

Rajnath Singh leads Kargil Vijay Diwas tributes at Dras war memorial

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Army Chief General Dhiraj Seth and senior military officers paid tributes to the country's fallen soldiers at the Kargil War Memorial on Sunday as the nation marked the 27th anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas.

Singh, who arrived in Dras on Saturday, was the chief guest at the 'Shradhanjali Samaroh', the wreath-laying ceremony at the memorial.

The Army is hosting a series of events to mark the anniversary of Operation Vijay, the 1999 conflict in which Indian soldiers recaptured the heights of Kargil.

As the sun shone over the Dras Valley on

Sunday morning, Singh laid a wreath at the memorial. Before him, Ladakh Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena, Army Chief General

light helicopter and followed by two cheetals – showered flower petals on the memorial during the ceremony.

On Saturday evening, in rain-soaked Dras, the Army hosted 'Shaurya Sandhya' at the war memorial to honour the courage shown by Indian soldiers during Operation Vijay and to pay tributes to those who were killed. Singh attended the event and handed a ceremonial 'kalash' to some family members of Army personnel who died in the Kargil conflict.

The anniversary marks India's victory in 1999, when its soldiers fought on snow-clad peaks under heavy firing from Pakistani troops and reclaimed the Kargil heights. Kargil Vijay Diwas commemorates the culmination of Operation Vijay on July 26, 1999.



Seth and General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command, Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, also laid wreaths, along with other senior officers. Three helicopters in arrowhead formation – led by an advanced

Contractors to be blacklisted for substandard road restoration: Yogi Adityanath

Agra. (Agency)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday directed officials to take a stern approach to the upkeep of civic amenities and warned that contractors could be blacklisted if work falls short. At a meeting with public representatives in Agra, he expressed displeasure over delays and poor-quality restoration of roads dug up for drinking water pipelines under the Jal Jeevan Mission.

He also reviewed development matters linked to Agra and the Mathura-Vrindavan region, asking officials to closely track court cases affecting the city, prepare plans to promote key industries, improve processes linked to Ayushman payments, and move proposals on transport and tourism infrastructure. According to a government statement, Adityanath told Jal Nigam officials that merely making a dug-up road motorable was not enough. He said that if the work was found unsatisfactory, the contractors should be blacklisted and FIRs lodged against the officials concerned. Referring to the recent Supreme Court permission to the Taj Trapezium Zone Authority to process about 400 pending applications for non-polluting MSMEs, he directed the divisional commissioner to monitor court rulings involving Agra so that the city's development is not held up due to lack of legal advocacy. Saying Agra has strong potential in leather products and defence manufacturing, the Chief Minister asked for a concrete plan to promote these sectors. He also said street vendors operating on footpaths should not be evicted and should instead be shifted to designated vending zones. He directed the Health Department to verify and speed up the settlement of payments related to Ayushman cards and empanelled hospitals.



'Nation Above Post': Amit Shah On Dharmendra Pradhan's Resignation

New Delhi. (Agency)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday lauded Dharmendra Pradhan's decision to resign from his post as Union Education Minister, describing it as an act of placing national interest above personal ambition.

In a post on X, Amit Shah said: "For Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers, the nation, our youth, and students hold far greater importance than any position. Today, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan ji's resignation from his post is a reflection of this very principle."

Shah emphasised that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government respects the sentiments of the country's youth and is committed to reforms against examination paper leaks.

He praised the decisions taken by PM Modi to ensure strict punishment for those responsible, expressing confidence that these measures would deliver justice to students who cleared the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET).

India emerging as trusted global defence partner: PM Modi

New Delhi. (Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday asserted that India is emerging as a trusted global defence partner and the country continues to strengthen its defence capabilities.

Addressing his monthly radio broadcast 'Mann Ki Baat', he also paid rich tributes to the Indian soldiers who fought the Kargil war. Despite harsh weather and the enemy's challenges, they showed extraordinary courage during the 1999 conflict with Pakistan, he noted.

"Kargil Vijay Diwas fills us with pride. This day reminds us of the extraordinary courage of our brave soldiers," he said.

The prime minister said today, be it in defence production or defence exports, India is consistently moving towards new heights. "India is emerging as a trusted global defence partner and the country continues to strengthen its defence capabilities," he said.

Modi said at the beginning of July he was in Indonesia, where a major agreement was reached for the BrahMos and Astra missiles. This month, he said, the DRDO also successfully tested the Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket.

MAHANAGAR METRO EXCLUSIVE

The Fear of Khaki Turns to Ashes, Khaki Itself is Corrupt!

Busting of the 'Dongri Syndicate' of LCB ASI Bipin Chaudhari and Bootleggers in Tapi-Vyara

MAHANAGAR METRO

Tapi-Vyara : In Gandhi's Gujarat, the most terrifying and dark face of a corrupt system fooling the public in the name of paper-based prohibition has been exposed in the Tapi-Vyara district. A sensational ground report by 'Mahanagar Metro News' has made such a massive and shocking revelation that it has sent tremors from the Home Department in Gandhinagar to the Range IG's office. Corrupt police officers and bootleggers have together turned the Tapi district into a 'den' of extortion and black business. The main mastermind of this entire corrupt chain and considered the SP's ultimate 'favorite', LCB ASI Bipin Chaudhari has been firmly rooted in the same district for the last 10 years. As if the government transfer laws have been canceled for this gentleman, he is ruling fearlessly. According to sources, crores of rupees are collected monthly from liquor containers passing through Tapi district and illegal chemical-laced country liquor distilleries. A game of monthly protection money (hafta) of 60 to 70 lakh rupees is played with notorious bootleggers like Sanju Dadhi, Hemant



Battery, Vijay Sayan, Nitin, and Rustom Songadh. To deliver liquor to Surat, the police's own road-patrolling provides 'special protection' to these bootleggers' containers! Until now, questions were being raised about a luxurious 10-day Dubai trip, but now a big revelation has been made that this gentleman has also gone on a trip to Bangkok! And this is not the first time—he has made luxurious trips to Bangkok in the past as well! The biggest question: Where did an ordinary ASI-level employee get the money to make expensive trips to Bangkok and Dubai? Were these foreign tours sponsored by the 'black

earnings' of the bootleggers? When Tapi District Police Chief (SP) Jashu Desai was contacted by 'Mahanagar Metro News' regarding this matter, he offered a hollow defense saying, "I don't know anything, I will get it investigated," and later completely stopped picking up the phone! The LCB PI has also adopted a mysterious silence. This silence itself proves that all pawns from top to bottom are involved in this scam. The chemical-laced country liquor distilleries operating in Tapi are inviting a major hooch tragedy. If an innocent person loses their life, will the SP or these operators take responsibility? Keeping this serious matter in mind, direct information about the entire case has been given to the Range IG! Everyone is watching whether strict action will be taken against this operator, who is openly challenging the Home Minister's claims of 'zero tolerance'. Direct Demands of 'Mahanagar Metro News' to the Government and Home Department:

1. ACB Raid and Property Investigation: An immediate raid and investigation should be conducted by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) into

all movable and immovable properties, bank accounts, and benami assets acquired by ASI Bipin Chaudhari over the last 10 years.

2. Investigation of Bangkok-Dubai trips: Whose permission was taken for the past Bangkok trips and the recent Dubai trip? What was the source of its funding? A special vigilance inquiry should be held into this.

3. Inquiry Committee against SP and LCB PI: A high-level inquiry committee should be appointed by the Range IG regarding the inaction and patronage provided by District Police Chief Jashu Desai and the LCB PI.

4. PASA on Syndicate Bootleggers: Strict action under PASA (Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act) should be taken by putting all bootleggers like Sanju Dadhi, Hemant Battery, Vijay Sayan, Nitin, and Rustom Songadh behind bars.

Mahanagar Metro News will take this issue to its logical conclusion with impartiality and fearlessness. Now it remains to be seen whether the Range IG and ACB uproot the den of this corrupt operator or if the matter is covered up by saying 'everyone gets a share'!

Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation gave oxygen to democracy: Uddhav Thackeray

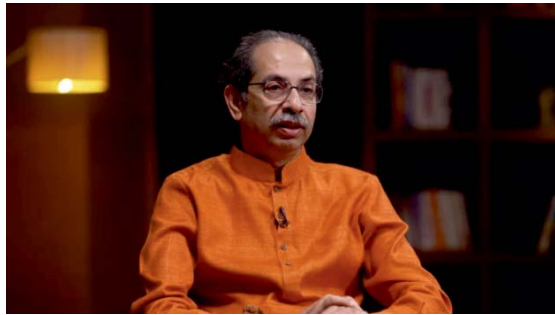
Mumbai. (Agency)

Uddhav Thackeray hailed the youth-led protests over exam irregularities after Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation. He said the movement revived democratic dissent and exposed failures of both the government and the Opposition.

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray has said the youth-led protests seeking the removal of Dharmendra Pradhan gave "oxygen to democracy", and called the Cockroach Janata Party's agitation a sign of the failure of both the government and the Opposition. He made the remarks in an interview with Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut, executive editor of party mouthpiece Saamana, which was published on Sunday but recorded before Pradhan resigned as Union Education Minister on Saturday.

Pradhan stepped down after an unprecedented youth movement led by the Cockroach Janta Party, founded by Abhijit

Dipke, drew lakhs of people over alleged irregularities in exams and the NEET paper leak. The agitation grew into nationwide



protests in recent weeks, with demands for his resignation and reforms in the education sector.

Thackeray said it was commendable that people no longer feared jail or guns, and added that this was "dangerous" for the ruling party. "These protests have given oxygen to democracy which was almost dying," he said. He also questioned the absence of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh from the protests.

"CJP's protest is not only a failure of the ruling party but also of the Opposition. I had mentioned this sometime back...the country has lost trust in politicians," he said.

The former Maharashtra Chief Minister also claimed that the country was being shown only a carrot, but had got nothing in reality.

News box

6-year-old boy drowns in water-filled pit in Greater Noida's Kaladham Colony, contractor arrested

Noida.(Agency)

A six-year-old boy died after accidentally falling into a water-filled pit dug for boring work inside a residential colony in Greater Noida, police said on Sunday.

The incident took place on Saturday evening in Kaladham Colony, where the child was playing with other children near the pit at around 7 pm.

According to police, the boy accidentally fell into the water-filled pit and was pulled out by his family members, who rushed him to a hospital. Doctors



declared him dead on arrival. Police completed the inquest proceedings and sent the body for postmortem examination.

A case has been registered based on a complaint lodged by the victim's family, and further legal proceedings have been initiated, police said. The contractor responsible for the boring work was arrested on Sunday in connection with the incident, they added.

Weeks into session, Gurgaon govt school students still await textbooks

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Thousands of students in govt schools across Gurgaon are yet to receive their free textbooks weeks into the new academic session, forcing many to attend classes without textbooks or depend on worn-out copies from previous years.

Of the nearly 80,000 students enrolled in primary and middle schools, almost every govt school has reported a shortage of textbooks for one or more classes, teachers said.

Under the Right to Education Act, govt school students are entitled to free textbooks to ensure that financial constraints do not hinder learning.

This year, however, an increase in admissions exposed gaps in the book distribution system, with schools saying the number of books supplied was calculated using last year's enrolment instead of current student strength. Teachers said that the issue recurs almost every year because the initial supply rarely matches the actual enrolment.

They added that schools submit a revised demand only after the admissions pick up.

As a result, the shortages have affected Bal Vatika, Classes 1, 2, 3 and 5. In several schools, teachers are making students share books during lessons, while many parents have been asked to arrange books from former students until the fresh supplies arrive.

2 dead after guard enters STP tank to rescue worker in Noida

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A worker and a security guard died of asphyxiation after entering a sewage treatment plant (STP) tank at a residential society in Noida's Sector 150, with the security guard losing consciousness while attempting to rescue the worker, police said on Sunday.

The incident occurred on the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday at Eldeco Society under the Knowledge Park police station area.

According to police, Shashikant Sharma (40), a resident of Rajasthan's Karauli district, entered the STP tank to clean it but lost consciousness inside.

A security guard, identified as Akash (22), a resident of Firozabad, entered the tank in an attempt to rescue Sharma but also fell unconscious, police said. Local police and fire department personnel rushed to the spot and retrieved both men from the tank. They were taken to a hospital, where doctors declared them dead.

Police said the bodies have been sent for postmortem examination after completion of inquest proceedings. A case has been registered and Knowledge Park police have arrested the accused contractor, Manoj Jain. Further legal proceedings are being carried out, police added.

Four-lane elevated road to decongest Ghanta Ghar to Bhatia Mod stretch on GT Road

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

A Stalled over repeated reviews and design changes, the draft for a four-lane elevated road connecting Ghanta Ghar to Bhatia Mod on GT Road, one of the city's most congested stretches, has been submitted to the Centre for vetting. Narrow roads, roadside markets, two colleges and a high volume of vehicles heading towards Loni, Lalkuan and MMG Hospital lead to daily jams on the corridor, particularly during peak office hours. The project is expected to cut travel time on the stretch and ease congestion for commuters.

GDA officials said three alignments have been drawn up with estimated costs ranging from Rs 200 crore to Rs



253 crore, with one of them including slip roads and underpasses to ease traffic flow to Ghanta Ghar market, Daulatpura, New Gandhi Nagar and

Dayanand Nagar.

