of the Kali Bein is proof that determined action can heal even severely degraded water bodies. But isolated successes cannot substitute for a comprehensive strategy that combines strict compliance, transparent public reporting and sustained investment in sewage and waste-treatment systems.

Punjab derives its very name from its waters. To allow these rivers to remain open drains is to imperil not only ecosystems and public health, but also the state's identity and future prosperity. The time for reports and promises has passed. What Punjab now needs is the resolve to enforce the laws it already has. The problem is one of political will.

A thin red line through Punjab

Insurgency-ridden Punjab of the 1980s and 90s remains a contested memory. As terror was tamed by terror, the State became what it was threatened by. The makers of Satluj missed an opportunity in not aiming for the balance seen in great political tragedies like Antigone

Honey Trehan completed Satluj in 2022. It then entered a four-year limbo. Originally titled Punjab '95, it faced 127 objections from the Central Board of Film Certification, including to its title, in the hope that a rose by another name would cease to be one. When it finally appeared on a streaming platform earlier this July, it vanished almost as quickly as it had arrived because a rose by any other name is as dangerous.

The irony is obvious. A film about Jaswant Singh Khalra, a human rights activist remembered for documenting thousands of disappearances during Punjab's insurgency, acquired a history of disappearance itself. To me, the most interesting question Satluj raises is this: how does a constitutional State defend itself against those who seek to destroy it without becoming terrorist-like itself? Any journalist who worked on a news desk in the 1980s and 90s would remember those days. I was one. The front page, day after day, was numbing. If it was not mass shootings by insurgents, it was retaliation by the State machinery. Policemen, judges, public officials and civilians—even migrant labourers—were killed routinely. Insurgents were executed by the dozens. Terror was tamed by terror. The State became what it was threatened by.

This transference of identity deserves study. A State that refuses to use force against an armed rebellion risks ceasing to be a State at all. K P S Gill—who famously said, "I let my image ride. It serves its purpose"—headed Punjab Police at the time, never disguised this reality. In Endgame in Punjab: 1988-1993, Gill presents the campaign as a battle for the survival of the Republic itself. He disputes the casualty figures that have entered public discourse. While Satluj opens with a figure of 25,000 deaths at the hands of the

State, Gill's account places the combined toll of civilians, security personnel and militants at a little over 21,000. Clearly, Punjab of those years remains a contested memory. The dead have not yet been fully numbered, and so not fully honoured.

Gill was critical of human rights activism. He believed that some activists had become instruments that benefited militant objectives by concentrating on alleged State abuses while overlooking terrorist violence. Khalra was one such activist in Gill's eyes. Gill's position explains the moral universe within which he believed he was acting. The line between the patriot and the pariah has always been thin—and red. Trehan's relentlessly dark film does not recreate these personalities literally. The character of the police chief Bitta is widely understood to be inspired by Gill, while his deputy Sugga is believed to be drawn from his associate Ajit Singh Sandhu. By fictionalising them, Trehan frees himself from the limitations of documentary. Yet this is also where I believe Satluj misses an opportunity.

Great political tragedies rarely ask us to choose between good and evil. They force us to choose between incompatible goods. No one understood this better than Sophocles. In Antigone, King Creon believes that Polyneices, who attacked his own city, has forfeited the right to burial and that the authority of the State must prevail over personal ties. Antigone, however, believes that the sacred duty owed to her brother transcends any

royal decree. The result is catastrophe. The tragedy lies not in the triumph of good over evil but in the collision of two relative truths. Creon's Punjabi version in Satluj might have been Gill. Sandhu could have been imagined not merely as an emblem of State power but as a man haunted by the conviction that every hesitation costs innocent lives and every operational failure weakens the



Republic. Good intentions often start wars. Opposite him stands Khalra, equally convinced that a Republic which abandons constitutional accountability in order to save itself may preserve its borders while maiming the reason for its existence. That complexity is missing in the film. Can leaders in a democracy be

required to do morally troubling things for the sake of the community while remaining morally answerable for them? The point is not that illegality becomes virtue. The point is that democracies sometimes confront choices in which every available option carries grave moral and human costs. If the State refuses to use sufficient force against an armed insurgency, it risks disintegration. On the other hand, if it treats constitutional restraints as expendable, it risks hollowing out the very constitutional order it claims to defend. This is democracy's Catch-22, and the film avoids it. Artists are not obliged to tell the whole story. Endgame illuminates the predicament of the State; Satluj illuminates the predicament of the citizen confronting State power. Together they bring us closer to the truth than either can alone. This is why India—always confused when it comes to distinguishing between reality and art—should resist the temptation either to suppress such films or to treat them as history. Gill's success created the peaceful conditions in which Khalra's questions—and Trehan's film—could be asked. But a democracy that never returns to examine its emergency powers risks making the emergency a permanent possibility. A democracy that forgets why those powers were invoked risks misunderstanding its own history.

Asking yourself 'why' very important

To question yourself will provide you a clear picture because you will know why you do these things and what changes are needed in your life.



Fear stops a lot of people from asking 'why', because people just don't want to be in that uncomfortable state of knowing the answer. And there are some who probably know the answer but live in denial. Remember, acceptance is the ultimate freedom. Getting a reality check is so very important in life.

Essential to your happiness:

Have you asked yourself recently if you are doing the things you love? Do you think that you are on the right track and following your passion? Are you where you always wanted to be? Are you just

letting life to control you? Are you making a conscious decision to follow your dreams? Are you living life king/queen size? Are you pushing your creative boundaries? It's so important to ask yourself these fundamental questions. These questions will give you a ring side view of life. It might be a good time to make some changes, take a new direction, or have an open discussion with someone who matters in your life. What's most important is that you are following your own bliss.

Life is a journey:

Asking yourself 'why' is part of that journey, as it helps you to understand yourself, those around you. When you ask why, you are looking at your life as an outsider and this gives a perspective. To question yourself will provide you a clear picture because you will know why you do these things and what changes are needed in your life. So, don't feel scared and be open about asking questions.

Say bye to fear:

Men should seek Work-life balance

Flexible work arrangements are often sought to maintain work-life balance. If we believe a study, these arrangements may exacerbate discrimination based on parental status and gender.

Researchers analysed the reactions both men and women received while making flexible work requests - meaning that they either asked to work from home or to work non-traditional hours.

They found that among those who made flexible work requests, men who asked to work from home two days a week in order to care for a child were significantly advantaged compared to women who made the same request. "These results demonstrate how cultural notions of parenting influence perceptions of people who request flexible work," said author Christin Munsch, an assistant professor of

sociology at Furman University in South Carolina.

Today, we think of women's responsibilities as including paid labour and domestic obligations, but "we still regard breadwinning as men's primary responsibility and we feel grateful if men contribute in the realm of childcare or to other household tasks," she added.

For her study, Munsch used a sample of 646 people in the age group of 18 to 65. Participants were shown a transcript and told it was an actual conversation between a human resources representative and an employee.

After reading the transcript, participants were asked how likely they would be to grant the request and also to evaluate the employee on several measures, including how likeable, committed, dependable, and dedicated they found him or her.

Among those who read the scenario in which a man requested to work from home for childcare related reasons, 69.7 percent said they would be "likely" or "very likely" to approve the request, compared to 56.7 percent of those who read the scenario in which a woman made the request.

Almost a quarter - 24.3 percent - found the man to be "extremely likeable", compared to only three percent who found the woman to be "extremely likeable".

Munsch also found that both men and women who made flexible work requests for childcare related reasons were advantaged compared to those who made the same requests for other reasons.

Pakhi Jain was in for a shock when she heard her seven-year old return from school one day and mouth expletives. "When asked who taught such words, he said everyone in his school bus used them and he was following suit because he wants to be like his seniors," says Jain, who didn't know how to deal with the situation at that time.

She is not the only one. While most parents and school authorities impress the need to inculcate discipline within the four walls of the classroom, these rules often do not apply to school buses. In the recent times, there have been several cases of rowdy behaviour in buses, with children even hitting each other.

Ground for unruly behaviour

After hours of being cooped up in classrooms, the bus ride provides a perfect ground for the child to let out all that pent-up energy.

Says consulting psychiatrist Dr Pavan Sonar, "Unlike classrooms, there is more freedom in buses, as there is an absence of parentteacher supervision. So, children feel the liberty to do some mischief."

Adds clinical psychologist Saloni Sawnani, "Kids of all ages travel together in the bus. If the older kids are using foul language or behaving badly, younger kids follow suit to fit in. That leads to more cases of rowdy behaviour."

More often than not, these buses are understaffed with only one attendant taking care of around 40-50 children. Moreover, the attendant is only equipped to ensure that the children are not physically injured. "They are not responsible towards children's behaviour, so there is no supervision at all," she adds.

When your child turns rowdy

Do you feel your kid is picking up bad habits from the school bus? Discipline your kid and firmly explain that inappropriate language will not be tolerated. Also, impress upon him/her that there is no greatness in being like the older children and doing wrong



things. "Often, when a child gets into a fight in the bus and it comes to the parents' attention, they confront the driver or school authorities. This is not the way to tackle the situation as you would be setting a wrong example," says Sawnani.

Instead, get to know both the ver sions and if you feel that your kid is at fault, act with concern rather than harshness. "Make your child under stand that bullying another person is wrong. Often, children don't report instances of bullying. So, teach him/her to understand and report such instances to you, the teachers or the supervisor of the bus," says Dr Sonar.

School authorities' role

With safety and discipline in buses being a concern, school authorities are now taking strict measures. While a few city schools have student monitors in every bus -they not only maintain discipline, but also keep an eye on the bus staff -some even have plans of

installing CCTV cameras in the vehi cles. Interestingly, at an international school at Chandivali, a text message is sent to the parent when the child swipes his I-card and boards the bus.