The delay has been a source of frustration for residents and traders who use the corridor daily. Since the

project was first floated in 2022, it has gone through multiple design changes and reviews without reaching the tendering stage. A final decision from the central govt is expected within weeks, after which the tender process will begin, officials said.

Officials said the elevated road would do more than reduce travel time. By separating fast-moving traffic from local pedestrian and vendor activity at ground level, it is expected to improve road safety and reduce the idling that contributes to air pollution in the area. Access to the Ghanta Ghar market is also expected to improve. "Once completed, it will help provide a seamless flow of traffic connecting commuters more efficiently between key points along.

Court denies bail to Thar driver in fatal Sohna Chowk crash

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A local court on Friday rejected the bail plea of the 23-year-old Thar driver arrested in connection with the Sohna Chowk crash that claimed the life of 19-year-old tattoo artist Divyansh Chadha, ensuring the accused remains in judicial custody.

Divyansh succumbed to his injuries on Tuesday, having remained unconscious since the July 17 collision. The accused, Rohit Yadav, a resident of Sanjay Gram Colony in Sector 13, was arrested on the day of the crash.

According to police, Divyansh was driving the family's Baleno towards Rajiv Chowk around 4.40am when a Thar allegedly came at high speed from the opposite direction and crashed into the car at the Sohna Chowk



intersection, a few metres from the police commissioner's office. The impact flung the Baleno onto the

divider and overturned the SUV.

Four members of the family were injured in the crash — Meenakshi Chadha (45), her son Divyansh, her daughter Lakshita Chadha (23), and a relative, Yashika Chadha (22), who was seated behind Divyansh. Divyansh sustained injuries to his head, neck and ribs. Yashika continues to undergo treatment in critical care. A relative told TOI that she regained consciousness on Thursday and was taken off the ventilator, but was put back on it after her condition deteriorated. "She will undergo surgeries as her jaw was completely broken," the relative said.

The family has alleged that the driver was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the crash, police said the claim is under investigation.

'Greatest threat to democracy comes from police state': UP court acquits 2

Muzaffarnagar.(Agency)

Severely reprimanding the investigating officer (IO) for "setting aside the law" by filing a chargesheet against "two innocent persons merely to show that an attempt to murder case has been resolved", a court in Muzaffarnagar on Saturday acquitted Sharafat and Asif and called for action against the IO for his "conduct and several inconsistencies during investigation".

Quashing the charges under IPC 307/34 and Arms Act, the court of additional sessions judge (fast track-III) Ravi Kumar Diwakar observed: "In a democracy, the greatest power lies with the law, and the greatest threat to democracy comes from the police state. When police officers act arbitrarily and violate the fundamental rights of citizens, it doesn't take long for democracy to transform into a police state. The rule of law is paramount in a democracy..."

In its judgment, the court further stated: "...respect for uniform is enhanced not by its power, but by its restraint, impartiality and constitutional integrity. Where fear replaces law, the freedom of citizens is endangered."

Hence, the court stated, it will always uphold the principle that "every power of the state is subject to law, and that under no circumstances can 'rule of law' be replaced by 'rule by force.' This is the hallmark of constitutional governance and the true spirit of justice."

Gen Z protesters say quiet resignation cannot replace accountability

Gurgaon.(Agency)

They slept on pavements through rain, humidity and heat, held their ground through lathi charges and tear gas, and refused to leave Jantar Mantar because, as one of them put it, "everyone knew this fight was bigger than one examination or one recruitment".

On Saturday, their primary demand was met. Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned in the



midst of a storm over the NEET-UG paper leak — the latest in a series of examination controversies that brought hundreds of young people

onto the streets since June 20. At the Cockroach Janata Party protest site at Jantar Mantar, founder Abhijeet Dipke announced his resignation was the movement's "first victory". "His resignation is not the end, but only the beginning," Jitendra Kumar Maurya from Prayagraj, who spent two nights sleeping on the street outside Jantar Mantar, said. "The movement started by Gen Z must continue until every deserving student in this country gets an equal opportunity based purely on merit."

Two held after dispute over parking turns violent in Ghaziabad colony

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

A parking dispute between two neighbouring families escalated into a violent clash in Khoda in which two men attacked each other with sticks, leaving several people injured. Police have registered an FIR and two people have been detained for questioning.

The incident took place Friday night in Pratap Vihar Colony.

According to the complaint filed by local resident Wasim Ansari, the dispute arose after his neighbours parked their car outside his house, obstructing access to his two-wheeler. He claimed that the accused — Irshad, Shadab and Shehzad — regularly parked their vehicle in front of his residence despite repeated objections.

Wasim alleged that when he protested against it again on Friday night, the argument quickly turned



violent. He accused the three men of attacking him and his family members with sticks. His sister, Mehrunisha, and younger brother, Shahid, were among those who sustained injuries in the assault.

Several others were also hurt during the clash.

The altercation allegedly took place in a narrow residential lane and was captured on CCTV cameras installed in the locality. A video showing the fight has also surfaced on social media platform. The video shows two groups of two men violently attacking each other, while some other people, including women, try to stop them. In both groups, one man has a stick in his hand and is hitting the other while the other is trying to strike back.

Following the incident, the injured approached the police and lodged a complaint. Based on the allegations, police registered a case and initiated an investigation into the matter. Police are also examining CCTV footage from the area to establish the sequence of events and identify those involved in the violence. Assistant commissioner of police

(Indirapuram) Suryabali Maurya said efforts to investigate the matter is underway and that Irshad and Shadab have been taken in for questioning. Further legal action will be taken based on the evidence collected during the investigation.

The incident has once again highlighted how seemingly minor neighbourhood disputes over parking can spiral into serious violence. Residents of densely populated colonies have often raised concerns over limited parking space and frequent altercations caused by vehicles being parked outside homes or blocking access to residential lanes.

Police have urged residents to resolve such disputes peacefully and report grievances through legal channels rather than taking law into their own hands. The investigation is ongoing, and police are expected to make arrests soon.

10 chargesheeted in Rs 30.29 lakh investment fraud, fake resident certificate cases

Jammu. (Agency)

The Crime Branch has filed chargesheets against 10 people in two separate cases in Jammu, including an alleged Rs 30.29 lakh investment fraud linked to a Rajasthan-based company and a forgery case involving the alleged fraudulent procurement of permanent resident certificates, an official said on Sunday.

In the first case, the Economic Offences Wing of the Crime Branch has accused the company and its representatives of luring people to invest money by promising very high returns and then misappropriating the funds. In the second, the agency has alleged that forged revenue records were used in a conspiracy to obtain permanent resident certificates for buying land and securing government jobs in Jammu and Kashmir.

The investment fraud case was registered in 2011 under various sections of the Ranbir Penal Code after Ashish Sharma filed a written complaint at Gandhi Nagar police station in Jammu. He alleged that Messrs Gold Sukh Trade India Ltd, Jaipur, and its local representatives induced him to invest Rs 1,20,480 on false promises of high returns.

Centre, Andhra Pradesh weigh relief package for tobacco farmers

VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)

The Centre has stepped up efforts to address the concerns of tobacco farmers in Andhra Pradesh following sustained consultations by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu with the Union government. As part of the initiative, the Union Ministry of Commerce has deputed senior officials to the State to hold discussions on measures to support tobacco growers. Additional Secretary Nitin Kumar Yadav and Director Mounika Gaur from the Ministry of Commerce met the Chief Minister at his Camp Office in Undavalli on Saturday before he left for his Kurnool district tour.

The meeting was attended by Union Minister Pemmasani Chandrasekhara, State Ministers Gottipati Ravi Kumar and DBV Swamy, senior officials from the Agriculture Department and Markfed, and representatives of the Tobacco Board. The Centre presented three proposals aimed at providing immediate relief to tobacco farmers. These include interest-free working capital loans, financial incentives, and a price deficiency compensation mechanism.

Stakeholders to continue tobacco talks tomorrow

Chief Minister Naidu said the proposals should be examined comprehensively and stressed that any decision must protect farmers from financial losses.

Godavari woman breaks barriers in game fowl breeding

RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM. (Agency)

In Rustumbada village near Narasapuram, West Godavari district, Yadlapalli Ratnakumari has broken barriers in a field long dominated by men. In just five years, the young entrepreneur has become one of the most recognised women breeders of game fowl, building a thriving business from modest beginnings.

A Class X school leaver from a small farming family, Ratnakumari entered the trade after watching her husband Rajesh struggle for years without success. Speaking to TNIE, she said, "Watching his hard work, I began learning about game fowl, their bloodlines, breeding techniques, popular Telugu varieties and the science behind raising quality birds."

Starting with a six-cent farm, the couple worked tirelessly to expand. Today, their birds fetch between Rs 3,000 and Rs 1 lakh depending on pedigree, while fertilised eggs sell for Rs 300 each. Ratnakumari uses Instagram to market her stock, drawing buyers from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and beyond. "Just as families examine the background of a bride or groom before marriage, breeders carefully study a rooster's lineage before selecting it for breeding. A champion bloodline commands enormous respect and value," she explained.

The FDA came for adulterated milk. Mumbai's sweet shops are paying the price

Mumbai. (Agency)

Over the past two months, Maharashtra's Food and Drug Administration has inspected 360 establishments, seized 1,60,329 litres of adulterated milk worth Rs 65.17 lakh, suspended 35 licences and registered seven FIRs. Much of the dairy trade warned the crackdown would leave Mumbai short of milk. It hasn't. Interviews across the supply chain suggest something more revealing. The crackdown has pushed a layer of cheap, adulterated milk out of the market without leaving households short. Bulk buyers are paying more, honest farmers are earning more, organised dairies are gaining customers, and thousands of smaller operators are struggling to meet rules that existed on paper but were rarely enforced.

What disappeared wasn't milk. It was cheap milk. Three days ago, Goregaon-based National Dairy raised cow milk from Rs 58 a litre to Rs 60, attributing the rise to higher costs from Kolhapur and Satara. A sweet shop owner who procures 5,000 litres a day says good quality milk has gone up between Rs 2 and Rs 5 a litre since last Saturday. One medium-sized player in Maharashtra's milk manufacturing and processing business estimates the raids have wiped "4-5% of milk which was adulterated" off the market. "Because of the crackdown on adulterated milk, our sale of paneer and ghee has increased by 30-35 per cent."

The manager of a popular city-based dairy with multiple outlets sees it from the other side. "I am getting my existing milk

supply, but due to FDA's raids and inspection and fear due to it, a lot of people who were making duplicate



paneer or buying it have gone down, and the demand for genuine paneer has gone up. So my orders have gone up, but there is not enough milk supply to tend to the new orders."

Until recently, buyers had a cheaper option. "Earlier people were buying

substandard paneer for anything between Rs 250 and Rs 450 a kg, whereas my paneer is sold at Rs 800 per kg," the manager said. "But now they are left with no option but to buy genuine paneer."

The squeeze is on businesses, not households

One of Mumbai's oldest sweets manufacturers said any reduction in supply won't be immediate at retail counters for domestic users, "but it would be for business establishments like a restaurant or sweet manufacturers like us." Much of that pressure traces to the FDA's July 3 compliance order, issued by commissioner Tukaram Mundhe, which bars loose milk and requires pasteurised milk to be sold in sealed, labelled packaging. A Chembur supplier said it has changed the economics of transport.

From 11 acres to 26: this Muktsar farmer turned his land to triple his income

Jalandhar. (Agency)

Balwinder Sandhu dropped out of convent education after matriculation due to a paucity of money given his family circumstances and started traditional wheat and paddy farming on his family land. Later, he began shifting to horticultural crops, starting with just two acres in 2010-11. The 51-year-old farmer at Sukhna Ablu village in Muktsar Sahib district today owns 26 acres, of which he transformed around 20 acres into a diversified organic farm "Preet Agro Nature Way Farm", producing nearly 35 to 40 varieties of fruits, spices and a similar range of seasonal vegetables.

"I started with just two acres of horticulture by shifting from wheat and paddy in 2010-11. I gradually expanded

after seeing the response from customers and realising that there was a market for fresh produce," he says. Sandhu inherited about 11 acres from his father, who had a holding of around 33 acres. Gradually, he



expanded and added another 15 acres worth more than Rs 4 crore from his farm earnings. Now he supplies products to consumers directly from his farm. Sandhu

has planted an unusually wide range of fruit varieties, including kinnow, daisy, malta, mitha, Nagpuri orange, Japanese orange, different varieties of lemons and chakotra. His orchards also include dragon fruit, strawberries, peaches, plums, mangoes, pears (nashpati and baggu gosha), Hisar safeda guava, grapes, jamun, mulberry and ber.

Alongside orchards, Sandhu grows seasonal vegetables and crops, including watermelon, muskmelon, maize, chillies, turmeric, other spices and mustard and processes them into powders and oil for direct sale to customers.

He grows rare wheat varieties such as Bansi and Sona Moti, which he says have relatively very low gluten content and are four times more nutritious than prevalent varieties.

Heavy rain batters Himachal: Orange, yellow alerts on; 134 roads shut, power & water supply disrupted

Shimla. (Agency)

As many as 134 roads remained closed due to landslides and flash floods triggered by torrential rains, and 78 electricity distribution transformers (DTRs) and 35 water supply systems were affected on Saturday, even as the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), Shimla, issued an orange alert for July 28 to 30, warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall in isolated parts of Himachal Pradesh. The IMD also warned of low to moderate flash flood risk in parts of Chamba, Kangra, Kinnaur, Kullu, Mandi, Shimla and Sirmaur districts till Sunday morning, cautioning inundation in saturated soils and low-lying areas. The weather department has also issued a

yellow alert for heavy rainfall at isolated places on July 25 and 26.



IMD has predicted light to moderate rainfall across most areas until July 31, accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds of 30-40 kmph over the low and mid-hill districts, and Kinnaur and Lahaul and Spiti.

According to the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC), it has recorded an improvement in the overall situation compared to the morning, when 165 roads, 273 DTRs and 234 water supply schemes were disrupted due to incessant rainfall. However, several districts continued to face road connectivity issues. Mandi remained the worst-hit district with 58 roads blocked, followed by Chamba (14), Kullu (33), Sirmaur (12), Shimla (7), Kangra (5), Lahaul and Spiti (4) and Una (1). However, no national highway was reported closed. Power supply disruptions were reported mainly from Kullu, where 59 DTRs remained affected. Shimla reported nine disrupted transformers, Chamba and Kangra eight each and Mandi two.

handbrake. The bus reportedly moved forward accidentally and crashed into the office, damaging the office door and shattering its own front windscreen.

The bus, which usually operates on routes A-361 (Kurla Bus Station-Mahal Village) and A-21 (Shyamaprasad Mukherjee Chowk-Deonar Depot), is attached to the Anik depot. At the time of the accident, the bus was being operated by a BEST driver and conductor, they added. No injuries were reported in the incident. The mishap comes amid growing concerns over a spate of accidents involving BEST buses in recent weeks. Within the last week, three wet-lease buses operating under the BEST banner crashed into road dividers in Mankhurd, Borivali, and Powai, resulting in the death of a senior citizen and injuries to several others.



Leg crushed, parents thought she'd be better off dead. Karnataka girl is now India's hope at CWG

From losing a leg in a childhood accident to earning a place at the Commonwealth Games 2026, Karnataka para-athlete Shilpa K S is set to represent India in women's shot put.

Bengaluru. (Agency)

In 1993, elated after getting an ice-cream, a four-year-old girl in a remote Karnataka village was running towards home clutching the stick when a speeding lorry crushed her left leg. Cut to 2026, the same girl is representing India at the 2026 Commonwealth Games being held in Glasgow, Scotland.

Meet Shilpa K S, a para-athlete in the women's 57 kg shot put throw category. Born to Shantha and Shailla, a farmer couple in Kanchigara Koppalu in Krishnarajanagar taluk of Mysuru district, Shilpa's childhood was traumatic. Speaking to The Indian Express, Shantha said, "She was just four years old when her leg was crushed. We are farmers and were unable to afford medical expenses. We used to carry her to school, and it was

really hard living in a village set-up. But she was always a stubborn kid, which has taken her to this level."

After completing her schooling at Kanchigara Koppalu, Shilpa pursued an undergraduate course at the Government First Grade College in Krishnarajanagar. She then moved to Mysuru to pursue post-graduation. Later, when the Para Volleyball Association of Karnataka was looking to form the first women's sitting volleyball team, Shilpa, who was by then working as a teacher, was introduced to the sport by her friend Geetha.

"She (Geetha) was the one who encouraged me. It was only when I was 29 years old that I entered competitive sports through sitting volleyball and represented Karnataka at the national level," Shilpa said.

Raghavendra S G, joint secretary of the Karnataka Sports Association for Physically Handicapped, said that Shilpa was fit and so they encouraged her to take



up shot put and discus throw, and she did very well. Shilpa's journey was not easy. In the absence of any corporate backing or sponsorship, she trained and competed using an ordinary 'Jaipur foot' (a low-cost prosthetic limb) instead of modern

sports-specific prosthetics.

Hardest decisions

But then came a point when Shilpa had to take the hardest decisions of her life – to relocate to Bengaluru for better training and resign from her job. "I decided to take up sports seriously. I came to my elder sister's house and started training at Kanteerava Stadium under Arjuna awardee athlete and coach S D Eshan," she said. Shilpa achieved international glory when she won silver and bronze medals during a tournament in Thailand in 2024. The next year, Shilpa won a gold medal at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix held in New Delhi. She got the ticket to represent India at the Commonwealth Games when she won a bronze medal at the Fazza International World Para Athletics Championships.

India's future needs a new opposition

The period between summer and the rainy season is vacation time. It's a time of visits and discussions. People renew friendships and themselves through conversations, which combine dialogue, debate and gossip. The topic inevitably turns to politics. And the discussions on politics have been deeply reflective this season. The debates have become more drawing-room affairs, as public spaces for difference are drying up. One of the debates was on the present regime. It revealed three things: first, there is a clear-cut difference between short-term and long-term discussions. The short term has a sense of immediacy. Narendra Modi comes out an iconic figure. The long term is more ambiguous, and one senses that, in a deep and fundamental way, the regime has little sense of the future. It has captured history in which the future, as an imagination, is open to democratic possibility. The debate reveals the fate of words, and the fate of words is critical for democracy. Democracy itself has become a jaded term, but possibly the most jaded word today is the idea of the opposition. The concept of opposition has become a lukewarm term. It expresses immediate negation, but lacks a deeper sense of philosophy. As a philosopher friend reflected, the idea of the opposition has little sense of the power of dissent and the availability of eccentricity. The opposition, as one sees it today, is a listless term. One has to accept that the Congress has been a source of disappointment. As a party today, it has little sense of history, little sense of memory and no sense of inventiveness for the future. The Congress, as someone put it, sounds like yesterday's newspaper. It has almost become a piece of nostalgia. Under Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi it had vigour and intensity. Under today's leadership, it is almost a listless entity. The bigger casualty is the idea of opposition itself. It has lost its playfulness and plurality. It is the idea of the opposition that the future must revive. The opposition needs to challenge the BJP along the following grounds. One can see it as a set of dualisms. Firstly, there is a distinction between a sense of civilisation and the aridity of the nation-state. Whether it was the national movement or the Nehruvian regime, there was always a sense of India as a civilisation, as a value framework. The Non-Aligned Movement embodied such an idea, but today the country has been reduced to a nation-state. It is obsessed with infrastructure and security as a system and is virtually panopticing itself. One consequence of this is that the current regime has no notion of peace. Its literacy on peace ends with progress and security. It is here that civil society must enter and create new possibilities of conversation, negotiation and friendship. The Dalai Lama is a wonderful example of this. Even as Tibet has been subject to powerful harassment at a genocidal level, he can still say: "I am concerned about China at a civilisational level. It needs to unravel itself." The second dualism that haunts the current regime is the distinction between imagination and ideology. The regime's policy sounds like a dry textbook. It needs a new imagination to invent the future as an alternative, as a set of competing possibilities, as a celebration of difference. The future is a dream of possibility that the regime has not been able to absorb. It has become an anathema and the politically current has become politically impoverished. One witnesses this in the decline of the university. The Prime Minister felt that the educational system must challenge its Macaulayite genes. But the bureaucratisation of the university has made the system more Macaulayite than before. Dissent is unavailable to inmates of the system because it is doubly anti-national. The third dualism that haunts the regime is the distinction between monocrop and plurality. Democracy in India is too frozen around terms like margin and minority.

35 years after liberalisation

Jobs & productivity, not inequality & economic distress, should define India's next chapter

The reforms of 1991 are seen by many as having been India's economic launch pad. In his Budget speech of July 24, 1991 - 35 years ago, today - Manmohan Singh quoted Victor Hugo to say "No power on earth can stop an idea whose time has come", and added: "I suggest to this august House that the emergence of India as a major economic power in the world happens to be one such idea." Thirty-five years later, what is clear is that the dismantling of industrial and trade controls on that day served to accelerate India's rate of economic growth as well as the rate of its poverty reduction. But one would have to add that the promise of 1991 has been redeemed only partially. Indeed, the country once again finds itself at a cusp, confronted by new challenges of economic security, technological adequacy and an inclusive pattern of growth, which have no easy answers in a less than hospitable global climate. In the 40 years to 1990-91, the economy had grown five-fold. Since the population grew two-and-a-half times in that period, income per head barely doubled as a result. In comparison, in the 35 years since 1990-91, the economy has multiplied eight-fold. And since the population has grown by 70 per cent in the interim, per capita income has multiplied more than four-and-a-half times. It goes without saying that the achievements of the second period have been built on the foundations laid in the first. Yet India basically under-performed in relation to other countries in the first period, but has a growth record in the second period that not many countries can match. China and Vietnam show that much more could have been done. Starting from a comparable point, the first is on the threshold of achieving high-income status. Vietnam started out with less than half of India's per capita income in 1991 and now has an 80 per cent higher income level. That puts it in the upper-middle income group, whereas India, ranked in 1991 among the low-income countries, is still only in the lower-middle income group. WorldNews Coverage Three-quarters of all countries rank above India on per capita income. India's figure is less than a quarter of the world average. However much we may pat ourselves on the back for the achievements of the past 35 years, it has not been anywhere near enough, and much remains to be done.

Still, absolute poverty has dropped sharply. Destitution

blighted 37 per cent of the population in 1991; that is down to 5 per cent. But that only takes bare survival as the yardstick. On broader indicators, the record is more qualified. On the composite multi-dimensional index (which includes health, education and other indicators), one-sixth of the people are still poor. On the UN's human development index, India is two-thirds of the way down the list of 192 countries. Yet there is now much-improved (though not universal) access to many basic goods and services, like clean cooking fuel, treated tap water, toilets, low-cost financial services and household electricity. Also, the country's physical infrastructure has improved noticeably in recent years. Though some of the



accomplishments are modest in an international context, India enjoys traction in a way that it did not before. That is primarily because of the size of its population, the world's largest. As the sixth-largest economy, India has among the world's biggest markets for a whole range of products and services. These reflect the birth of a large middle class with money to spend. There is no one way to define that class, but a commonly used income criterion cuts off at a minimum per capita income of \$10 per day, using purchasing power parity for rupee comparison. At a rough guess, that would include 30 per cent to 40 per cent of India's population of 1.45 billion, yielding a vast middle class (more correctly, the upper echelon) that is more numerous than the entire population of all countries other than China.

The existence of anywhere between 80 million and 100 million households in this category explains annual sales of 20 million for two-wheelers, 25 million for refrigerators and 150 million for smart phone

handsets (plus another 250 million for feature phones). Every day, more than half a million people take off or land at what are among the busiest airports in the world. As many cars are now sold in a fortnight as were sold in all of 1991. Products are more affordable, relative to incomes, of better quality, with greater choice. It is not just the size of its markets. Over these 35 years, India has become recognised for its expanded capabilities -- in software services, for instance, and the manufacture of low-cost pharmaceuticals that became globally useful during the pandemic. Also recognised are its ultra-low-cost digital infrastructure stacks and technological sophistication in oil refining, the manufacture of specialty chemicals and some engineering goods, as well as in medical care. Dozens of countries higher up the income ladder cannot claim any of this or the massive rollout of solar and wind energy capacity. Based on how these capabilities are reflected in the country's export mix, India ranks in the top third of 145 countries on the Harvard Growth Lab's Economic Complexity Index. WorldNews Coverage Much more would have been achieved if the country had followed through with the core logic of the 1991 reforms: to leave to the private sector and markets what they can deliver, open up to the world and focus government efforts on what governments alone can deliver: law and order, justice, public health, quality state schools, environmental protection and the proper regulation of markets. On each of these, India is found wanting. The country has 2.2 million policemen and four times as many private security guards. Court delays are endemic. Half of all schoolchildren now go to private schools, and 40 per cent of hospital beds are privately provided -- both involve paying not modest charges when incomes are still modest (though there is now a government-funded insurance programme for hospital bills). Poor nutrition levels find reflection in widespread stunting and wasting.

Tax revenues are not enough to change this picture and public debt has been uncomfortably high since the pandemic. Shrinking shares (relative to the larger whole) are being spent on both education and defence and practically nothing on purely civilian research and development. On top of which, the informal sector of the economy still overshadows the smaller organised sector.

Double blockade of sea routes exposes economic fragility

If key chokepoints come under sustained pressure, the global oil market would lose its principal contingency route

The Houthis' threat to disrupt shipping through the Bab al-Mandeb Strait has delivered a double whammy to global energy markets, exposing a dangerous new fault line in energy security. As Saudi Arabia increasingly relies on the Red Sea route to bypass the largely-blockaded Strait of Hormuz, the prospect of simultaneous disruption at both passageways threatens to choke the Gulf's principal export alternatives. The result would not only be tighter oil supplies, but a transportation crisis capable of driving crude prices back above \$100 a barrel, inflating freight and insurance costs, and disrupting global trade. For India, the world's third-largest oil importer, the risks extend beyond a higher import bill to renewed inflationary pressures and supply-chain disruptions, yet again highlighting that maritime security has become as critical to economic stability as energy production itself. Saudi Arabia currently diverts an estimated 4-5 million barrels a day through its East-West pipeline to the Red Sea port of Yanbu, reducing dependence on the



Persian Gulf route. If both chokepoints come under sustained pressure, the global oil market would lose its principal contingency route. The disruption would extend beyond crude. Europe relies heavily on diesel and jet fuel shipments from Saudi Arabia and Asia that

pass through Red Sea and Suez Canal. Any prolonged interruption would tighten already-fragile markets, push refining margins higher and add another wave of inflationary pressure on advanced economies. Longer routes around the Cape of Good Hope would further raise transport costs and delay deliveries. The implications are particularly acute for India. Higher crude prices, combined with rising freight and insurance costs, would widen the import bill, pressure the current account and complicate inflation management. While diversified sourcing and strategic petroleum reserves provide some cushion, they cannot fully offset the impact of simultaneous disruption at two of the country's most important maritime supply routes. Energy security is not just about producing oil—it is also about keeping it moving. Bab al-Mandeb is Hormuz's safety valve. If it closes, the global economy loses its only credible fallback. The trajectory of the West Asia crisis will be determined as much at sea as on land.