Most schools have also hired a lady attendant to comply with the guide lines issued by the RTA (Roads and Transport Authority). "Having trained staff in buses is important. If younger and older kids are travelling together, the attendant should ensure that the y elder ones are seated behind and the n younger ones in front. Any kind of e intermingling between e intermingling betwee s the two should be t avoided," says Sawnani.

Measures school authorities can take

- Provide instructions about school bus safety in classrooms.
- Send students on time, so that they don't have to run to catch the buses.
- Get the bus inspected for technical snags and ensure safety measures.
- Ensure that the bus has adequate staff and that a lady attendant is always present.
- Install CCTVs in buses for monitoring the behaviour of kids.

Things parents should remember

- Check the background of the agency from where the buses are hired.
- Teach your child the importance of safety, how to wait for the school bus and how to board it.
- Any misbehaviour, on the part of a student or the bus staff, should be brought to notice immediately.
- Teach your child to maintain cleanliness in the bus.





Are you in Control of your child's online Activities?

We marvel each time a toddler effortlessly unlocks a phone and dials a number or takes a picture. While this may seem amusing, it is actually a cause for concern.

Many parents don't think twice before letting their young children access games and watch videos on tablets and mobile phones; in fact, many kids under the age of 10 have their own personal gadgets. The internet can be a dangerous place for an innocent child, which is why it is important for parents to have complete control over their ward's activities. Denet Pradeep has locked all the apps on her tablet, so that when her 11-year-old daughter has to use them, she has to come to her to unlock it. This way, she knows exactly what her daughter is looking at online. Apart from

this, I have told her that there are some things that she shouldn't watch. She's at an age when she is curious about a lot of things, but she knows that if she wants to know about something, she should come and ask me. I have also told her that there are certain pictures that she should not share on group chats. I don't think that children should be given any privacy till they are 18 because it is our job as parents to protect and guide them," says Denet. Psychosocial therapist Dr Shreedevi agrees and says it is wrong for busy parents to give their children a free hand over mobile

phone/tablet usage to keep them distracted, as this can lead to internet addiction and expose them to online dangers. While a child's internet usage can be tracked to a large extent at home, what happens when kids go to their friends' houses and use gadgets there? "You should look at the pictures that your kids have taken when they go out with their friends. Also, there should be a set family time at the end of each day, during which everyone in the family shares what they did. If your child has done something good, then you should appreciate it; if something bad has happened, then you must explain why it is wrong. Therapeutically, this is helpful and busy parents must make time for such an activity," says Dr Shreedevi.

Quick tips to keep in mind

- Do not let your child use a phone/tablet as a means of recreation
- Get your child into the habit of using the internet and apps only in your presence

- If your child uses the internet when you are away, encourage him/her to tell you what they have been viewing
- Look at your child's browsing history to keep a tab of their online activity
- Reserve family time every night to discuss what your children did through the day

- When your child turns eight, educate him/her about safety
- Get to know their friends and find out more about them through the stories that your ward tells you
- Be choosy about whose house you allow your kids to go to

How dance, music play a role in child's early years

Thanks to the strides that medical science has taken in the past decade, there has been a lot of focus on the importance of brain development in the early years of a child.

As a parent or educator, you may tend to think that a baby's brain is genetically pre-wired. However, neuroscientists now believe that early physical movement experiences are crucial to the neural stimulation needed for a baby's brain development. It begins developing from the time of conception till the age of six. Child development specialists have produced decades of research showing that the environment of a child's earliest years can have effects that last a lifetime. Special educator Hashmin Currimbhoy says, "The early stages of development are strongly affected by genetic factors; for example, genes direct newly formed neurons to their correct locations in the brain and play a role in how they interact. A child's experiences not only determine what information enters the brain, but also influence how the brain processes information. Brain cell connections are made repeatedly, they become permanent, but if they are not performed repeatedly, they are lost. Everyday I witness the relationship between a baby's gross motor development and the resultant learning. The more children move, the more information they are gathering about their environment and themselves. This completely justifies the need for adding movement to promote brain development right from the start."

Creative movement helps relieve stress. Dance in a child's early years shows how different types of practice allow dancers to achieve peak performance by blending cerebral and cognitive thought processes with muscle memory held in the cerebellum. Through regular aerobic training that incorporates some type of dance at least once a week, anyone can maximise his or her brain functioning. "For many children today, stress blocks learning avenues. We can relieve much of that stress through daily listening and singing experiences, moving to music, and exploring instrument sounds. We can help create that safe feeling through the songs and movements we teach," explains Hashmin. For example, a popular game is the Movement Card Game, which says Hoola Like A Hippo, Hop Like A Bunny, Do The Jellyfish Jiggle, Show Me A Cat

Pounce With A Ball etc. Once children are familiar, teachers integrate these into one set of movements and create a dance sequence. How music plays an important role in brain development of a child in the formative years is very crucial. Explains clinical psychologist Seema Hingorany, "In the first five years of life, a child's brain develops more and faster than at any other time in his life. The early experiences a child has -the things he sees, hears, touches -stimulate the brain, forming connections. This is when basic premise for learning behaviour is formed. Both genes and the environment influence a child's development. Healthy brain development establishes a child's social competence, cognitive skills and positive



emotional well-being. Many researches have proved that learning music helps build grey matter, which is responsible for processing and retrieving information, and new neural connections within the brain, thus increasing brain volume. These positive connections can help enhance intellectual and emotion al skills. Children, who are regularly exposed to music, may begin to use music as a source of comfort or to soothe themselves. Many feel a sense of safety when they are around a musical environment."

A huge playground welcomes you, when you enter Hotel for Dogs located on East Coast Road.

There is a swimming pool on one side and water bowls on the other. As the caretakers open the doors of a kennel, more than 15 dogs come bounding out, high on energy. There are about 40 dogs of different breeds, including Great Dane, Pitbull, Labrador, Golden Retriever, Husky, Pomeranian and Shih Tzu. They busily chase a football around. One of the owners of the kennel, Adishwar TA says, "Ideally, this is how dogs should be kept. They should have a lot of space to move around and interact with each other. A kennel needs to let the dogs play around and indulge in activities. Dogs tend to sulk when they are away from their parents, so a kennel should make him/her forget that," he says. Shravan Krishnan, the other owner, chips in, "You cannot keep the dogs in a crate or tie them up. As they are territorial, they suffer from separation anxiety and take time to get used to a different place."

But the best part about leaving your dogs at a kennel is that they don't just take care of the dogs, but also discipline them and provide luxurious facilities as well. Boarding is air conditioned, there are play areas, swimming pools which are vet-certified, grooming studios, pet stores, agility-training and fun activities, and behaviour correction programmes. Interestingly, boarding for pets in Chennai is much cheaper when compared to other metros. "Boarding for dogs in other cities is expensive. In fact, a lot of cheap boarding places also use dogs for blood transfusions and breeding. In south India, Chennai has the best facilities," says Adishwar.

Besides kennels that board dogs, there are individuals who take in dogs into their homes as well - like Geeta Nair. "I have parameters based on which I board dogs at home. They should be toilet-trained. I have three sittings with the pet and the owner before I take in the dog. This exercise is just to find out if the dog can adjust with other dogs and without his/her parents," says Geeta. Besides taking them for walks, she also makes sure she cooks all their meals herself. "I don't like giving them off-the-shelf food, so I cook. For canines that have health issues, like the ones on a renal diet or

Give your pets a break; send them on a vacation



with cardiac problems, I ask the owners to get the dogs their own food," she says. But does Chennai have enough kennels? Arunodaya Reddy, the owner of Harley and Me on ECR says, "People here don't want to spend money and that too, on a dog. We have a long way to go when it comes to looking at our pets as family, or children. A lot of people like to pretend they are caring and loving parents, but when it comes to actually taking care of them, there is no follow through. They still feed their dogs curd rice and low-quality meals. Awareness of pet care is essential. Pets, too, need vacation just like us. It is selfish to dump your dog because you don't want to take care of it," he says. Geeta believes that Chennai needs more

individuals who take up boarding. "There are many people who don't know where to leave their dogs when they are off on a vacation. Most importantly, we need more people who have clean, affordable kennels within the city. Also, having a pet is not a style statement. One needs to establish a rapport with their pet, and understand their needs. If you have anxiety issues, then it transmits on to the dog as well. You should have the confidence to handle another dog. The best way to bond with a dog is when you groom him/her or take them for walks. How long does it take to just brush a dog? People don't even want to do that. Be a dog lover, understand them and then make an effort to take care of them," she says.

Avoid deploying Indian seafarers in Hormuz: Government's big advisory to shipowners

The country's top maritime authority, the Directorate General of Maritime Administration (DGMA), has issued a circular in this regard.

New Delhi. (Agency)

India has directed shipping companies, including owners, operators and staffing firms, to temporarily refrain from deploying Indian seafarers on merchant vessels undertaking voyages through the conflict-hit Strait of Hormuz. The country's top maritime authority, the Directorate General of Maritime Administration (DGMA), has issued a circular in this regard. "In view of the heightened security situation in the Gulf region, the Directorate General of Maritime Administration (DGMA), through DGMA Circular No. 36 of 2026, has directed Ship Owners, Ship Managers and RPSL (Recruitment and Placement of Seafarers License) Companies to avoid deploying Indian seafarers on vessels undertaking voyages through the Strait of Hormuz until further orders," it said. The DGMA also listed a few other precautionary measures meant to ensure the safety of Indian sailors:



Heightened security vigilance in the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz and adjoining waters. Continuous monitoring of navigational warnings and security advisories, with strict

implementation of the ISPS (International Ship and Port Facility Security) Code. Immediate reporting and assistance through the IFC-IOR (Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region) and DG Communication Centre (Mercantile Marine Domain Awareness Centre) in cases of emergency. The DGMA said it was closely monitoring the evolving security situation in the Middle East, adding that it remains committed to safeguarding the safety, security and welfare of Indian seafarers. This comes as commercial ships and their crews continue to be caught in the crossfire of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Indian seafarers reportedly account for a significant, if not the majority, of casualties among civilian sailors due to the Iran war. Since the war began on February 28 this year, at least 10 Indian sailors have been killed in strikes linked to both Iran and the US.