Space dreams: Grounding needed before liftoff

Space agency hit by a spate of resignations amid the rise of private companies

Roughly four months ago, a government panel came to the conclusion that the government itself had been selling cutting-edge data and technologies—satellite systems, rocket components, advanced materials, chemicals, specialised sub-systems—to the private sector for less than a song. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, headed by BJP MP Bhubaneswar Kalita, tabled a demand for grants that read: "It has been observed that technologies are often transferred to private players at undervalued rates, allowing these partners to earn significant profits while the originating institutes receive only a marginal share of the value created. Furthermore, there is no credible mechanism to verify whether the benefits of low-cost technology transfers are being passed on to the intended target users for whom the technologies were developed. In view of this, the committee recommends that the department of space (DoS) should consider adopting a more competitive and market-aligned pricing framework for technology transfer." It added, "Licensing fees should appropriately reflect the true commercial value, uniqueness and societal impact of technologies developed through public funding." The panel also recommended clear guidelines to determine technology transfer costs, and a committee constituted by the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre or IN-SPACe to evaluate technology fees. To ensure transparency and accountability, it further recommended for all transfer agreements to be subject to periodic third-party audits. The government-owned NewSpace India, a commercial



little as ₹6,000 each, and a handful gratis.

The panel's absence of trust in the existing system is obvious. It concluded that space tech is being transferred at inordinately low rates to private players, who are raking in the profits and sharing only a small percentage with "the originating institutes". It recommended that all technology transfer agreements be cleared periodically by third-party audits. It did not clarify the nature of the third party, leaving the door open for both government and

private sector butting-in, fiddling the books, retrospective redaction and creative obfuscation.

This has been done before for decades in the public sector—which is why, one assumes, the panel asked for the essentials of the technologies NewSpace India had transferred since its much-publicised inauguration in May 2019, including information on the fees it had received through such transfers, these appraisals being vital in tracking the internal assigning of proper valuations, and the identification and pinpointing of possible windfall profits. Most of these questions have gone unanswered. This is concerning because the public-private growth in India's space sector has been exponential. India's space economy is currently valued at about \$8.4 billion (₹80,848 crore), is projected to expand five-fold to between \$40-45 billion (₹384,862-433,176 crore) by 2030, reaching \$100 billion (₹964,800 crore) by 2040. The number of space startups in India has grown from one in 2014 to more than

400 in 2026. NewSpace India's revenue has surged from ₹321.77 crore in 2020 to ₹3,246.09 crore in 2025—a head-spinning 908.82 per cent in a mere five years. Driving all this is IN-SPACe, a single-window agency authorising space activities by government and private organisations—a body incalculably powerful because it is single-window and omnipotent. As of June 2026, IN-SPACe had registered more than 4,500 organisations,

issued 133 authorisations and signed 106 memorandums of understanding. By February 2026, it had facilitated more than ₹1,400 crore in startup investments in 2025. By June 2026, IN-SPACe had facilitated 118 tech transfers and signed 189 joint implementation plans and partnership agreements. IN-SPACe authorises everything from launch, operation, data dissemination, infrastructure use, issues guidelines on safety, security, liability, and prioritisation of shared facilities, and promotes industry clusters, technology transfer and equitable access to public infrastructure. It operates under the DoS, and seems to be paradoxically a roaring success—because, meanwhile, the DoS is a mess. It has a staff shortage of 27.8 per cent. Against a sanctioned strength of 20,269 posts, DoS has 14,637 employees—or 5,632 fewer than optimum, lower than in 2002. Since three-fourths of the DoS workforce comprises scientific and technical personnel, the vacancies are mostly of engineers, scientists and designers of satellites, launchers and deep-spacefaring missions.

By January 2026, the DoS used only 78 per cent of its revised allocation for 2025-26. At the budget stage, the allocation for Chandrayaan-4, due for launch in 2027, was hacked to ₹21 crore from ₹150 crore—because it was unspent. The Venus Orbiter Mission Shukrayaan-1, scheduled for launch in March 2028, spent ₹5 crore from its earlier allocated corpus of ₹50 crore.

Stunning employee shortage, outlays hacked or unspent on flagship spacefaring—and, at the same time, there are tech transfers to the private sector at cut-rate prices and corporate astronautics feeding off Isro tech. These beg not conspiracies, but a question. Where is the DoS budget—of ₹13,705.63 crore in 2026, an increase of more than 10 per cent—being applied?



A work desk not only sets up the mood of a working environment but is also a reflection of one's personality. Considering the space crunch with piles of paper and stationery on the desk, decking up your workstation with minimal accessories is the way to go. And what's better than jazzing up your desk with table-top plants, making the place look lively. To know more about the plants which would be ideal for an office environment, we spoke to Sanya Ahuja, Founder & CEO of Greenish- a plant gifting company. "Table-top plants require minimal maintenance and do not occupy a lot of space—they are less than half-a-feet tall, thus making them suitable for the office desk. An ideal plant is chosen on the basis of whether it acts as an air purifier i.e., absorbs toxins from the environment,

beautifies or is easy on maintenance. They are mostly priced between INR 450-600," said Ahuja. Read to know more about the five ideal table top plants, according to Ahuja, and pick the one which would make your desk look lively at work:

1. Golden Pothos
Golden Pothos belongs to the money plant family and is very easy to maintain too. This is an air purifying plant which means it absorbs toxins from the air apart from producing oxygen. They are tolerant of low light conditions and erratic watering—they need to be watered only when its soil starts to dry. It needs to be kept in the sunlight only once a week. The beauty of this plant lies in the texture of its leaves.

5 ideal top plants to make your work desk lively



2. Syngonium
There are six to seven shades of Syngonium of which pink and green have a greater demand. These air-purifying plants are preferably grown using organic manure instead of soil. Organic manure is light in

weight, has more nutrients than plain soil and it also tends to retain moisture for a longer time. Thus, this plant needs to be watered and kept in the sunlight only once a week, making them an ideal choice for the busy bees.

3. Philodendron
The beauty of this plant lies in the 'cut' of its leaf—the fast growing Philodendron hybrid has red leaves and extremely attractive foliage. It requires bright but indirect exposure to sunlight once a week to get the best foliage colour and should be watered only when the soil dries up. The brown leaves could be cut or trimmed as per

the need.

4. Sansevieria
Interestingly known as mother-in-law's tongue, these are air purifying plants and are available in different types like straight, golden and green. These plants have hard-textured leaves and hence are perfect for beginners. Sansevieria needs to be watered once in few days and are also ideal to be kept in bedrooms as they are known to produce oxygen even at night.

5. Chlorophytum
This again is an air-purifying plant. They have dark green leaves with white margins and are extremely tolerant to harsh conditions-- thus making them an ideal choice for beginners or forgetful owners.

Give an interesting twist to Your home décor

Toran
Considered auspicious, torans are traditionally created with mango or coconut leaves. But nowadays, the market is full of cheap, plastic junk. Instead, paint samples and veneer on handmade paper or on a cardboard yourself. You can also get printed cloths and cut it in the shape of a toran.

Hanging jar lights
Stack up all those empty jars that have been lying around in your house and put them to good use. Fix metal rods from your ceiling and then create extensions using wooden boards. Place a candle or a diya inside the jar and hang them with the help of those extensions.

Paper bag lanterns
This year, opt for paper bag lanterns to beautify your entrance. Not

only are they easy to make, they also have a charm of their own. Fold over one inch of the top of a paper bag. Start in a circular motion and when you have folded it completely, pull out the gussets on both the sides. Slide a small piece of cardboard in the bag so that you have a surface to cut on. With the help of a pencil, trace the stencils and use a knife to slowly cut out the design. Put a tea light in each bag and after you light it, place it on the entrance in a design that you prefer.

Gem or buttoned bowls
If you are organising a party in your house, it's a given that you might be looking for new crockeries and bowls to impress the guests. But this time, make your own at home! Take a transparent bowl and decorate it with colourful buttons available in different sizes. All you need to do is stick some glue on the bowl and then place the buttons. Keep it out to dry completely. You can alternatively also take wooden bowls and paint them colourfully. An aztec print on the wooden bowl looks interesting.



Use artistic tapestries to decorate your home

With the festive season coming up, just like your wardrobe, your furnishings and home decor artefacts too need a revamp. Meticulously weaved tapestries, that are also artistic is the perfect choice. Ever medium has its own charm and distinct appeal. Tapestry is generally misunderstood as a piece of art decor, a wall hanging or merely a decorative item. But some have dared to look at it in a different way and have established it as an independent form of art. Dinesh Kurekar, a master artist and skillful weaver is one of them with his next show to be held at the iconic Jehangir Art Gallery from the 4th - 10th of October 2016. A master weaver and artist, each of Dinesh Kurekar's works takes three months to complete with the meticulous weaving of tapestry into the wonderful form of art. The handloom industry has recently been on the rise with many personalities in the creative field reviving the the same. Kurekar's USP lies in exactly this, in his talent to convert the usual art on a canvas into weaving art using thread thereby creating masterpieces of tapestry. Kurekar's forte lies in the rare combination of art and craft, where the he has full control over the execution and innovative ideas along with the skills of a master weaver. Bearing the originality of an artist, his ideas first take the form of a painting on a canvas with acrylic colors or crayons. Then he meticulously weaves and transforms it into a tapestry giving it a new sense of physicality and scale. With a lot of precision and tedious work involved, after putting roughly eight hours of work, the artist manages to complete only around 1.5 inches of

the artwork! Once the weaving is complete, he then cuts the woollen strands to create an illusion of a plain surface and prunes certain forms at a raised level to give a sense of relief. The unequal distribution of raised surfaces reflects light differently and adds a new dimension to the tonal values of colour. Imagination, delicate touch and zest for creating interlinked spaces, Kurekar has added a dash of the abstract world in his creations, his masterpieces, thus carving a niche for himself in the world of contemporary artists. This upcoming festive season using tapestries to decorate your home can help give it a fresh new perspective.



How to make your Living room look Home

Make your living room homely, comfortable yet elegant. Here are a few ways to do it...



good use of space, accessories and furniture available to you so you can create a living area that is inviting, relaxing, homey and elegant.

Window treatments

Are your drapes older than you are? May be it's time for a change. If you want to make your room less — or more — formal, window treatments can do the trick. Look through catalogs and magazines for window treatments you like, and then figure out how to make them yourself. An inexpensive fabric draped over a new curtain rod may be all you need. And don't forget to consider sheets or even your old dupattas, as window treatments. They're inexpensive and you can easily find something to complement your decor.

Lamps and lighting

Overall lighting sets the mood for any room. Step back and review the lighting in your living



Colours

Colours have psychological effects on people and their moods. When applied in your living area, colours can intimidate, invite or irritate. Decorating using colours is also an inexpensive way of decorating because it only involves painting or papering walls.

If you want your living area to be warm and inviting, then use bright orange, yellow or green. Green has several shades and it's one of the most flexible colours around. And orange sofa can be teamed with a red carpet. Whatever colour you pick for your walls, make sure your carpets and furniture are coordinated.

Photographs and artwork

Try breaking up the monotony of books on a shelf by tucking photos between stacks of books, or propping photos on easels for display. You can also slip pictures under glass table tops. A picture ledge (a narrow shelf specifically made for pictures) is a great place for displaying all sorts of artwork — and it keeps you from covering your walls with nail holes. Consider grouping pieces together for an eye-catching focal point.

Rearranging furniture

Your lifestyle or taste determines what the focal point of your living area is. If you have a piano, and this is the focal point of your living area, your furniture could be set around it. When rearranging your furniture, also consider traffic in your living area. Does the arrangement of your furniture allow free movement and flow? Does it give an uncluttered look?

It is always good to arrange furniture in off-square angles like shown in the picture above.

Carpets and rugs

A carpet or an area rug can be an easy way to mark off a conversation area in your living room. You can angle the rug for extra decorating drama. A brown floor can look nice with a dark chocolate carpet.

You can also add a comfy throw or your sofa and make just about any piece of furniture look like a great place to curl up.

In a home, the living area, or the receiving room, is one of the busiest rooms. It's also the room, guests initially see and form a lasting

impression about the home. Hence, the living area should be well-decorated, well-laid out and inviting to guests and family members. It should project a homely,

comfortable yet elegant image. Decorating your home, particularly your living area, allows you to combine creativity, elegance and good taste. Make

room. Most seating should have light available from a lamp or overhead fixture. While you're looking, check out your lampshades. Do they complement each other? Purchasing a new shade is a quick and inexpensive way to update a lamp.

If you have house-plants, consider adding twinkle lights. These lights add warm, subdued lighting when used alone, and accent light any time.