Row after UP cleric says Lord Krishna was Muslim, offered namaz

New Delhi. (Agency)

A speech by Maulana Jarjis Ansari has triggered a controversy after a video showing him claiming that Lord Krishna was a Muslim and offered namaz five times a day went viral on social media. The video, reportedly from a religious address delivered in Jharkhand on June 23, has resurfaced amid the ongoing Krishna Janmabhoomi dispute, prompting protests by several Hindu organisations that have demanded the cleric's arrest. During the speech, Ansari cited a verse from the Bhagavad Gita -- "Yogi yunjita satatam atmanam rahasi sthitah, Ekaki yata-chittatma nirashir aparigrahaah" -- and claimed it instructed devotees to worship with the "whole body", arguing that Lord Krishna himself offered prayers five times a day. "If our brothers do not mind, then even Krishna ji used to offer prayers five times a day. If you do not believe, then see the 10th verse of the 6th chapter of Shri Bhagavad Gita," Ansari said before reciting the verse. He further claimed that if Hindus studied their scriptures closely, they would "start loving Islam", asserting that Islam was a universal faith preached not only by Prophet Muhammad but also by Lord Ram and Lord Krishna. "If these Hindu Muslims read their books... then believe that they will start loving Islam. Because Islam is the religion of the world. This is not the religion of the Muslims. Ramchandra ji has also presented this religion.

Rs 5 lakh bribe to paper-setter, 111 questions matched: CBI in NEET leak case

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Central Bureau of Investigation has told a special court that a coaching centre owner from Maharashtra's Latur, arrested in the NEET paper leak case, allegedly paid Rs 5 lakh to get chemistry questions before the examination. In its response to a bail plea filed by Shivraj Raghunath Motegaonkar, the agency said he procured the questions as part of a conspiracy with co-accused persons. The agency said Motegaonkar allegedly got the questions from PV Kulkarni, who was on the National Testing Agency panel that set the paper. It also alleged that Motegaonkar's son attended Kulkarni's coaching classes, where the questions were provided. According to the CBI, Motegaonkar, who runs a coaching centre in Maharashtra's Latur, "in conspiracy with the co-accused, procured NEET (UG) leaked chemistry questions prior to exam, and paid Rs 5 lakh for the same." The agency said he prepared handwritten notes from the questions provided in Kulkarni's chemistry tutorial classes. **PHONE HAD MASTER QUESTION SETS** The CBI told the court that it had recovered Motegaonkar's phone, which contained 36 images, including five duplicate images, carrying 132 handwritten chemistry questions. It said 111 of these allegedly matched the questions in the NTA's master question sets prepared for NEET (UG) 2026. The agency claimed the notes were purportedly in Motegaonkar's handwriting. It added that metadata analysis showed the pictures were taken nearly 10 days before the May 3 NEET (UG) examination. The CBI said, "Incriminating notes of chemistry questions relating to NEET UG 2026, allegedly in the handwriting of ...Shivraj Raghunath Motegaonkar was recovered from his mobile phone.

Don't introduce third language in Class 9: SC on CBSE's three-language policy

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Supreme Court on Thursday questioned the introduction of a third language at the Class 9 level under the CBSE curriculum, with Justice B V Nagarathna observing that it would place unnecessary pressure on students just before their board examinations. The Court also advised Tamil Nadu not to oppose the Centre's education policy merely because it originated from the Union government, while noting that discussions over Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) in the state are still underway. Hearing Tamil Nadu's appeal against a Madras High Court order directing the state to facilitate the establishment of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas in every district, Justice Nagarathna questioned why a new language should be introduced only in Class 9. Calling the move "very bad", Justice Nagarathna observed that students already face significant academic



pressure as they prepare for Class 10 board exams. "Ninth standard is stressful. Why do you introduce a new language in 9th? You introduce it in 6th," Justice Nagarathna said. The judge urged the Union government to reconsider the timing of the policy, saying students should begin learning a third language much earlier. "Union of India, please don't have a third language in 9th standard. CBSE, ICSE, State Board—10th standard is a board exam. From the end of 8th standard onwards, the pressure starts," Justice Nagarathna said, urging the Centre to introduce the third language from the middle-school level instead.

Even if Sonam Wangchuk ate, it wouldn't take away anything from the protest

New Delhi. (Agency)

The air is hot and humid, and the perspiration doesn't dry up. Forget ACs, there are no fans even as the temperature soars. The whole area smells of sweat, and the toilets stink. One night at the Cockroach Janta Party's protest site at New Delhi's Jantar Mantar was enough to make me realise the harsh conditions in which activist Sonam Wangchuk was holding his indefinite fast. That fast entered its 19th day on Thursday. While the young leaders of the



Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) take turns to stay at the protest site, recharging themselves, Wangchuk is a constant presence. An iPad and a table fan for comfort. Even if Wangchuk has a morsel today, like many prominent people from diverse fields is appealing him to, it won't take away anything from his agitation. I say this not as a detached observer, but after the night at the protest site. Earlier, I had stepped into the shoes of a demonstrator, a cockroach, rather than reporting as a journalist. My conclusion—holding an indefinite hunger strike in Delhi's current weather is extraordinarily difficult. The heat, the humidity, and sudden spells of rain constantly test everyone present at the protest site. And that is what kept bringing my thoughts back to Wangchuk, who has endured those same conditions without food for nearly three weeks.

RTI reveals govt's quiet plan to shield India from global fertiliser supply shocks

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Centre has revealed that it is actively diversifying fertiliser import sources, exploring alternative global supply routes and strengthening the domestic supply chain to shield India from disruptions amid growing global uncertainties, according to a Right to Information (RTI) reply accessed by . Responding to an RTI query on the steps being taken to diversify imports, reduce dependence on vulnerable international routes and strengthen domestic fertiliser security, the government said it has initiated "a range of measures" aimed at ensuring uninterrupted supplies. "With regard to diversification of import sources, ensuring the supply chain of fertilisers and to reduce vulnerabilities arising from global market disruptions, a range of measures have been undertaken through the best available alternative import routes for ensuring supply sources for raw materials/intermediates and finished fertilisers with a focus on strengthening domestic fertiliser supply chain," the RTI response stated. The reply confirms that the government is actively working to broaden its import base so that India is not overly dependent on a limited number of countries or supply corridors that could be affected by geopolitical conflicts or market volatility. Besides identifying alternative import routes, the Centre said it is focused on securing supplies of raw materials, intermediates and finished fertilisers required for both imports and domestic production. The RTI response also highlighted a parallel effort to strengthen India's domestic fertiliser ecosystem by reinforcing supply chains and ensuring the timely movement and availability of fertilisers across the country. The measures are aimed at making India's fertiliser network more resilient against external shocks while ensuring uninterrupted supplies for the agriculture sector, which relies heavily on fertilisers during sowing seasons. While the RTI reply does not specify the countries or alternative routes being explored, it indicates that the Centre has adopted a broader strategy to reduce vulnerabilities arising from global market disruptions and bolster India's long-term fertiliser security. The disclosure comes amid continuing global uncertainty over commodity supplies and logistics, with governments across the world reassessing supply-chain resilience. Earlier this year, reports suggested that India's fertiliser subsidy bill could climb by nearly 20% in the current financial year as prices of key nutrients surged amid supply disruptions linked to tensions around the Strait of Hormuz during the Iran-US conflict.

Worker killed after concrete lining falls inside Silkyara Tunnel in Uttarakhand

New Delhi. (Agency)

A young worker was killed after a section of concrete lining fell on him inside the under-construction Silkyara Tunnel in Uttarakhand's Uttarkashi district during the early hours of Friday, according to authorities. The body has been sent for post-mortem examination. The incident occurred at around 2 am, approximately 900 metres inside the tunnel from the Barkot side, preliminary information suggests. The man hailed from Jharkhand, the project manager of the company carrying out the tunnel's construction said. "A block of the



tunnel's concrete (shotcrete) lining collapsed about 900 metres inside from the Barkot side. A 21-year-old labourer from Jharkhand died after being trapped under the fallen

concrete," Uttarkashi District Magistrate, Prashant Arya, was quoted as saying by news agency ANI. A thorough investigation into the accident will be conducted by the National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL), which will subsequently submit its report. The exact cause of the accident and other details will be confirmed only after the investigation report is completed. The 4.5-km tunnel is being built as part of the central government's Char Dham all-weather road connectivity project. It became a subject of nationwide attention when a landslide caused 41 workers to be trapped inside it for 17 days, before they were eventually rescued in an operation involving various government agencies.

Govt hikes windfall tax on diesel, ATF; cuts levy on petrol exports

MUMBAI. (Agency)

The government has increased the windfall gains tax on exports of diesel and ATF, while lowering the levy on petrol for the fortnight beginning July 16. The rate of Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) on diesel exports has been increased to Rs 15.5 a litre from Rs 8.5 a litre. Similarly, SAED on ATF exports has been raised to Rs 14.5 per litre from Rs 7.5 per litre till July 15. However, the export duty on petrol has been cut to Rs 2.5 per litre, from Rs 4 per litre. The Finance ministry in a notification said the duty hikes will be effective from July 16. Amid escalating tensions in West Asia, the government had on March 27 imposed an export duty on diesel and ATF (Aviation Turbine Fuel) and revised the rates every fortnight. Beginning May 16, an export duty was also imposed on petrol. The ministry also said that there is no change in the existing duty rates on petrol and diesel cleared for domestic consumption. The windfall tax was levied to increase domestic availability of the fuel amid the war in West Asia. They were also aimed at not allowing exporters to take undue advantage due to price differences as globally crude oil prices had risen since the beginning of the war. The windfall tax was intended to ensure domestic availability of petroleum products by disincentivising exports in the backdrop of the West Asia crises.

Goods worth \$140 million exported on Day 1 of UK free trade agreement

New Delhi. (Agency)

With the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between India and the UK kicking in on Wednesday, 50 consignments of goods worth over \$140 million were shipped to the UK on the first day of the agreement's implementation, the Union commerce ministry said. "CETA will give fresh momentum to our farmers, entrepreneurs and MSMEs. Several sectors will gain stronger access to the UK market. It will also deepen cooperation in technology, professional services and innovation, while supporting greater mobility for skilled Indian talent," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a social media post on Wednesday. With the FTA taking effect, several labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, apparel, handicrafts, engineering goods, and gems and jewellery are expected to gain zero-duty access to the UK market. Exporters from sectors including textiles, gems and jewellery, and marine products have already dispatched consignments at zero duty on the first day of the agreement. The Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) said that around 30 exporters shipped gold, diamond, silver and platinum jewellery worth \$10 million to the UK on Wednesday. The industry body expects exports to the UK to touch \$2.5 billion over the next three years.

India emerges as strategic AI transformation market for IT firms alongside global business

New Delhi. (Agency)

India is increasingly emerging as a strategic market for artificial intelligence-led transformation for the country's largest IT services companies, with executives at Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HCLTech and LTIMindtree highlighting rising domestic opportunities alongside their global businesses as Indian enterprises step up investments in AI, cloud and cybersecurity. The shift comes as Indian companies are moving beyond experimentation with AI and expanding enterprise technology spending. A Cognizant-Dun & Bradstreet study showed that that 80% of Indian organisations are investing in technology primarily to drive revenue growth, with AI-driven automation, cloud migration and cybersecurity ranking among the top technology priorities over the next 12 months. The country's largest IT services firms also reported stronger growth in their India business during the June quarter than in many overseas markets. TCS reported India as its fastest-growing geography. The domestic market accounted for 2.2% of revenue in the June quarter, growing 10.6% quarter-on-quarter and 13.8% year-on-year, making it the company's fastest-growing geography in Q1 FY27. Meanwhile, HCLTech reported that India contributed

Hidden cost of renting: Over Rs 1.26 lakh crore is locked in security deposits with landlords

New Delhi. (Agency)

For most people looking to rent a home, the monthly rent is only half the story. Before they even move in, tenants are often required to pay security deposits worth several months' rent, locking away lakhs of rupees that could otherwise be invested, used for emergencies or spent on other financial goals. In India's biggest cities, these upfront payments have quietly become one of the largest—and least discussed—costs of renting. A new NoBroker Rent Report 2026 reveals just how significant this burden has become. According to the report, tenants across India's six largest metro cities currently have Rs 1,26,042 crore locked

up in security deposits with landlords. To put that into perspective, the report notes that this amount is larger than the annual infrastructure budgets of several Indian states. **A HIDDEN FINANCIAL BURDEN** Unlike rent, which is a monthly expense, security deposits remain locked for the entire duration of the tenancy. The report describes this as idle household capital that could otherwise earn returns through investments, fund education, support a home purchase or simply provide families with greater financial flexibility. Instead, it remains tied up with landlords, often for years.

"This isn't just idle money—it's capital that could have been earning returns

LOCKED UP

Among the six metros covered in the study, Mumbai accounts for the highest amount of tenant money tied up in security deposits. The figures underline how security deposits have become a major financial commitment, particularly in India's largest cities where rental demand remains strong. **THE BIGGEST PAIN POINT ISN'T ALWAYS THERE** While rising rents often dominate discussions around housing affordability, the report suggests that the bigger challenge for many tenants is arranging the hefty security deposit before they can move into a house.



in the stock market, funding education, or simply providing financial security," the report noted.

MUMBAI HAS THE MOST MONEY

ITR filing alert: More than 5 crore taxpayers have checked this statement. Have you?

New Delhi. (Agency)

If you're getting ready to file your Income Tax Return (ITR), you've probably found yourself switching between bank statements, dividend records, Form 16, investment reports and tax documents. It can be difficult to keep track of everything, and missing even a small income detail could lead to mistakes in your tax return. To help taxpayers avoid such issues, the Income Tax Department has once again reminded people to check their Annual Information Statement (AIS) before filing their ITR. In a post on X, the department said that more than 5 crore taxpayers have already viewed their AIS and urged others to

reconcile the details before clicking the 'File ITR' button. The Income Tax Department said many taxpayers struggle to collect



information from different sources while filing their ITR. Interest earned on savings accounts or fixed deposits may be reflected in bank records, dividend income comes from another source, while details of certain high-value financial transactions may be available

elsewhere.

The department said the easiest way to bring all this information together is by checking the Annual Information Statement.

WHY IS AIS IMPORTANT?

Along with the post, the department also shared a short video explaining why taxpayers should begin the filing process by reviewing their AIS. The Annual Information Statement, or AIS, is a detailed record of a taxpayer's financial transactions available on the Income Tax portal. Unlike Form 26AS, which mainly reflects tax deducted at source (TDS), tax collected at source (TCS) and certain tax payments, AIS provides a much wider picture of your financial activity.

Rupee slips 6 paise to 96.31 against US dollar in early trade

MUMBAI. (Agency)

The rupee declined 6 paise to 96.31 against the US dollar in early trade on Thursday amid volatility in global crude oil prices and a stronger greenback with the West Asia crisis showing no signs of abating. FII outflows continued to weigh on the local unit while a positive start to the day at the domestic equity markets provided support, according to forex traders. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 96.28 against the greenback before slipping further to 96.31 from its previous close. The local unit had on Wednesday extended its slide for the third straight day and settled 9 paise lower at 96.25 against the US dollar. The United States intensified

its strikes targeting Iran early on Thursday, hitting targets further north as American forces also fired into a ship it accused of trying to



break its naval blockade on the Islamic Republic. Iran retaliated with missile and drone fire targeting Bahrain and Kuwait before dawn. Days of back-and-forth strikes by the US and Iran across West Asia -- and renewed threats to the Strait of

Hormuz -- have shredded the interim deal to end the Iran war and could tip the region back into all-out war. Jordan's military said in the morning that it shot down eight missiles launched by Iran targeting the kingdom. "The rupee opened at 96.28 despite the dollar index depreciating while Brent oil prices are nearer to USD 85 per barrel, indicating inherent dollar demand that the currency pair is showing," Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading marginally up by 0.01 per cent at 100.49.

Leaked Kudankulam plant data not linked to nuke systems: Nuclear power operator

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) on Wednesday denied reports of a "sensitive data breach" at the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project, asserting that no sensitive nuclear information or critical systems had been compromised after a ransomware group claimed to have leaked thousands of project-related files on the dark web. The clarification came after Reuters reported that the ransomware group World Leaks had published more than 19,000 files linked to the Tamil Nadu-based nuclear plant, including engineering blueprints, vendor lists, inspection records and operational documents allegedly sourced from a server belonging to project contractor Reliance Infrastructure. Rejecting reports of a breach involving nuclear

infrastructure, NPCIL said the information in question related only to the Balance of Plant (BoP) package, common service facilities of a

conventional nature that are not part of the plant's nuclear safety or nuclear security systems. "The information reportedly available in the public domain pertains only to conventional balance of plant common service facilities," NPCIL said in a statement issued by Executive Director (Corporate Communications) Prateek Agarwal. The state-run nuclear operator said the engineering, procurement and construction contract for the BoP package had been awarded to Reliance Infrastructure through a public tender. NPCIL added that the scope covered conventional facilities typically found in thermal power

plants and other process industries, and did not involve reactor safety or security systems. It also clarified that it had shared only indicative drawings



and technical specifications during the bidding process. Based on these, Reliance Infrastructure prepared detailed engineering drawings in consultation with original equipment manufacturers, which were subsequently reviewed and approved

by NPCIL. The reported leak is believed to have originated from a server hosted by third-party cloud provider Yotta and used by Reliance Infrastructure. According to Reuters, the cache includes documents dating from 2016 to mid-2025, such as engineering drawings related to control, cooling and ventilation systems, vendor and supplier information, joint inspection records involving Indian and Russian engineers, meeting minutes and insurance documents. Reliance Group acknowledged that a "partial breach" had occurred but maintained that there was no impact on critical infrastructure or core operational systems. The company did not disclose the exact nature of the compromised data. Kudankulam, with a planned capacity of 6,000 MW, is India's largest nuclear power plant.

Temperature will continue to rise for 7 days in Bengaluru: IMD

BENGALURU.(Agency)

Bengaluru recorded a rise in maximum temperature for the second consecutive day on Wednesday. According to India Meteorological Department (IMD) the entire state is recording a rise in maximum temperatures by 2-3 degrees Celsius. In the absence of cloud cover and rain, the IMD has forecast a rise in maximum temperatures by 3-5 degrees Celsius for most parts of the state.