5 tips to care for expensive oil

Paintings

- 1. Room selection:** Paintings are displayed at the best place at home where it gets maximum views, but room selection is a handy task. A room should have proper lighting, but make sure to hang paintings away from direct sunlight, bright overhead lights and fireplaces. Don't keep the painting in the room with fluctuating temperature and also make sure, the wall where the painting is to be hanged is not damped/moist, as all these conditions tend to harm the painting in many ways.
- 2. Hanging the painting:** Before you hang the painting, make sure the hook is appropriate and strong, so that the painting doesn't fall and get damaged. Don't rely on regular nail for hanging a priceless painting.
- 3. Handle with care:** Whenever you need to take down the painting for cleaning, always handle the

frame without touching the surface of the painting with hands. Never use a rough cloth piece to clean the painting. The hands should be washed and dried to avoid the moisture from damaging the surface of the painting.

4. Cleaning of painting: The painting should not be regularly cleaned, but only when required. The front of the painting should be cleaned gently with a soft brush to remove the loose dust on the painted surface, alternatively a soft micro fibre cloth can also be used as the painting requires soft treatment and not harsh. The back of the painting could be cleaned with soft brushes.

5. Expert call: If you find any insect infestation, any yellowing or damage on the painting, wrap it in a bubble wrap and take it to an expert/art restorer for examination or restoration, as the case may be.

Decorating a room for your Child

Decorating your kid's room can be fun and exciting. You can totally indulge your inner child with the colours and prints you get to play around with. However, it's important to remember that the occupant is going to be a kid. As interior designer Renu Chainani says, "It can also be a very challenging task. Since kids are in their growing years, they need all the space in the world to run, jump and play without hurting themselves."

While you focus on making the room look all cute and beautiful, you also need to pay absolute attention to safety. Actor Sudhanshu Pandey — father of two young and boisterous sons — Nirvaan and Vivaan says, "Kids will be kids. No matter how much you try to protect them, they will run, jump, fall and hurt themselves. As parents it is our responsibility to ensure that there is nothing in the room that can cause them bodily harm."

So what are the most important factors that you need to heed while planning out your

kids room? "Safety, space and storage," says Renu adding, "There's just no excuse where safety is concerned. No sharp corners and edges." That was precisely what TV actress Gouri Tonk did in her daughter Pari's room. "She's a growing girl and would often have her friends over. Hence, we decided to give her a dedicated room. Safety was our first concern. All her furniture— bed, study table, cupboard, etc have rounded corners and the walls, soft, rounded edges. The floor has skid proof tiles," she says. Still on the point of safety, electrical fittings are an extremely important consideration. "Keep plug points at safe heights. Also, ensure that you go in for safety sockets so kids cannot push their pencils or toys into them," Renu warns. Another important factor, as Sudhanshu points out, is window heights. "Windows in kids rooms should either be placed relatively higher or should be well shielded with a properly fitted grill," he says. Space is another big consideration. "In

cities, space is the biggest constraint. An ideal way to ensure space in a kid's room is to opt for compact beds— pull-out, bunk or wall-mounted. This way, during the day time, there is plenty of space for them to play," says Renu. That's exactly what Gouri and Sudhanshu have done. While Gouri got the room equipped with a sliding bed, Sudhanshu opted for bunk beds for his boys. "Personally, this is the best feature of their room. The boys have so much fun in them," says the actor. Last, but definitely no less in importance, is the consideration for storage space. Says Renu, "For kids no space, however big it is, seems enough." And Gouri couldn't disagree. "We have made a lot of provision for space. There are plenty of drawers in Pari's room that are placed at her level," she says. There's pride in her voice when Gauri talks about her daughter's room. So we can't resist but ask her what part of the room she personally loves. "There's a small cabinet over her study table filled with all her Barbie dolls and one Barbie Prince dolls. It's my favourite because even I love dolls," she says laughing. Ezee has the prestigious Woolmark certification for adhering to international standards of being safe on woollens.



No law bars having chicken on Ganga: Suprme Court judge on Varanasi Iftar row

Justice Ujjal Bhuyan expressed concern over what he described as the shrinking space for dissent in India, saying citizens were increasingly facing criminal action for exercising their constitutional right to protest.

Delhi. (Agency)
Supreme Court Justice Ujjal Bhuyan on Saturday delivered a sharp critique of the judiciary's handling of cases involving dissent, questioning arrests over harmless acts such as eating chicken biryani on the Ganga and judicial resistance to protests over international issues like Gaza. Addressing an event at the National Law Institute University (NLIU) in Bhopal, Justice Bhuyan said courts must guard constitutional freedoms and warned that public space for dissent in India

was shrinking. Using the recent arrest of 14 Muslim men who were jailed for nearly three months after consuming chicken biryani while breaking their Ramzan fast on a boat in the Ganga, Justice Bhuyan questioned the basis of criminal action. "I am sure consuming chicken biryani is not an offence. There is no law prohibiting consumption of chicken over the Ganga river; they were arrested for that very reason and they had to remain in jail for three months. Can people be arrested and denied bail for 3 months for such an



activity, I ask myself! Citizens are watching, people are watching," he said. Justice Bhuyan said the episode illustrated a broader pattern in which citizens were increasingly being

subjected to criminal proceedings for exercising fundamental freedoms. "It will not be an exaggeration to say that public space for expressing divergent opinion is shrinking in India. Right to express one's views and right to demonstrate peacefully are fundamental freedoms of citizens. Debate and dissent are the essence of democracy. Unfortunately, even formal activities are criminalised," legal news outlet Bar and Bench quoted Justice Buyan as saying. The Supreme Court judge also questioned judicial attitudes towards protests over global

humanitarian issues, recalling a July 2025 Bombay High Court order rejecting a plea by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) to hold a demonstration at Mumbai's Azad Maidan against the alleged genocide in Gaza. "I found it very amusing that when in Bombay, Shivaji Park, when a group of people wanted to demonstrate in solidarity with the people of Gaza, the permission was not granted by the government. So, they moved a writ in the Bombay High Court; the learned judge said 'don't you have any issues.

MCD to revamp 'zero waste' push after compliance failure

New Delhi. (Agency)
The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is set to overhaul its community waste management programme. This comes after a third-party assessment found that 150 among the 680 colonies that were earlier declared as "zero waste colonies" had become non-compliant due to inadequate



monitoring. The MCD has proposed replacing the existing Sahbhagita Scheme with a revised Zero Waste Colony Initiative. The proposal said that the existing Sahbhagita Scheme, launched in 2022, was introduced to encourage community participation in solid waste management. To qualify for it, colonies had to ensure 100% waste segregation. Only 680 colonies were brought under the scheme. Now, the civic body hopes that the revamped scheme will give better results.

Metro services resume, crowds swamp stations

New Delhi. (Agency)
Massive crowds gathered at metro stations around Jantar Mantar on Saturday evening after the Delhi Metro resumed services at 18 stations that had remained shut for the past three to four days due to the Cockroach Janta Party protest. The services resumed hours after Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan submitted his resignation. Soon after, the CJP announced the withdrawal of its nationwide agitation, claiming the government had accepted all its demands. As protesters and commuters returned, long queues were witnessed outside several metro stations, including New Delhi Railway Station, where passengers had faced major inconvenience over the past three days. The closure of 18 metro stations, including New Delhi, Rajiv Chowk, Patel Chowk, Central Secretariat and Mandi House, had disrupted travel across the capital, particularly for railway passengers. Many were forced to take autos or e-rickshaws from Chawri Bazaar, the nearest operational station, paying higher fares. "We had to pay Rs 50 per person for a two-to-three-km e-rickshaw ride instead of the usual Rs 10," said commuter Jiten. Nisha, said she opted for a bus instead of an auto as it was more affordable. With metro services restored and the protest withdrawn, commuters expressed hope that normal public transport operations across the national capital would resume from Sunday.

New Delhi civic body's clean-up op underway, to clear 60 metric tonnes of waste

New Delhi. (Agency)
The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) continued a large clean-up operation in and around Jantar Mantar on Sunday, a day after the Cockroach Janta Party ended its protest. Officials said nearly 60 metric tonnes of waste is expected to be cleared from the site and nearby roads. Sanitation workers, heavy vehicles and mechanised cleaning equipment were deployed through the night after protesters dispersed on Saturday following the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the NEET paper leak controversy. NDMC officials said civic body staff remained on the ground to oversee the

operation. Sanitation teams were deployed at Tolstoy Marg, Jantar Mantar, Sansad Marg, Jai Singh Marg and the Connaught Place area. According to the NDMC, 75



sanitation workers were deployed overnight, while another 35 have been on duty since Sunday morning. Officials said around 40 metric tonnes of waste had been removed till Saturday night, and another 12 metric tonnes had been cleared since Sunday morning. The civic

body deployed eight auto-tippers, two heavy trucks, one excavator and three pressure jetting machines for the operation. Jetting machines were used to clean roads around Jantar Mantar, while mechanical road sweepers and sanitation teams worked across the area. The clean-up also includes restoration work, with civic teams repainting walls to remove protest slogans, repairing damaged kerbstones and footpaths and washing public spaces. The intensified drive follows a sharp rise in waste generated during the protest. On Friday, the NDMC removed around 27 metric tonnes of mixed waste from the protest site, up from around 15 metric tonnes a day earlier, along with construction debris, stones and other solid waste.

At Jantar Mantar, survival was the protest. A story beyond the memes

New Delhi. (Agency)
Viral videos captured the laughter, meme-oriented placards and Gen Z humour at New Delhi's Jantar Mantar. But beyond the memes were stories of aching bodies sleeping on the pavements of Jantar Mantar, volunteers who worked tirelessly without expecting anything in return, strangers who became family, and young people who chose discomfort over silence. Away from the social media reels was another Jantar Mantar, one that smelled of sweat, damp bedsheets and public toilets, where survival

itself became part of the protest.

The protest site in New Delhi that became synonymous with satire,



memes and Gen Z rebellion demanded something far less glamorous than online virality. It demanded endurance.

For nearly a month, the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), founded by Abhijeet Dipke in Boston, transformed New Delhi's designated protest site into a temporary township. Thousands of students, elderly and young volunteers occupied the stretch of Jantar Mantar, demanding Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation over the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak and other alleged irregularities in the education system. Their days revolved around speeches and slogans. Their nights revolved around finding enough space on the pavement to sleep.

Assess risks before accepting Black Sea jobs: Govt after deaths of 5 Indians

India has warned citizens to assess security risks before taking maritime jobs in the Black Sea region. The advisory follows deadly attacks on commercial vessels and underscores the conflict's growing threat to seafarers.

New Delhi. (Agency)
India on Sunday urged its citizens to carefully assess the security situation before taking up jobs on commercial vessels operating in or transiting conflict-affected maritime zones, particularly the Black Sea, as four Indian nationals were aboard a merchant vessel struck at Ukraine's Port of Odesa a day earlier. In an advisory, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Indian nationals should carefully weigh the prevailing security risks before accepting employment on commercial ships operating in the region, where missile and drone attacks have intensified in recent months. The advisory came days after five Indian seafarers were killed in

attacks on two commercial vessels in the Black Sea region within a week, underscoring the growing risks to merchant shipping amid the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. "Indian nationals intending to undertake employment on commercial vessels operating in or transiting the conflict-affected region are advised to carefully assess the prevailing security risks before accepting such assignments," the MEA said. It noted that the security situation in and around the Black Sea and adjoining maritime areas "remains highly volatile due to the ongoing conflict" and warned that commercial vessels operating in or

transiting these waters face "significant security risks, including missile and drone attacks." "Since April, there has been an increase in the number of such incidents on commercial vessels, which has also resulted in the tragic loss of five Indian lives," the ministry said.



The advisory was issued as the Indian Embassy in Ukraine confirmed that a merchant vessel carrying four Indian nationals was struck at the Port of Odesa on Saturday. "Embassy of India in Ukraine is closely monitoring the situation following the incident involving MV AGN Ragnar, which was struck at the Port of Odesa on July 25," the mission said in a statement. According to the embassy, two of the four Indian crew members have been confirmed safe, while information regarding the other two is still awaited. Search and rescue operations are underway, and the embassy said it is in constant touch with the concerned authorities to ascertain their status and extend.

Market valuation of 9 of top-10 firms erode by Rs 2.74 tn

New Delhi. (Agency)

The combined market valuation of nine of the top-10 most valued firms eroded by Rs 2.74 trillion last week.

HDFC Bank took the biggest hit. The market valuation of HDFC Bank tumbled Rs 1,18,383.91 crore to reach Rs 11,43,985.90 crore.

From the top-10 pack, Hindustan Unilever emerged as the only winner while those facing erosion from their valuation were Reliance Industries, Bharti Airtel, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Bajaj Finance, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) and Larsen & Toubro. The valuation of State Bank of India tanked Rs 26,814.94 crore to Rs 9,36,953.84 crore and that of ICICI Bank diminished by Rs 6,223.84 crore to Rs 10,28,217.93 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of LIC declined by Rs 15,116.74 crore to Rs 5,33,007.56 crore and that of Bajaj Finance dropped by Rs 26,802.74 crore to Rs 6,30,471.54 crore. Reliance Industries' valuation eroded by Rs 65,429.82 crore to Rs 17,29,661.44 crore while Bharti Airtel's valuation edged lower by Rs 6,021.64 crore to Rs 11,85,046.13 crore. TCS dipped Rs 5,191.95 crore to Rs 8,15,480.75 crore. The mcap of Larsen & Toubro faced an erosion of Rs 4,092.79 crore to Rs 5,20,747.89 crore while Hindustan Unilever climbed Rs 152.73 crore to Rs 5,03,928.59 crore. In a rank-wise analysis, Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm, followed by Bharti Airtel, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, TCS, Bajaj Finance, LIC, Larsen & Toubro and Hindustan Unilever. In a week, the BSE benchmark Sensex tanked 2,091.68 points, or 2.67 per cent, and the NSE Nifty declined 566.85 points, or 2.32 per cent.