According to IMD data, Bengaluru on Tuesday recorded a maximum of 33.6 degrees Celsius, which was the highest in July. The highest so far recorded was 33.1 degrees Celsius on July 1, 1914 and 1926. On July 1, 2021, the city recorded 32.7 Degree Celsius. On Wednesday, Bengaluru recorded a maximum of 32.2 degrees Celsius, against the normal maximum temperature of 28.3 degrees Celsius (3.9 degrees Celsius above normal). Kempegowda and HAL airports observatories recorded 33.1 degrees Celsius, respectively.

As per IMD data, Koppal and Raichur recorded the maximum temperature of 38.8 and 36 degrees Celsius, respectively, on Wednesday. Kalaburgi recorded 36.1 degrees Celsius and Bidar 36.6 degrees Celsius.

Class 7 student attempts suicide; parents allege staff harassment

BENGALURU.(Agency)

A Class 7 student of a private school allegedly attempted to end his life by hanging himself at his residence on Tuesday. The victim's parents alleged that he was subjected to harassment and physical assault by his teachers, which drove him to attempt the extreme step.

According to the FIR on Wednesday, the victim, Kishore (name changed), is the son of Maheshkumar, who runs a grocery store and is a resident of Chikkabasti on Ramasandra Main Road. Maheshkumar alleged that his son, a Class 7 student studying under the Right to Education (RTE) quota at St Philomena School in Mariyappanapalya, was beaten by the school's administrative secretary, Rangaswamy, the principal, and two to three teachers on July 14.

The alleged assault left the boy with multiple injuries. Distressed by the incident and fearing further harassment, Kishore allegedly attempted to end his life after returning home from school on Tuesday.

The school's principal, Manjushree MK, told TNIE, "I was not a witness to any of this, but it has come to my notice that yesterday (Tuesday), after the morning school assembly, Kishore found his Hindi project torn and suspected one of his classmates of damaging it. He then allegedly got into a physical altercation with the boy. The other student, who wears braces, was punched and sustained injuries.

Day after Mercedes crash, two Odisha youths killed in hit-and-run

BHUBANESWAR.(Agency)

A day after a speeding Mercedes-Benz claimed the life of a biker in Bhubaneswar, two more youths were killed in a hit-and-run accident on the Khandagiri flyover along NH-16 late on Tuesday night.

The victims, identified as Rashmiranjan Das (30) and Biswaranjan Pattnaik (27), were travelling on a motorcycle from Patrapada to Baramunda when an unidentified speeding vehicle rammed them from behind at around 11.30 pm.

Police said Rashmiranjan was riding the motorcycle while Biswaranjan was the pillion rider. The impact threw both of them off the bike. The vehicle allegedly ran over the duo before speeding away towards Baramunda. Passersby rushed the injured men to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared them dead. On Wednesday, Rashmiranjan's family lodged a complaint with Khandagiri police, demanding that the offending vehicle be identified and its driver arrested at the earliest.

'A passing motorist alerted us': Inside the first minutes of Mumbai's Coastal Road tunnel fire

A family's journey to South Mumbai turned into a race to escape after their car caught fire inside India's first undersea road tunnel. Here's how motorists, police and the tunnel's emergency systems responded before traffic resumed less than an hour later.

Mumbai.(Agency)

"We were heading towards South Mumbai when a person in a passing vehicle alerted us that something had fallen from our car. I immediately asked my driver to stop. As soon as I got out, I noticed smoke coming from the vehicle. Immediately, my mother and other family members came out. Thankfully, all of us escaped safely," recalled 60-year-old Sudhir Nair, who was travelling in a Maruti Ignis with three family members, including his elderly mother, on Wednesday afternoon.

Within minutes, flames engulfed the vehicle inside India's first undersea road tunnel on

Mumbai's Coastal Road, forcing traffic to a halt and triggering an emergency response involving police, firefighters and the



tunnel's automated safety systems. The cause of the fire is yet to be established. By the time the blaze was extinguished, the Maruti Ignis had been gutted. No injuries

were reported.

The first few minutes

According to police, the family was travelling from Thane to Churchgate when they noticed flames emerging from the engine compartment near the bonnet. "They got scared, immediately stopped the car and alerted the police control room," an officer said. As panic spread, several motorists stopped their vehicles inside the tunnel. Nair said strangers were among the first to respond. "We are safe because of the helping nature of Mumbai's citizens. Almost everyone stopped their vehicles and rushed to help us. I do not know who informed the police, but they reached the spot within a few minutes and safely escorted us out of the tunnel."

Building Pune | Work on 36-km elevated road first proposed in 1987 to start soon

Pune.(Agency)

After fast-tracking the Katraj-Kondhwa Road project, the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) is now focusing on another long-pending project: the High Capacity Mass Transit Route (HCMTR), an elevated road aimed at decongesting arterial roads. "We are gearing up to start the development of the HCMTR project soon after the monsoon. The preparation for it has begun, and a dedicated cell has been constituted for the purpose," said Municipal Commissioner Naval Kishore Ram.

Within the cell, there will be separate teams for Grade Road development, elevated corridor, shifting of utility services, and land acquisition, he

said. 85% of land ready: PMC commissioner The municipal commissioner said the HCMTR, originally proposed in 1987, will be a 36-km-long, 24-metre-wide road and is



expected to cost around Rs 9,000 crore. "There is not much land acquisition required for the project, as 60 per cent of

land is owned by government bodies and 25 per cent of land is already on Grade Road. So only 15 per cent of private land has to be acquired for the project. The land acquisition cost will be Rs 1,300 crore," he said. The HCMTR will be connected to all major Pune roads and provide an alternative expressway route for vehicles to travel from one corner to another corner of the city, he said. The elevated road will have ramps connecting major roads, the commissioner said, adding that the road would open to the public in two and a half years.

In 2020-21, the PMC started executing the project but kept it on hold after contractors quoted 45 per cent above the estimated cost of Rs 12,000 crore.

Fresh violence on Mumbai local: Two injured in late-night fight aboard local train

Mumbai.(Agency)

Two individuals were injured in a fresh violence onboard a Mumbai local train, raising serious questions over lack of security and passenger safety. The incident was reported around 12:30 am in the early hours of Wednesday, July 15, inside the luggage coach of Ambarnath-bound Mumbai local, barely a month after a fatal stabbing incident inside one of the suburban trains.

According to railway officials, the two men got into a fight, during which both sustained head injuries. The train was attended at Kalyan station by personnel from the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and the Government Railway Police (GRP). Both injured passengers were administered first aid before being

shifted to Rukhmabai Hospital. One of them, who suffered a severe head injury, was later referred to Sion Hospital for further treatment.

A preliminary inquiry by the GRP found that neither passenger was



carrying a sharp weapon. Investigators said the grievous injury was caused when a metal kada (bangle) worn by one of the men struck the other during the scuffle.

The Kalyan GRP has registered a case and is investigating the

circumstances that led to the altercation. In a separate security scare on the same day, panic briefly spread at Kurla railway station after a man carrying a wooden stick was seen running along Platform 1. Videos of the incident circulated widely on social media before railway security personnel apprehended him. The man is currently in the custody of the Kurla GRP. The latest incidents add to growing concerns over passenger safety on Mumbai's suburban railway network, which has witnessed a spate of violent episodes in recent weeks. Last month, 22-year-old Mayank Lohar was fatally stabbed aboard a Nalasopara-bound local train following an altercation. In January, a 32-year-old lecturer at a Vile Parle-based college, Alok Singh, who was allegedly stabbed during an altercation at Malad railway station.

Debris chokes Buckingham Canal stretch near landfill in Chennai

CHENNAI.(Agency)

Months before the northeast monsoon is due to hit Chennai, a stretch of the Buckingham Canal near the Kodungaiyur landfill has been choked by sand and construction debris, cutting its effective width by nearly three-fourths and reviving fears of the kind of flooding that hit north Chennai during Cyclone Michaung. A visit by the found large mounds of sand and debris dumped inside the canal, while thick clusters of water hyacinth covered parts of the waterway.

The Buckingham Canal is a critical drainage channel for north Chennai. It carries excess rainwater from the Captain Cotton Canal, Kodungaiyur Canal and other feeder drains before emptying into the Kosasthalaiyar River and eventually the Bay of Bengal. J Prashanth and Vishvaja Sambath of the Chennai Climate Action Group said the dumping could significantly reduce the canal's carrying capacity. Residents of Vyasarpadi told the TNIE that any obstruction in the canal's flow could lead to severe waterlogging and prolonged inundation during heavy rains. They recalled that during Cyclone Michaung in December 2023, floodwaters from the Captain Cotton and Kodungaiyur canals could not drain because of high water levels and restricted flow in the Buckingham Canal, inundating several neighbourhoods.

38 of 40 buildings at Azam Khan's Jauhar university face demolition

Lucknow.(Agency)

A demolition order was issued on Wednesday by the Rampur Development Authority (RDA) for 38 of 40 buildings at Mohammad Ali Jauhar University, claiming they were constructed without permission from the competent authority.

The university is run by the Mohammad Ali Jauhar Trust whose chairperson is jailed former Uttar Pradesh minister and senior Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan. Reacting to the demolition order, the Samajwadi Party termed the move as "unjustified", alleging the university was selectively targeted. The university has been given 15 days to remove the

"unauthorised" structures; the administration will proceed with the demolition if the institution fails to comply.

The order was passed by RDA vice-chairperson and Rampur District Magistrate Ajay Kumar Dwivedi under Section 27 of the Uttar Pradesh Urban Planning and Development Act, 1973.

Dwivedi said the order was passed after a detailed hearing, examination of records and a review of legal provisions. According to officials, proceedings were initiated on the basis of a report



submitted by the regional junior engineer. The officials said the RDA, during the scrutiny of records, found that

regularised under the law and demolition was the only legally permissible course of action, officials added.

IndiGo employee quit dream job after being told to touch director's feet

BENGALURU.(Agency)

A former ground staff employee at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), Bengaluru, who previously worked for IndiGo, has taken to social media alleging that the airline's toxic and dehumanising work culture forced him to quit what he described as his 'dream job'.

Mohammad Jamshid Y, the former employee, posted on Instagram alleging that he was harassed by an officer after he accidentally forgot to wear his tie to work. He identified the officer as Saptarshi Mukherjee.

"On a scheduled workday, I was assigned to conduct a weekly terminal inspection at Terminal 1 of Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru. After completing the inspection, I was stopped by the officer who noticed that I was not wearing my tie. I immediately accepted my mistake, apologised, and explained that I had unintentionally forgotten to wear it. I assured him that it would not happen again.

"He then called my supervisor and questioned why I had been allowed into the terminal without a tie. She apologised, and I was instructed to apologise to her, which I did without hesitation," Jamshid said.

According to the former employee, the incident did not end there. "I was then instructed to touch my supervisor's feet. I found this deeply humiliating and degrading in a professional workplace, so I respectfully refused.

NEWS BOX

Punjab Kings' world record broken: Steve Smith powers highest successful chase in MLC

New Delhi. (Agency)

Australian superstar Steve Smith powered Washington Freedom in a record-breaking T20 run-chase as they overcame defending champions MI New York in the Major League Cricket (MLC) 2026 Eliminator match in Oakland on Wednesday night.

Set a record 267-run chase on the back of Nicholas Pooran's 31-ball century, the fastest in MLC history, Washington skipper Smith and wicket-keeper Andries Gous combined to produce a stunning six-wicket win. Down 10 for two inside three overs, Smith and Gous produced a record third-wicket stand that yielded 241 runs in only 89 balls. Gous was adjudged as the Player Of The Match as he scored 132 off just 52 balls, hitting 10 fours and 12 sixes along the way. In a match that was a repeat of last year's final where MI had emerged victorious, Smith remained unbeaten on 110 off 48 balls as Washington stormed to the target in only 18.4 overs.

Washington broke the all-time T20 record



held by the Indian Premier League (IPL) side Punjab Kings for the highest successful chase in the format. PBKS had gunned down a 265-run target against the Delhi Capitals in Delhi in April this year during the IPL 2026 season, bettering their own record of a 262-run chase against Kolkata Knight Riders in 2024. During the match in Delhi, DC posted 264 runs on the back of KL Rahul's unbeaten 152 off 67 balls.

Hope I'm never that stupid: Romero slams Gary Neville as Argentina have last laugh

New Delhi. (Agency)

Argentina defender Cristian Romero hit back at Gary Neville after the defending champions beat England 2-1 to reach the FIFA World Cup final, saying he hopes he is never "that stupid" when he retires after the former England international criticised him before the semi-final.

Neville had questioned Romero and Lisandro Martinez's partnership ahead of Wednesday's clash in Atlanta, calling



them "the best, worst centre-half pairing in the world" on The Overlap. Argentina had the last laugh as they came from behind to beat England, with Enzo Fernandez and Lautaro Martinez scoring after Anthony Gordon's opener to seal a second successive World Cup final berth. Asked about Neville's comments after the match, Romero delivered a pointed response. The only thing that I hope for is that when I retire, I am not that stupid," Romero told DSports as quoted by The Athletic. England vs Argentina, FIFA World Cup 2026: Highlights | Report "Hopefully I won't criticise a player or anyone. Because at the end of the day, we are doing our best for our national team. Sometimes it goes right for us, sometimes badly, but we are just happy to be in a World Cup final again."

Romero said Argentina's players were focused on representing their country rather than responding to outside criticism. "I think we are making history. For us it is something really huge, and we feel the significance of this shirt like no one else," he said.

Jude Bellingham slaps Argentina star as ugly scenes erupt after England's exit

Jude Bellingham became embroiled in a post-match confrontation with Argentina players after England's semi-final defeat. The flashpoint saw him slap Argentina's Valentin Barco right after the Three Lions were beaten.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Tempers flared moments after Argentina booked their place in the FIFA World Cup final, with Jude Bellingham becoming involved in a heated exchange following England's semifinal defeat at Atlanta Stadium. As Argentina's players gathered to celebrate at the final whistle, Bellingham, visibly frustrated by the result, found himself at the centre of an ugly confrontation. The England midfielder appeared unhappy with the celebrations taking place close to him,



leading to a brief clash between members of both teams. Footage that quickly spread across social media appeared to show Bellingham making contact with Argentina substitute Valentin Barco by striking the back of his head, triggering a series of pushes and shoves between the players. Several Argentina stars rushed in to calm the

situation, while defender Nicolas Otamendi was seen stepping between the pair to protect his teammate. According to a report from the Daily Express, Bellingham took exception to Barco's celebration during Argentina's equaliser as he mocked the England squad. Referee Ismail Elfath reacted immediately, stepping in to defuse the situation and

usher Barco away from the England players. The Argentine substitute, however, escaped without any further punishment. The post-match flashpoint capped an emotionally charged outing for Bellingham, who had been heavily involved in confrontations throughout the contest. The Real Madrid midfielder had already found himself in the middle of another heated exchange during the match with Lionel Messi as tensions simmered between the two sides.

WILL FIFA PUNISH JUDE BELLINGHAM?

There is a chance that Bellingham could face further punishment, especially if FIFA investigates the matter. The governing body is known to take strict actions on players who engage in violent conduct before and after the game.

Bellingham could face a ban, that may rule him out of the third-place playoff against France on Saturday, July 18. Otherwise.

Messi faces Lamine Yamal in World Cup final: The story of that iconic bathtub photo

New Delhi. (Agency)

It reads like a script rejected by a Bollywood production house for being entirely unbelievable. A 20-year-old, fiercely introverted Lionel Messi stands staring down at a plastic blue tub containing a five-month-old infant. The young footballer is painfully shy, unsure how to hold a baby; the child is blissfully oblivious that the hands stabilising him belong to the man who would redefine the global game. Argentina 2-1 England: Match Report That was December 2007. The photographer, Joan Monfort, was simply trying to navigate a tricky charity calendar shoot for Diario Sport and UNICEF. The baby's parents had won a raffle in the working-class neighbourhood of Rocafonda. There were



no grand omens, no flashes of cinematic lightning; just a nervous young star and a splashing infant. Fast-forward 19 years, and that same baby is standing on the opposite side of the pitch in the 2026 World Cup final. The sporting world has seen its fair share of poetic symmetry, but the impending showdown at New Jersey's MetLife Stadium between Lionel Messi's Argentina and Lamine Yamal's Spain transcends simple coincidence. It feels like a cosmic setup. When Yamal's father unearthed the long-forgotten photograph, it was treated as a charming piece of trivia: a beautiful, fleeting internet moment.

World Cup needs more stories like Cape Verde. Cricket only wants India vs Pak

New Delhi. (Agency)

World Cups are built for stars to dazzle. For heroes to fall and cry, and prove they're superheroes after all. Some show they're human too. Some collect records, some become GOATs. Messi has done all of it, and Kohli, in his own sport, has too. But that's only one part of the story. The real romance lives in the underdog. Vozinha, Cape Verde's goalkeeper, standing between the posts for the third-smallest nation to ever qualify, taking the reigning champions to extra time before bowing out. Nobody wrote that story in advance. That's what a World Cup is actually for. And cricket, in its next 50-over edition, is leaving room for none of it.

FIFA clearly understands the

assignment. Fresh off running its first 48-team World Cup, a tournament Gianni Infantino is already calling a success on the back of nine of 10 African teams reaching the knockouts, the



governing body is now discussing a 64-team edition.

"Every nation should be able to dream of taking part," Infantino said. UEFA's Aleksander Ceferin thinks it's a bad

idea. Concacaf's Victor Montagliani thinks it's the wrong move for the sport. Fifa is examining it anyway. Whatever you make of the politics behind that push, and there's plenty to make of it, the direction is unambiguous: wider doors, more countries with something real to play for. To its credit, cricket has been listening too, at least where the T20 World Cup is concerned. It's now a 20-team tournament, and the ICC has just approved another expansion for 2028, increasing the Super 10 stage from eight teams to 10 and adding an Eliminator round so second and third-placed sides get one more shot at the semi-finals. That's real growth, more nations, more matches that matter, more Cape Verdes waiting to happen. Fair play to the ICC for that.

Super Series, Super 7s and more — Why ICC's changes to 2027 men's ODI World Cup format will affect associate nations

CHENNAI. (Agency)

With just 15 months to go for the 2027 Men's ODI World Cup to be played across South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia in October next year, the International Cricket Council has made major overhaul to the tournament format after the annual meeting in Edinburgh last week. Originally a 14-team tournament with two seven-team groups followed by a Super Six stages — a major expansion after two ten-team events in 2019 and 2023 — ICC has now introduced a Super Series and Super 7 stages before the semifinals. As per the new format, the last three ranked qualifying teams (12, 13, 14) will now play a round-robin stage called Super

Series from which only one team will enter the two six-team groups. Thereon, top three from each group and the next



best team will move to another round-robin stage among seven teams before the top four enters the semifinal.

The ICC have also tweaked the 2028

men's T20 World Cup format. According to the new format, the number of teams in the second round, Super 10s, will be more while the overall participation stays at 20. An eliminator is introduced between the second and third teams from Super 10s to qualify for the semifinals

Blow to associate nations

"The increased consequence and enhanced competitive intensity promises to enhance the overall experience of fans," an ICC press release said about the changes approved by the Board based on recommendations from the Chief Executives' Committee (comprising Chief Executives & representatives from full & associate members)..