Hindustan Zinc plans 5,000 crore capex for FY27, 80% for current projects

New Delhi. (Agency)

Vedanta group firm Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL) is likely to spend about \$500-600 million (around ₹5,000 crore) in the current financial year, with most of the capital earmarked for projects already underway and a smaller portion reserved for new initiatives, its Chief Executive Officer Arun Misra said.

In an interview to , Misra said roughly 80 per cent of the guidance is intended for projects that are currently running, while about 20 per cent will be allocated to new projects that the firm plans to announce soon.

He added that the group's total project capacity is about 1 million tonnes, of which 250,000 tonnes (25 per cent) has already been approved with a capex of ₹12,000 crore covering mining and mineralisation. Orders for mining have been placed and construction of the smelter has started, but milling and concentrate-related orders are yet to be finalised, the CEO said.

The remaining capacity will require investment in a similar proportion to reach 650 KT, with the expenditure expected to be phased over the next 4-5 years. That translates to an average annual capex of about ₹7,000-8,000 crore, he said, noting that in the current year only 15-20 per cent of that multi-year outlay will be reflected in actual cash outflows. He did not disclose any further timeline or detailed financial break-up for the new projects.

Punjab National Bank's profit to cross 20,000 cr mark in FY27: MD Chandra

New Delhi. (Agency)

Enthusied by the consistent financial performance of the last four quarters, Punjab National Bank MD and CEO Ashok Chandra exuded confidence that the bank's profit would surpass the Rs 20,000 crore mark this financial year. The public sector lender had earned a net profit of Rs 16,904 crore in the previous financial year. From the second quarter of last financial year, the bank has been maintaining a net profit of over Rs 5,000 crore every quarter, Chandra told PTI in an interview.

"We have maintained the same trend in the first quarter (ongoing financial year). And I am hopeful and confident that with the profitable growth, which is happening in the system....we will be surpassing the Rs 5,000 crore number and every quarter will be reaching a new height," he said. Asked if the bank can cross the Rs 20,000 crore mark during FY27 at this run rate, he said, "If I am telling that every quarter Rs 5,000 crore of net profit will happen, I think that goes to that figure which you are talking about".

States to remain net gainers despite GST compensation cess withdrawal: SBI Report

CHENNAI. (Agency)

States are likely to remain the biggest beneficiaries of the revamped Goods and Services Tax (GST) framework despite concerns over the discontinuation of the GST compensation cess, according to a report by SBI Research. The report estimates that states will collectively receive nearly ₹1.43 lakh crore more in FY27 than they did in FY26, arguing that the gains from higher GST collections and revenue devolution far outweigh any losses arising from the end of the compensation mechanism. The report comes amid concerns raised by some economists that replacing the GST compensation cess with an Additional Excise Duty

(AED) on products such as tobacco and pan masala would reduce states' revenues, as the proceeds from AED are shared under the Finance Commission's devolution formula rather than being transferred entirely to states.

Rejecting this view, SBI Research said such assessments capture only one aspect of the new tax structure while ignoring the broader increase in the overall revenue pool. It estimates that the combined share of states from GST and Basic Excise Duty will rise to nearly ₹19.1 lakh crore in FY27 from around ₹17.7 lakh crore in FY26, resulting in a net gain of approximately ₹1.43 lakh crore. The report acknowledges that states may forgo around ₹21,000 crore

because the newly introduced Additional Excise Duty is no longer transferred entirely to them, unlike the earlier compensation cess. However, it argues that this loss is relatively insignificant when viewed against the substantial increase in overall GST revenues and the enlarged tax base. According to the report, the revised tax structure has also increased states' share from higher GST rates on demerit goods. With the GST rate on specified products such as tobacco and pan masala increased from 28% to 40%, states receive a larger portion of the additional tax collected, strengthening their revenue position. SBI Research also underlined that the GST compensation cess was introduced as a temporary transitional

arrangement to protect states against revenue losses following the rollout of GST and was never intended to be a permanent source of income. It noted that state GST revenues have grown significantly faster in the post-GST era than the taxes they replaced, indicating that states have become increasingly self-sustaining under the new tax regime.

Looking ahead, the report expects GST collections to recover after the moderation seen following the September 2025 rate rationalisation. It projects annual GST revenue growth of 8-9% in FY27, saying the recent slowdown was a temporary consequence of tax restructuring rather than a sign of weakening revenue trends.

These stocks have earned confidence of FIIs: Exposure raised in Q1; do you have any?

Kolkata. (Agency)

FII buying is often considered an indication of rising overall investor confidence in a stock. Investors always closely monitor the activities of foreign institutional investors in the Indian stock market. Large foreign investor purchases are often considered a sign of market confidence. Shareholding data for the Q1FY27 period shows that FIIs have increased their stakes in select undervalued stocks. Significantly, these companies are trading at attractive valuations relative to their sectors and remain a favorite of foreign investors due to their strong fundamentals.

Coal India in focus

Coal India tops this list of stock where FIIs raised their exposure. According to an Equitymaster



report, FII holdings increased from 8.38% to 10.37% during the June 2026 quarter. The report also states that the company is expected to benefit in the future from the central government's announcement of a Rs 375 billion

incentive for coal gasification projects.

Aditya Birla Capital

Market price (July 24): Rs 394.00, up 0.45% Aditya Birla Capital is in the second place of this list. FII holdings increased from 7.01% to 7.94% in the June quarter. This means foreign investors purchased an additional 0.93%.

Himadri Specialty Chemical

Market price (July 24): Rs 787.90, up 1.32% Foreign investors have also seen increased interest in Himadri Specialty Chemicals, a specialty chemicals company. FII holdings increased from 5.98% to 6.80% in the June 2026 quarter. The company is rapidly expanding its business in lithium-ion battery-related materials.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Car maker leader Maruti Suzuki India is aiming to sell around 900,000 CNG vehicles, a nearly 30 per cent increase in the ongoing fiscal, with demand for such automobiles rising in the wake of the West Asia war, according to a senior company official.

The demand for CNG vehicles is no longer restricted to small cars and vans, but it has also seen a rise even in the company's SUVs, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd (MSIL) Senior Executive Officer, Marketing & Sales, Partho Banerjee told . "In the first quarter of this fiscal, we have sold 220,000 units of CNG vehicles across models, which is a growth of 58 per cent over the same quarter last year," he said when asked about the traction of CNG vehicles currently in the market. Banerjee said due to the fuel price hike after the West Asia war, demand for CNG vehicles has shot up.

Asked what the target for CNG vehicle sales this fiscal is, he said, considering how CNG vehicle sales have grown in the first quarter, for the full year we are targeting around 900,000 units.

Maruti Suzuki India currently sells 15 CNG models, including light commercial vehicles, in the domestic market. In fiscal 2025-26, it sold more than 700,000 units of CNG vehicles.

The demand for CNG vehicles is no longer restricted to small cars, vans, and the utility vehicle Ertiga. There is also a strong demand for CNG in SUVs as well, he noted. "In case of our SUV Victoris more than 50 per cent of sales are coming from the variant with 'underbody CNG' (tank)," Banerjee said, adding that considering that trend, the company has also introduced the same 'underbody CNG' in the newly launched fresh version of compact SUV Brezza.

The company has equipped the new 'Brezza S-CNG' with the idle start-stop technology along with the new 6-speed manual transmission to deliver better fuel efficiency of 26.9 km/kg.

Last month, the company had a 42 per cent contribution from CNG vehicles to its total sales.

Costa Coffee store count shrinks to 198 in India in FY26, revenue up 7%

New Delhi. (Agency)

British coffee chain brand Costa Coffee's store count in India shrunk to 198 outlets in FY26 from 220 a year ago, marking a first decline in over five years in a key market for the company, according to the latest annual report of its exclusive franchise partner Devyani International Ltd (DIL). Costa Coffee is owned by global beverage major The Coca-Cola Company. However, Costa Coffee's revenue was up 7 per cent year-on-year to ₹212.5 crore in FY26. In FY25, sales/revenue from operations increased 30.76 per cent to ₹198.5 crore, driven by store expansion, with the network growing to 220 outlets from 179.

FY26 revenue saw growth despite the store count falling, underlining the shift from network-led growth to higher revenue per outlet.

The net reduction of 22 cafes marks



a break from Costa Coffee's expansion run since FY21, when it operated just 44 outlets in the country. The store count had risen

every year since then -- to 55 in FY22, 112 in FY23, 179 in FY24 and 220 in FY25 -- before contracting in FY26. Though the annual report did not explain the store reduction, DIL said it pursued "a more disciplined and selective approach to expansion" across its portfolio. Costa Coffee's Global CEO Philippe Schaille had in April 2025 said India is among the top 20 markets for Costa Coffee and expected it to be among the top five markets in the coming years. DIL, in its annual report, said they are "continuing to strengthen Costa Coffee". It further said alongside DIL's other Yum! Brands (Pizza Hut and KFC), Costa Coffee acts as a primary growth anchor for the company.

ABDL targets mid-teen growth in FY27, aims to cross 600 crore Ebitda

The Chhabria family-promoted firm, which is expanding its international footprint, expects to increase presence to 60-70 nations over the next three years, driven by premium and mass-premium portfolio

New Delhi. (Agency)

Alco-beverage firm ABDL expects to deliver mid-teen growth in revenue and volume in FY27, driven by premiumisation, exports and capacity expansion, despite uncertainties arising from geopolitical tensions and supply chain disruptions, Managing Director Amar Sinha said. Allied Blenders and Distillers Ltd (ABDL),

which owns brands such as Officer's Choice and ICONiQ, is pursuing a three-year transformation strategy focused on premiumisation, strengthening margins and expanding its international footprint, he said.

The Chhabria family-promoted firm, which is expanding its international footprint, expects to increase presence to 60-70 countries over the next three years, driven by premium and mass-premium portfolio.

"We would have a volume and top-line growth of mid-teens in FY27. Ebitda margins should remain stable and comparable to FY26," Sinha told PTI in an interaction.

The company said its premiumisation drive remains the key growth lever going forward as it reported a 5.8 per cent year-on-year rise in income from operations to ₹984 crore in the June quarter on

volume of 9 million cases (9 litres each), up 6.2 per cent.

"I genuinely believe that now ABDL is in a three-year transformation journey," Sinha said. According to Sinha, prestige-and-above (P&A) brands accounted for 48.2 per cent of



volumes and 59.3 per cent of value sales in June quarter FY27 and ABDL aims to take this higher by further increasing its share in the total basket.

"Our vision is to take P&A volume saliency above 50 per cent and P&A value saliency to 60-65 per cent," he said, adding that premiumisation will continue to be a key driver of growth and profitability for the company. According to Sinha, the company has already reached a level where its ICONiQ White is now selling over one million cases every month. On the outlook for FY27, Sinha flagged continuing volatility from the geopolitical crisis but said the company remained "cautiously optimistic". Ebitda margins are expected to stay stable compared with FY26. He said soft grain ENA and extra neutral alcohol (ENA) prices had helped cushion the impact of the crisis in the first quarter and were likely to continue through the year, while packaging costs for glass bottles and PET should also start softening.

Man gets ten years' rigorous imprisonment for raping mentally-challenged woman

BERHAMPUR.(Agency)

A local court in Rayagada on Saturday sentenced a 29-year-old man to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment for raping and attempting to murder a mentally-challenged woman in 2024.

The convict is Babula Kulishika. Additional district and sessions judge Alpana Swain also imposed fine of Rs 4 lakh on Kulishika, further directing him to undergo additional imprisonment as per law if he failed to pay the sum.

The verdict was pronounced basing on the evidences, witness testimonies and arguments presented by both the prosecution and the defence.

According to the prosecution, the incident had taken place on October 31, 2024, under the jurisdiction of Chandili police station in Rayagada district. Kulishika had abducted the survivor, then aged around 34 years, from the residence of her brother following which he sexually assaulted her and later attempted to kill her to destroy evidence.

Later, basing on the complaint of her relative, police registered a case on November 5, 2024, and began investigation. Kulishika was subsequently arrested.

TEDx and LinkedIn to gurukuls, social media: Meet Ram temple trust's new 'guidance' panel

Lucknow.(Agency)

Amid the ongoing donation controversy, the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust has turned to old and trusted names for the nine-member 'Dharmik Committee' set up to "guide" religious and spiritual activities at the Ayodhya Ram temple.

The nine represent both the traditional and contemporary – from a saint who delivers TEDx talks and maintains a LinkedIn presence, to representatives of prominent ashrams and mutts in Ayodhya, to Vedic scholars, a yoga master and successors to leaders of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, as well as those who have been associated with the trust since its inception.Of the nine members announced by the trust at its July 22 meeting, five are already trustees, trust treasurer Swami Govind Dev Giri is the panel president, and one of the members is his close aide.

The trust hopes the move will help reinforce public confidence, particularly among Ayodhya's saints and residents, that rituals and spiritual traditions remain central to the temple's functioning, even as it handles the donation row.

Woman in Delhi-bound train held with gold bars worth over Rs 7 crore

Lucknow.(Agency)

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has arrested a woman travelling in a Delhi-bound train from West Bengal with 4.98 kg gold bars allegedly smuggled from Bangladesh worth around Rs 7.11 crore. She was arrested at Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Junction in Uttar Pradesh's Chandauli district.

A senior DRI official told The Indian Express that they had got intelligence about a woman carrying smuggled gold in big quantity travelling from Cooch Behar in West Bengal to New Delhi on the Brahmaputra Express on Wednesday. The DRI team conducted a search and she was found in an AC coach as the train reached Chandauli, the official said.A woman member of the team conducted a search and found 13 gold bars weighing about 1.5 kg concealed in a cloth waist belt. A subsequent search of her handbag recovered 29 more gold bars weighing about 3.48 kg.

Tasmac staff face suspension, dismissal for selling liquor above MRP

CHENNAI.(Agency)

Tasmac staff will now face suspension, fines and even dismissal according to a new disciplinary framework to eliminate the practice of selling liquor above the maximum retail price (MRP). Following a Madras High Court order on June 12, the corporation has issued a circular detailing a progression of penalties that eventually leads to the permanent termination of the erring staff.

According to the revised guidelines issued on July 24, an initial instance of overcharging will result in a one-month temporary suspension. Upon returning to duty, the employee is required to provide a formal undertaking and will be transferred to a different shop within the same district. A subsequent violation carries a harsher penalty of three months' suspension and will be transferred to a retail outlet in a different



district, where they must serve for a minimum of three months.

If a staff member is caught for a further violation, they will face immediate suspension followed by the framing of charges, and if these charges are proven through an inquiry, the employee will be permanently dismissed from service. No salary or consolidated pay will be provided

during any period of suspension.

The corporation has also issued fresh guidelines for penalties for overcharging. A fine of Rs 1,000 per bottle (up to a maximum of Rs 5,000) is mandated if the overcharging margin is between Rs 1 and Rs 9. For any overcharging of Rs 10 or more, a flat fine of Rs 10,000 will be imposed.

Liability for these fines is shared between the shop personnel to ensure mutual accountability. The salesman involved is responsible for 60% of the fine, while the shop supervisor must pay the remaining 40%. In instances where the supervisor was not present during the violation, the salesman is liable for the full 100% of the penalty amount.To ensure these rules are strictly followed, district managers have been instructed to maintain a dedicated register to track violations by a shop. Furthermore, all disciplinary actions and penalties must be recorded.

The first woman then, the only woman still: Sindhu's 27-year railway journey

PALAKKAD.(Agency)

Every day, millions of passengers board trains expecting railway stations to be clean, food sold on platforms to be safe and public spaces to meet basic standards of hygiene. Behind that expectation is an often invisible workforce responsible for sanitation and public health across the railway network.

For nearly three decades, one of Southern Railway's most demanding public health assignments was carried out by a woman who entered the profession when it was considered unsuitable for women. Today, as K G Sindhu leaves Shoranur for Chennai following her promotion as assistant health officer, she remains the only woman holding that position across Southern Railway's six divisions – Palakkad, Chennai, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, Salem and

Thiruvanthapuram.

Sindhu's journey mirrors not only the evolution of railway sanitation but also the gradual entry of women into a profession



that was once almost exclusively male.

When Sindhu appeared for her recruitment interview before senior Southern Railway officials in Bengaluru in February 1999, one

question stood out. "They asked me whether I was afraid of becoming the first woman to work as a health inspector. The post had never been held by a woman before," she recalls.

The concern reflected the nature of the job at the time. Health inspectors were expected to spend long hours in the field, inspecting stations, railway colonies, yards and tracks, supervising sanitation workers and ensuring compliance with public health standards.

The work demanded extensive travel, irregular hours and constant outdoor inspections – conditions widely perceived as unsuitable for women. "I simply told them, 'Let's see, sir.' My only ambition was to join the Railways," she says.

That appointment made her Southern Railway's first woman health inspector.

Vijayawada shelter restores dreams of rescued children

VIJAYAWADA.(Agency)

A childhood should never begin with learning how to survive. It should be about scraped knees, unfinished homework, birthdays and the comfort of knowing someone is waiting at home. Yet for many children, abandonment, abuse, addiction, child labour and fractured families cut childhood short.

For more than three decades, Navajeewan Bala Bhavan (NJB) in Vijayawada has worked with children carrying those burdens. Some are rescued from railway stations, others from the streets, and many from homes where they no longer feel safe. Since its inception in 1989, the organisation has reunited more than 30,000 children with their families. Its impact, however, is best



seen in the lives rebuilt.

"They come frightened, angry or emotionally withdrawn. We don't begin by asking questions. We first make them feel safe," counsellor Prasanna Kumari said. "Only after they know someone is willing to listen do they begin opening up. Our priority is always the child's best interest, and wherever possible, restoring them to their family because no institution can replace the love and affection of a home."

One of those children was "Ananya" (name changed). She lost both parents while in Class X. "It took me a long time to accept what had happened," she recalled. With counselling, financial support and education from NJBB, she rebuilt her life, first as a duty medical officer and later as an assistant professor. "At that age, what saved me was knowing someone believed I still had a future."For Akshaya, whose mother battled mental illness, support meant refusing to let circumstances dictate her path. She scored 913 out of 1,000 in her vocational intermediate examinations and is now pursuing nursing. Hemalatha, once a flower seller forced out of school, returned to the classroom and went on to excel in academics, chess, drawing and cultural competitions.

Armed gang uproots SBI ATM in Andhra Pradesh's Madanapalle, escapes with Rs 13.5 lakh cash

TIRUPATI.(Agency)

A four-member gang allegedly uprooted and stole an SBI ATM containing Rs 13.5 lakh from the CTM Road Industrial Estate in Madanapalle town of Annamayya district early on Saturday. Police have launched a massive manhunt and formed five special teams to trace the accused. Police said the gang arrived in a Bolero pickup vehicle, uprooted the ATM and loaded it into the vehicle.

When local residents tried to stop them, the robbers allegedly threatened them with firearms before fleeing, sparking panic in area.

During the search operation, police

recovered the dismantled ATM near Motla Cheruvu between Vayalpadu and Nimmanapalle. Investigators suspect the gang broke open the machine at the secluded location and escaped with the cash. Forensic experts collected evidence, while police began examining CCTV footage.

SBI ATM Administrative Officer Murali Krishna confirmed that the ATM contained Rs 13.5 lakh at the time of the theft.Speaking to TNIE, Annamayya SP Dheeraj Kunubilli, said, "This is the work of a gang from Haryana.



involving the same modus operandi. If not Haryana, there is a high possibility they are from neighbouring Uttar Pradesh."

A similar incident occurred last month in Sri Sathya Sai and Anantapur districts, "They avoided highway toll plazas and travelled through interior village roads, making it difficult to trace them through CCTV cameras. Our teams tracked their movement until around 6 am, after which they appear to have crossed the State border. Preliminary information suggests they moved towards Tamil Nadu and may later proceed to Karnataka or re-enter Andhra Pradesh before heading north," he said."We suspect a local person guided the gang, as it would have been difficult for outsiders to navigate the interior roads and identify the secluded spot where the ATM was dismantled without local support.

Only 120 PGs registered in Chandigarh despite thousands operating across city

Chandigarh.(Agency)

Despite the rapid growth of paying guest (PG) accommodations in Chandigarh, only 120 establishments have been registered with the UT Administration, exposing poor compliance with mandatory norms and raising serious concerns over safety and regulation in a city where thousands of PGs continue to operate.

The issue gains significance as the 2020 Sector 32 fire, which claimed three lives in an unauthorised PG, had prompted the administration to launch a citywide registration and inspection drive. While the exercise initially gained momentum, enforcement gradually faded, leaving the majority of PGs outside the regulatory framework.

PG accommodations are concentrated in Sectors 15, 20, 21, 22, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 44, 45 and Manimajra, catering largely to students and working professionals. Yet, despite their proliferation, only 120 have completed the registration process.

Deputy Commissioner Nishant Yadav said he would seek a report from the concerned officials on why registration numbers remain so low.

Baljinder Singh Bittu, chairman of the Federation of Sector Welfare Associations Chandigarh (FOSWAC), blamed weak enforcement."Thousands of PGs are operating openly across the city. They function right under the administration's nose, yet there is hardly any effective checking or monitoring.

Himachal's first island tourism project at Gobind Sagar Lake to be ready by Sept-end

Shimla.(Agency)

Known for picturesque mountains and captivating hill stations that attract tourists from across the country and abroad, Himachal Pradesh is diversifying its tourism sector with the first-ever island tourism project at the Gobind Sagar Lake in Bilaspur district, which is likely to be operational by the end of September after a delay of almost one year. Officials familiar with the project said the three islands – Jeori Pattan, Dhararsani and Bholu – have been envisaged to be developed in line with island destinations in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, while ensuring environmentally sustainable infrastructure through portable, non-permanent structures.

They said tenders for developing tourism infrastructure on three islands were awarded last year, but work has so far begun at only two locations—at Jeori Pattan near the Mandi-Bharari bridge on the Kiratpur-Manali National Highway and another at Dhararsani at Jagatkhana—while development of the third site at Bholu is expected to begin once pending logistical issues are resolved. Jeori Pattan is nearly 130 km from Chandigarh and well connected by road. From September 15 to January, Dhararsani.

NEWS BOX

England gymnast takes scary fall in Commonwealth Games, rushed to hospital

New Delhi. (Agency)

England gymnast Gabriel Langton was rushed to hospital after taking a frightening fall during the men's team gymnastics final at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow on Friday.

Langton lost his grip on the horizontal bar during England's final rotation and crashed headfirst onto the floor, bringing the competition to a lengthy halt as medical personnel rushed to his aid. The 19-year-old was left unable to get up on his own and received treatment on the competition floor for several minutes before being placed on a stretcher. He was fitted with head and neck support before being carried out of the arena and taken to hospital for further assessment. The sight left the arena stunned, with several



gymnasts visibly shaken as medical staff attended to Langton. The competition was paused while he was treated, with the focus shifting entirely away from the medals at stake.

Langton had been drafted into England's squad as a replacement for injured six-time Olympic medallist Max Whitlock. His fall came in the final rotation of a competition in which England were chasing a fourth consecutive Commonwealth Games men's team title. The team had to put the frightening incident behind them and complete the competition without their teammate.

England eventually settled for silver behind Canada, while Australia took bronze. But there was little appetite for celebration as the English gymnasts waited for news about Langton.

"From what we've heard, he's doing OK," his teammate Luke Whitthouse said after the competition. "Gymnastics is such a dangerous sport and things like this remind us of that. It's one of those things you have to put out of your mind."

I am Indian football, and I will tell you why I am not at the FIFA World Cup

Glasgow, (Agency)

Kashmir, 2026. It is 3 PM in the afternoon. School is over. This is the most exciting part of the day for me. I am finally free to go out of the classroom, onto the open grass, and get a good kickabout while watching the meadows. I play through the sunset while gazing at the gorgeous, snow-capped Himalayas. I breathe in the fresh air as I listen to Jhelum crashing onto the riverbank. When I am in the middle of the pitch, I have no worries. I have been at the centre of some big discussions in the recent past, with many suggesting that I am at an historic low. They say that the state of my



being is so bad that it might take years to undo the damage done. But I'll tell you what, it does not feel that way when I am in the middle of the pitch. Today, I am with Mehnoor Shakeel, a 17-year-old promising forward from Kashmir. Mehnoor is one of the brightest sparks of the new generation of footballers coming out of the valley. These young girls want to play, and they are hungry for success. Mehnoor plays for DownTown Heroes FC. Last year, in a U19 tournament held by the Reliance Foundation Youth Sports, she scored 11 goals in a single game. It was not a fluke. She trains day in, day out, hoping that she can go out to the mainland to become a star for the Indian national team one day. If Mehnoor's dream is to play for India, then sooner or later she will have to leave these mountains. That is where my worry begins. I am told that things are not better in the mainlands either.

India outclass Pakistan 3-1 to win FIH Youth Hockey5s Asian Championship

India's sub-junior men's team produced a disciplined performance to beat arch-rivals Pakistan 3-1 in the final and win the FIH Youth Hockey5s Asian Championship on Saturday. The victory capped an unbeaten campaign for India, who also finished on top of the Elite Pool standings.

New Delhi. (Agency)

"India's sub-junior men's team defeated arch-rivals Pakistan 3-1 in the final to win the FIH Youth Hockey5s Asian Championship on Saturday, completing an unbeaten campaign and securing a place at the inaugural FIH Youth Hockey5s World Cup. Goals from Romit Pal (5'), captain Ketan Kushwaha (12') and Shahrukh Ali (13') helped India clinch the title, while Muhammad Usman (16') scored Pakistan's lone goal. The victory also saw India finish on top of the Elite

Pool standings. India made a bright start to the summit clash, controlling possession with quick passing and disciplined positioning. The early pressure paid off in the fifth minute when Romit Pal broke the deadlock, giving India a deserved lead.

Pakistan found it difficult to break through India's organised defence in the first half as the Indian side carried its one-goal advantage into the break. India took firm control of the contest early in the second half. Captain Ketan Kushwaha doubled the lead in the 12th minute before Shahrukh Ali struck a minute later to put India 3-0 ahead and leave Pakistan with a mountain to climb.