Messi's priceless reaction as Argentina find England goalkeeper's cheat sheet

After Argentina's late win over England, Lionel Messi and his teammates examined Jordan Pickford's penalty cheat sheet in Atlanta. Argentina moved to the final with Messi pulling off two stunning assists in the second half.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Argentina's World Cup celebrations took an amusing turn after the semifinal victory over England when Lionel Messi and several of his teammates were seen inspecting Jordan Pickford's penalty cheat sheet. During the on-field celebrations following Argentina's

dramatic 2-1 win, a member of the coaching staff picked up Pickford's water bottle and passed it around the squad. The bottle, which featured notes on England's expected penalty takers and their preferred shooting directions, quickly became a source of amusement, with Messi, Enzo Fernandez and others smiling as they examined its contents. The moment soon went viral on social media, especially because the match never reached a penalty shootout despite looking destined for one deep into the second half. England had been on course for the World Cup final after taking the lead and holding their advantage until the closing stages. However, Enzo Fernandez struck a

stunning equaliser in the 86th minute before Lautaro Martinez completed the comeback with a towering header in



stoppage time, sending the reigning champions into another World Cup final. With penalties a real possibility for much of the contest, Pickford had come

prepared. Like many modern goalkeepers, the England No. 1 had attached a detailed penalty guide to his water bottle, listing Argentina's likely spot-kick takers along with their preferred placement. Such cheat sheets have become a common sight in elite football and have helped goalkeepers make informed decisions in high-pressure shootouts. Pickford famously relied on similar notes during England's successful penalty shootout against Colombia at the 2018 FIFA World Cup and again at Euro 2024, where pre-match analysis helped him deny Switzerland's Manuel Akanji from the spot.

Samantha Ruth Prabhu

Says She Had 'Been Waiting' To Get Pregnant: 'Always Wanted To Be A Mother'

Samantha Ruth Prabhu and Raj Nidimoru are expecting their first child, and the couple recently confirmed this when the actress announced her pregnancy during the promotions of Maa Inti Bangaaram. Samantha is currently on maternity leave, and in a recent chat, she revealed that she had always wanted to be a mother.

Speaking to Pinkvilla, Samantha mentioned, "It's definitely new and exciting. But I've been waiting for this moment for a while now. I've always wanted to be a mother. So I know that I'll be giving this my all." This will be Samantha's first child. After her divorce from Naga Chaitanya, she married Raj Nidimoru in December 2025.

"I've always been passionate about everything in life. But now I feel I carry a different, new kind of strength and purpose in me. I'm looking forward to this journey a lot. And I'm filled with gratitude, learning every day, and getting ready to embrace whatever comes next," said the actor.

Pregnancy rumours first surfaced after fans noticed what appeared to be a baby bump during the success celebrations of Maa Inti Bangaaram. Samantha later made the announcement herself at the film's success meet, where she revealed that she would be taking a brief maternity break after completing her current commitments.

Now, besides her pregnancy, Samantha is also celebrating her film's success. Her latest film, Maa Inti Bangaaram's worldwide gross box office collection recently crossed the Rs 100 crore mark. In a video posted a few days ago, the actress shared her excitement after the film reached the milestone, marking a successful run at the box office.

The mom-to-be was seen relaxing at home when she was informed about the film's performance. She beamed with joy and thanked audiences for their love and support. Samantha also recalled initial doubts around whether audiences would show up for a woman-led film and said the success marks the start of a bigger change.

For the unversed, Maa Inti Bangaaram is a Telugu action comedy-drama directed by BV Nandini Reddy. The film is produced by Samantha Ruth Prabhu, Raj Nidimoru and Himank Reddy Duvvuru under Tralala Moving Pictures.



Samay Raina Gets Mobbed As He Makes Appearance With A Mystery Girl, Holds Her Hand In Public



Stand-up comedian and India's Got Latent host Samay Raina grabbed attention on Tuesday night after he was spotted making a public appearance in Mumbai with a mystery girl. Videos from his outing, which have now gone viral, show Samay exiting a venue before being mobbed by paparazzi and a large crowd of fans eager to catch a glimpse of him. Amid the chaos, the comedian was seen holding the girl's hand and carefully escorting her through the crowd as they made their way to a car.

The gesture quickly became the talking point online, with many wondering if the woman was Samay's rumoured partner. However, the identity of the woman remains a mystery. She kept her face covered with a mask during, making it difficult to identify her.

Neither Samay Raina nor his team has commented on the viral videos or the speculation surrounding the girl.

First Appearance After SC Fine

Earlier on Tuesday, the Supreme Court imposed a cost of Rs 3 lakh on Samay in connection with proceedings arising from the India's Got Latent controversy. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice J V Mohana directed Raina to deposit the amount within two weeks, observing that he had allegedly made false statements before the court and failed to comply with its earlier directions.

"We have no reason to doubt that Samay Raina has taken the court for a ride. He is in brazen violation of statements/undertakings given before this court. The misconduct is sought to be compounded by stating that a compliance affidavit was filed yesterday, however, no affidavit has been filed," the bench said.

Samay Raina Dating Medha Shankr?

Just a few days back, dating rumours surrounding comedian Samay Raina and 12th Fail actress Medha Shankr also made headlines. It all started after a viral post claiming that Samay Raina and Medha Shankr were seen together at the same location grabbed everyone's attention. According to the post, the two allegedly walked separately after noticing paparazzi, prompting fan

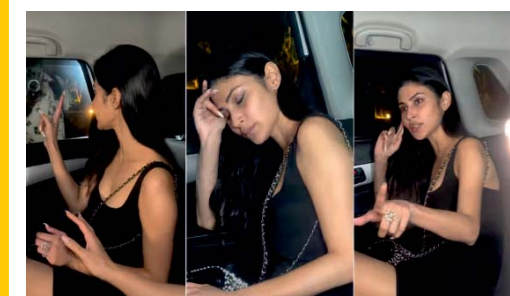
'Bandh Karo': Mouni Roy Gets Angry At Paparazzi, Asks Them To Stop Filming Her



Actress Mouni Roy appeared visibly upset and furious with the paparazzi after they continued filming her as she stepped out following an evening with friends in Mumbai on Tuesday night. Videos from the outing, show Mouni seated inside her car dressed in a sleeveless black outfit with no make-up and her hair left open.

The photographers were seen continuing to record her through the car window when the actress repeatedly gestured towards them and firmly said, "Bandh karo" (Stop it), while pointing her finger in their direction. She continued to remain furious, gathering all her patience and requesting the paparazzi to stop filming before her vehicle drove away.

Mouni was out for dinner with her close friend



Anusha Dandekar and Arjun Bijlani. The two were seen warmly hugging each other as they met outside a restaurant before spending time together. Talking about Mouni Roy, on the personal front, over the past few weeks, news of trouble in her marriage with businessman Suraj Nambiar stirred headlines. Mouni and Suraj released an official statement announcing their separation. The couple married in January 2022 in Goa in the presence of family and close friends. They tied the knot in both Malayali and Bengali ceremonies.

On the work front, Mouni began her television career with Ekta Kapoor's hit serial 'Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi' as Krishna Tulsi before becoming a household name with shows such as 'Devon Ke Dev... Mahadev' and 'Naagin'. She made her Bollywood debut with Akshay Kumar-starrer 'Gold' and later featured in films including 'Made in China' and 'Brahmastra: Part One - Shiva'.

Priyanka Chopra

Hints At Bollywood Actor With 'Multiple Extracurricular Activities': 'The One Guy...'

Priyanka Chopra dropped a cheeky hint about a Bollywood actor during a candid podcast with Nick Jonas and the Jonas Brothers, leaving fans wondering who she was talking about. While discussing celebrity gossip, Nick admitted that one of his favourite "storylines" involves actors with 'extracurricular activities', perhaps, a euphemism for alleged affairs. Neither Priyanka nor Nick disclosed any names or what it meant.

Nick Jonas, Priyanka Chopra On Bolly Stars In 'Extracurricular Activities'

"So some of the storylines that I like to follow are where there's, perhaps, extracurricular activities outside....," Nick said, hinting at relationship rumours without naming anyone. Priyanka immediately chimed in, saying, "The one guy with multiple extracurricular activities."

Curious, Kevin Jonas asked her to reveal the actor's name. Laughing, Priyanka replied, "I'll tell you when we go for lunch," making it clear that the gossip would stay private.

Nick Jonas On Bollywood Gossip

The conversation began with Nick revealing that one of the unexpected perks of marrying Priyanka has been getting access to Bollywood gossip. Asked what he has enjoyed the most about their eight years together, Nick joked,

"About these eight years together, it's all the Bollywood gossip I've got." Priyanka admitted that, despite being one of India's biggest stars, Nick often knows more about Bollywood relationships than she does. "It is true though. That stuff even I don't know. Like, I don't know when someone's broken up with someone, and you were always the one to tell me," she said. She recalled that it usually comes up while she's



texting friends. "I'll be like, 'Hey, give my love to blah, blah, blah.' And he's like, 'No, they've broken up.' And I'm like, 'Oh.' It's happened twice."

Nick Admits He Secretly Follows Anonymous Accounts

Nick confessed that he enjoys keeping up with Bollywood celebrity gossip and even has a few anonymous sources. "Oh yeah, I do. And I love it," he said.



NEWS BOX

'Could be a woman, no reason why not': US voices support for a female as next UN Secretary-General

world.(Agency)

Voicing support for a woman to lead the United Nations, the US said there is "no reason" why a female cannot be elected as the next Secretary-General of the world body.

"Could be a woman, absolutely. There is no reason why not," US Representative to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and Alternate Representative of the United States to the Sessions of the General Assembly Ambassador Dan Negrea said Wednesday.

Negrea responded to a question by PTI on a woman leading the United Nations as its next Secretary General. Negrea was addressing a press briefing organised by the New York Foreign Press Centre here on 'Outcomes of the High-Level Forum on the US Trade Over Aid Initiative'. The briefing was held a day after the US Mission to the UN hosted a Trade Over Aid Forum on the margins of the United Nations High-Level Political Forum. Negrea, in response to a question on the selection process for the world's next top diplomat, said: "The United States is very much involved in evaluating the candidates, and we are considering this an extremely important matter." He said the US has met with candidates vying for the top job at the 193-member world organisation. "...it's a crucial, crucial matter on the efficiency of a very important international organisation. And we are spending a lot of time at the U.S. Mission to the UN on this and at the State Department in Washington. Yeah, very much so," he said.

Ukraine buries its unknown soldiers as families wait for identification

KYIV.(Agency)

In a military cemetery in Kyiv, a brother and sister walk between the crosses, carrying a bunch of carnations. Each cross in that section bears the same words: "unknown defender of Ukraine," with an ID number below and a note that identification is ongoing. One grave stands out: beneath the inscription, a photo was later attached, showing Ihor Yalynych, a soldier last seen alive in Kharkiv region in 2022. After four years of searching, Stanislav and Oleksandra Yalynych found their father. Identification of the dead is a reckoning that will stretch on for years, among the longest-lasting wounds of Russia's war in Ukraine. Some graves may remain nameless forever, with the families left to wait. For most of the war, there was nowhere to bury the unidentified dead. The bodies lay in refrigerated storage while the national military cemetery was still being built. Even before the cemetery was completed in January, the first group of unknown soldiers were laid to rest in August. More than 300 now lie beneath numbered crosses, with more graves being dug.

US unveils new 25% tariff on certain imports from Brazil

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

The United States on Wednesday announced a new tariff on various imports from Brazil, after a year-long investigation into the Latin American giant's trade and other policies. The 25-percent tariff is set to take effect July 22, a senior US official told reporters. But a range of products including beef, coffee and certain aircraft parts would be exempted, the official added. The exclusions also cover certain goods that the United States does not produce.

"Brazil's unfair trading practices have prevented US workers and producers from accessing this important market," US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said in a statement.

"We remain open to continuing negotiations with Brazil to bring about long-needed changes to the problems identified in this investigation," he added. In earlier findings, the US investigation deemed that certain practices by Brazil were "unreasonable or discriminatory and burden or restrict US commerce." The latest move also comes as President Donald Trump's administration pushes to rebuild his economic agenda after the US Supreme Court in February struck down a swath of his global tariffs.

The Brazil tariffs were justified under Section 301 of the Trade Act, and the Trump administration this year initiated other probes using the same authority.

Israel's latest strikes kill a dozen people in Gaza, including police officers

Israeli attacks on Gaza's police have been condemned by the United Nations human rights office, which said last month that police personnel

DEIR AL-BALAH.(Agency)

Israeli airstrikes have killed at least a dozen people in Gaza over the past two days, local health officials said Wednesday, as strikes continue almost daily despite a months-old ceasefire with Hamas. On Wednesday, three members of a family were killed in central Gaza, Al Aqsa Hospital officials said. On Tuesday, a woman and six police officers were among those killed

in an airstrike on a police station in the densely populated Jabaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza, hospital officials said. A man died in the bombing of a tent camp in Khan Younis in the south, Nasser Hospital officials said. And Israeli forces shot and killed a child in the Muwasi area outside the southernmost city of Rafah, according to hospital officials. The Israeli military did not immediately comment on the strikes in central and southern Gaza. In a statement on the attack in Jabaliya, it claimed that four of the slain police officers were Hamas militants, without providing evidence on how those killed were involved in planning or carrying out attacks. One of the officers, Col. Mohamad Marwan Salem, was a senior police commander

and head of the Jabaliya police station, the Hamas-run Interior Ministry said. Hamas, which ruled Gaza for

considers police stations legitimate targets if they're "being used to advance military activities, or if those present are military operatives involved in advancing terrorist activities."

It did not say what military activities it believed were taking place at the Jabaliya police station, nor did it provide evidence that attacks were being planned. Hamas says the police force is engaged in maintaining law and order. Israeli attacks on Gaza's police have been condemned by the United Nations human rights office, which said last month that police personnel had been attacked at least a dozen times in 2026, including "during ordinary law enforcement operations, including directing traffic and patrolling streets and markets."



years, maintains an armed wing as well as civilian police and security services that are overseen by its Interior Ministry. Throughout the war, Israel has targeted local police, including those guarding humanitarian aid convoys. Israel's military has claimed it

Indian national stabbed in US over his religion: reports

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

An Indian man was allegedly stabbed 15 times inside a shopping mall near Salt Lake City in the US state of Utah because of his religion, media reports said.

Syed Sohailuddin, a worker in the Valley City Mall in West Valley City, Utah, was allegedly stabbed on Monday afternoon by Peter Michael Larsen, who asked the victim his religion, Fox 13 News reported. The suspect, Larsen, was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder and carrying a prohibited dangerous weapon. He told police he targeted the employee over his religious beliefs, according to the court records, ABC News reported. Sohailuddin was transported to the hospital, where he underwent surgery. Larsen was

also hospitalised with injuries suffered after he was punched in the head by those who stepped in to stop the alleged assault. The



Consulate General of India in San Francisco said it was deeply saddened by the tragic stabbing incident involving an Indian national in Utah. "The Consulate is in close contact with the friends and family and stands ready to provide all possible consular assistance. We remain engaged with local authorities and will continue to monitor the matter closely," the

Consulate said in a post on X. Larsen told the law enforcement officials that "he believes he is a catalyst and he intends to kill Muslims." An affidavit filed by the authorities in court said that releasing Larsen from jail would be dangerous, "based on his violent actions today" and his ideologies. A witness told FOX 13 News that he was inside a nearby store where he worked when he heard shouting and people running away from a scene where the alleged stabbing had taken place. Before attacking, the suspect asked Sohailuddin, who was working at a mall kiosk, where he was from, his name and if he was Muslim, said Luna Nunez, who works with the victim. Nunez was recalling the conversation she had with Sohailuddin when she visited him in the hospital.

Pakistan: Security forces foil suicide attack, kill four terrorists

Security forces in Pakistan foiled a suicide attack killing four terrorists. In separate incidents, three policemen were killed and 34 injured after terrorists attacked a police convoy and a police station.

BOSTON.(Agency)

Security forces on Thursday reportedly foiled an attempted suicide attack in Pakistan thereby killing four terrorists. The terrorists tried to attack the security forces' post in the Kari Kot area of Lower South Waziristan's Wana using an explosives-laden vehicle. The attempt was however foiled by security forces as the threat was detected. The suicide

attacker was killed along with three other terrorists, the Dawn reported.

Three policemen killed in terrorist



attack Three policemen were killed and 34 injured after terrorists attacked a police convoy and a police station in separate incidents in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, quoting officials said. Terrorists attacked a

police convoy in Lower Dir district with hand grenades and automatic weapons on Wednesday, killing three police personnel and injuring 19. Police said the attack occurred near Ladam Top at Haider when the convoy was passing through the area. The assailants first hurled hand grenades and then opened heavy fire on the convoy. During the assault, the attackers also set two police vehicles ablaze. The injured personnel were shifted to hospitals, where they were receiving medical treatment. Police said further details would be shared once the situation became clearer. Security forces have since cordoned off the area and launched a search operation to trace the attackers, added.

Over 500 feared dead in two suspected shipwrecks off Myanmar: UN

The Rohingya undertake perilous sea journeys every year in search of better living conditions, travelling aboard rickety boats often operated by trafficking networks.

GENEVA.(Agency)

The United Nations warned Thursday that more than 500 people were feared dead following reports of two large shipwrecks off Myanmar since late June. The UN's International Organization for Migration and its refugee agency UNHCR voiced alarm in a joint statement at reports "that two boats carrying more than 500 people may have capsized off the coast of Myanmar in recent days". Preliminary

information indicated that the two vessels in question departed from war-torn Myanmar's Rakhine State in late June, with mainly members of the country's mostly Muslim Rohingya minority onboard, the statement said. Some had reportedly travelled from the huge camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar, where more than a million Rohingya refugees who have fled from Rakhine live in squalid conditions.

The statement said that one boat, believed to have been carrying around 250 people, lost contact shortly after departure. A second boat, reportedly carrying some 280 people, is meanwhile believed to have sunk off Myanmar's Ayeyarwady coast on July 8. "While the incidents and casualty figures have yet to be officially confirmed, UNHCR and IOM are

gravely concerned by the potentially devastating loss of life," the statement



said. The UN agencies highlighted that the journeys "took place outside the regular sailing season, when maritime conditions are typically more hazardous". Recent torrential rain and flooding across the region have further increased the risks associated with such sea movements. "The statement cautioned that "if verified, this tragedy would add to the nearly 300 people

reported to be missing or to have lost their lives in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal so far this year, including Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi nationals". The Rohingya undertake perilous sea journeys every year in search of better living conditions, travelling aboard rickety boats often operated by trafficking networks. According to UNHCR, nearly 900 Rohingya refugees were reported missing or dead at sea in the northern Indian Ocean last year alone -- out of more than 6,500 who had attempted such perilous sea crossings. Thursday's statement stressed that the latest reported tragedies "underscore the devastating impact of protracted conflict and displacement, as well as the continued lack of sustainable solutions for Rohingya communities."