Muhammad Usman reduced the deficit in the 16th minute, but India remained compact at the back and comfortably saw out the remaining minutes to complete a 3-1 victory and lift the continental title. The finalists, India and Pakistan,

also qualified for the inaugural FIH Youth Hockey5s World Cup by virtue of reaching the gold medal match. India also returned with a medal in the women's competition. The sub-junior



women's team settled for silver after a hard-fought defeat to China in the final, ensuring both Indian teams finished the tournament on the podium.

Following the campaign, Hockey India announced cash rewards for both squads. Each player of the gold medal-winning men's team will receive Rs 2

lakh, while every member of the support staff will be awarded Rs 1 lakh. Each player of the silver medal-winning women's team will receive Rs 1 lakh, with members of the support staff receiving Rs 50,000 each. Congratulating the players, Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey said the performances of both teams reflected the progress being made in the country's age-group programme.

"Our sub-junior men's and women's teams have made the nation proud with their outstanding performances at the FIH Youth Hockey5s Asian Championship. The men's victory over Pakistan in the final and the women's silver medal are a reflection of the hard work put in by the players, coaches and support staff. These results underline the depth of talent in Indian hockey, and we are confident these youngsters will continue to make the country proud."

Jhandu was once a taunt. Now it has a Commonwealth Games medal

CHENNAI. (Agency)

When Jhandu Kumar's name echoed through the arena in Glasgow, it carried a weight far greater than the bronze medal hanging around his neck. For years, "Jhandu" had been a reminder of some of the hardest days of his life. It was a name born from helplessness, poverty and a family's desperate attempt to save their son after polio left him disabled as a child. On Friday, the same name announced India's first medal of the Commonwealth Games. Jhandu, 28, clinched bronze in the men's heavyweight para powerlifting event with a total of 130.9 points, successfully lifting 181kg and 190kg. He then went for 196kg, a bold attempt that could have pushed him higher up the podium, but the lift did

not count. For Jhandu, though, the disappointment barely registered. "The



happiness is overwhelming. I haven't been able to sleep since last night... Even when I lie down, sleep just doesn't come," he told reporters during a Sports Authority of India interaction. The medal was the reward for a journey that began far away from the Commonwealth Games arena, and with

a name he once wished he could leave behind.

JHANDU: THE NAME THAT HURT

Jhandu was five when polio changed his life. He remembers little of the illness itself, but he remembers what came after. "My family says that I got polio when I was 5 years old. I had to sit down and walk... People used to taunt me. They used to say, 'Now that he has become disabled, what will he do?'" His family did everything it could to find treatment for him.

His parents spent whatever they had, hoping to help their son recover. Eventually, even that struggle became attached to his name. Friends of his father mocked the family, saying, "Aap ka beta sab jhandu kar diya, sab paisa khatam kar diya."

Bizarre: Commonwealth Games boxer wins without throwing a single punch

New Delhi. (Agency)

Namibian boxer Tryg again Morning Ndevelo advanced to the men's 60kg round of 16 at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow without throwing a single punch after his opponent Anthony Joseph missed the call time on Sunday. Joseph, representing Trinidad and Tobago, was due to face Ndevelo in the opening round of the competition. However, when the bell rang to start the first round, Joseph was nowhere to be seen. The Trinidad and Tobago boxer eventually arrived at the ring, but officials stopped him from entering because he had reported after the call time. As a result, Ndevelo was awarded a walkover victory and progressed to the round of 16 without contesting a single

punch. The bizarre outcome keeps alive Ndevelo's hopes of winning a Commonwealth Games boxing medal at



his third appearance at the multi-sport event. Elsewhere, Australia's Paul Trainor opened his Commonwealth Games campaign with a controversial stoppage victory over Scotland's Alan Perrie in the men's 80kg category. The referee stopped the contest with 37

seconds remaining in the second round because of an injury sustained by Perrie after Trainor knocked out his opponent's mouthguard. There had already been a brief stoppage earlier in the round to allow the ringside doctor to examine the inside of Perrie's mouth. After another exchange, the referee called off the bout, awarding Trainor the victory. Perrie was furious with the decision and walked straight out of the arena. The home crowd, who had cheered the Scottish boxer and booed Trainor before the contest, reacted with even louder boos when the fight was stopped. "I understand. It's months of sacrifice. It would be bitter for him. I understand that emotions run high," Trainor said after making a winning Commonwealth Games debut.

years after repeated quarter-final and semi-final exits. I've been losing in the semis and quarters over the last four years. I've always said, if anyone's asked, 'This tournament's a curse,' and I've never been able to play well in the event," she said. The triumph carried extra significance as it came in her final year on the junior circuit. "This is my last year (as a junior) and my only chance to win it. It means the world," Anahat added.

The Delhi teenager said she tried not to let the occasion overwhelm her. "I knew if I'm stressed, I play terribly, so I just came out on court and hit my lines well. I wanted to enjoy every moment of getting to play in a world championship final," she said. Anahat, the tournament's top seed, dominated the final against Salem and wrapped up the title in straight games to reach great heights, "Poncha said.



Erling Haaland brings Viking row to Donnarumma's wedding

Erling Haaland brought Norway's iconic Viking Row to Gianluigi Donnarumma's wedding. A viral video shows how Haaland led the guests in the viral celebration that became the defining symbol of his country's historic 2026 FIFA World Cup campaign.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Erling Haaland swapped his goalkeeping boots for a bongo drum as he took over the dance floor at Gianluigi Donnarumma's wedding in Italy, leading guests in a rousing rendition of Norway's viral "Viking Row." The Italian goalkeeper tied the knot with his partner Alessia Elefante in a lavish ceremony in

Fasano, attended by a star-studded guest list that included Pep Guardiola, Paolo Maldini, Sandro Tonali and Nicolo Barella. It was a contrast in fortunes for the left-hander, who hit his maiden T20I hundred at the Harare Sports Club back in 2024. He will be keen to get a few runs under his belt this time around. But it was Haaland who stole the show during the evening reception. Climbing onto the stage, the 26-year-old Norwegian striker grabbed a drum and set a steady rhythm, prompting formally dressed guests, suits, tuxedos and all, to sit down on the floor and lean back and forth in unison to mimic rowing oars. It was a familiar sight by now. During the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the Viking Row had gone from a Norwegian celebration to a global phenomenon, becoming almost inseparable from the country's

remarkable campaign in the United States.

VIKING ROW TAKES OVER THE WORLD

The celebration first became a defining feature of Norway's World Cup journey



during the group stage.

Every time Norway took to the pitch, the Viking Row seemed to follow. Norwegian supporters filled stadiums with rhythmic movement, while the players repeatedly joined in on the pitch after their victories. Thousands of fans

had already taken over Times Square in New York before one of Norway's matches, performing the synchronised rowing motion to the beat of the drum. Soon, it was no longer confined to Norwegian supporters. The celebration became one of the most recognisable supporter traditions of the entire tournament. FIFA described it as one of the World Cup's two most distinctive fan traditions. The players embraced it just as enthusiastically. After Norway secured their place in the knockout rounds, Haaland and his teammates gathered around the drum on the pitch and recreated the celebration alongside their supporters. It became a recurring image of a team that was quickly turning heads on and off the field.

And Norway had plenty to celebrate.

The Viking Row became the soundtrack to the country's best-ever World Cup campaign.

Dhurandhar's

Ayesha Khan

Celebrates Dharmendra Pradhan's Resignation Days After Being Detained At NEET Protest

Dhurandhar actress Ayesha Khan was recently detained by the Mumbai Police for allegedly being present at the NEET paper leak protest. Now, following the latest development, where Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan submitted his resignation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the actress expressed her support for the decision. Taking to social media, Ayesha shared a screenshot of the news and celebrated the big win.

Sharing the update on her Instagram stories, Ayesha Khan wrote, "We are half way there." She also described the resignation as a "good sign." In a long note, she celebrated the big victory and wrote, "Let's now hope that adequate compensation is made to the victim families, though nothing in this world can compensate for one's personal loss." She also called for accountability over the way peaceful protesters were treated. She urged people not to overlook what she described as the unjust FIRs filed against the students, stressing that the issue should not be forgotten.

Ayesha further added, "And let's hope for accountability towards the peaceful protesters. These are the exact young minds all of us were fighting for. Let's not forget that these FIRs are not fair." She concluded her post by writing, "This phase of our country will always be a part of my core memory. So much that we all have learnt in the process. Where there's a will there's a way. Jai Hind."

Have a look: On July 22, Ayesha joined students in Mumbai to show her support for the protest demanding accountability in the NEET paper leak case. During the demonstration, the actress was detained by the Mumbai Police. Later, she shared videos from inside a police van, alleging that she had been taken into custody despite simply "standing" at the protest site. In another clip, she appeared to be forcibly escorted by women police personnel as she repeatedly questioned why she was being detained. Through a series of videos, Ayesha also criticised the Mumbai Police over their handling of the protest.



Dharmendra Pradhan Resigns: Sonakshi Sinha Does Sit-Ups, Apologises To Gen Z, Says 'What A Day'



Sonakshi Sinha could barely contain her excitement after Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan announced his resignation on Saturday. The actor, who had earlier amplified posts about the student protests and Sonam Wangchuk's hunger strike, returned to Instagram with a celebratory video addressed directly to Gen Z.

Rather than posting a formal statement, Sonakshi leaned into humour. She admitted that she had underestimated the younger generation and dramatically apologised by holding her ears and performing sit-ups.

Sonakshi Sinha Salutes Gen Z

In the video, a visibly ecstatic Sonakshi said, "Aap jaante nahi ho, aapne aaj kya kiya hai? I am an artist bro, but Gen Z is the art!!! Main bahot halke mein leti thi Gen Z ko. Chaar ghante kaam karte hain, thak jaate hai, kuch nahi hoga inse."

Translated, the actor said she had previously taken Gen Z lightly, assuming that they tired easily and would not be able to achieve much. Saturday's development, however, appeared to completely change her assessment.

Sonakshi then held her ears and performed sit-ups as a playful apology. "Never again!!! Salute... salute! Look at me now, I want to be you. I want to be Gen Z. What have you all done yaar? Unbelievable, unbelievable!" she added.

Her animated reaction came after weeks of student-led demonstrations demanding accountability over examination-related controversies. Sonakshi had been among the prominent film personalities who publicly acknowledged the protests through her social media posts.

'What A Day,' Writes Sonakshi

Clarifying the sentiment behind the video, Sonakshi wrote in the caption that she was proud of Gen Z and thanked the young protesters.

Vijay Varma Denies Viral Reservation Post Shared In His Name: 'This Is All False'



Actor Vijay Varma has dismissed claims that a widely circulated social media post on reservation and privilege was written by him. As the message gained traction online, many users attributed it to the actor, assuming it reflected his personal views on the ongoing debate surrounding reservation and equal opportunity. Vijay, however, quickly set the record straight, stating that the viral post had nothing to do with him.

Vijay Varma Calls Viral Post 'False'

The post, which had been extensively shared across social media platforms, narrated the story of two friends from different financial backgrounds preparing for a government examination. It argued that economic privilege often influences access to resources and opportunities while touching upon the broader discussion around reservation and fairness.

As the message continued to circulate, many users began sharing it under Vijay Varma's name, believing he had authored it.

The actor addressed the misinformation on X (formerly Twitter), writing, "I never posted this. This is all false."

With that brief statement, Vijay distanced himself from the viral message and clarified that he had not made any public comment in the manner being claimed online.

Clarification Comes Amid Public Debate

Vijay's response arrives at a time when conversations around education, examinations and equal opportunities have intensified across the country. Several celebrities have recently voiced their opinions on student-related issues following widespread protests over alleged examination irregularities.

The actor himself had reacted to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation earlier this week. Instead of issuing a detailed statement, Vijay shared an Instagram post featuring a lyric from Channa Mereya, the popular song from Ae Dil Hai Mushkil, drawing attention online.

His latest clarification, however, was aimed solely at correcting misinformation that had spread rapidly on social media.

Alia Bhatt

Hails Students After Dharmendra Pradhan Resigns: 'Gen Z Showed Up, The Rest Is History'

In a major political development, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan submitted his resignation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, July 25, amid mounting criticism over examination paper leaks and the NEET row. His resignation comes after weeks of student-led protests at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, where activists and education groups had been demanding

A while ago, Alia Bhatt took to her Instagram stories and shared a note showing her support for the CJP protest. As soon as the news of Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation surfaced on social media, the actress celebrated the big win. She wrote, "Gen Z showed up! The rest is history." Have a look:

Bhumi Pednekar too shared a long note while reacting to the development. She wrote, "May this only make our India stronger and fairer. Today is a monumental moment for our democracy. Citizens that didn't give up and leadership that listened. The youth spoke, their conviction, their courage, and their belief in the power of change was inspiring. There was so much said on that stage but only the voice of what the students rightly wanted echoed through. To me, accountability is about delivering real, solution-driven change. Identifying the cracks and filling them. True reform, that actually impacts the future discourse

of our students. That is the hope I carry for what comes next. I think for every Indian, whether you are in public office or are an ordinary citizen, the nation, its prosperity, its people and its security should always come first. Jai Hind." Other celebs including Vir Das, Priyanka Chopra, Samay Raina, Vaani Kapoor, Sonakshi Sinha, Ishaan Khatter, Vijay Varma, Tahira Kashyap, Malaika Arora and Aditi Rao Hydari also celebrated the news.



accountability, justice for affected candidates, and sweeping reforms to the examination system. The announcement quickly sparked widespread reactions on social media, with several celebrities lending their support to the movement. Alia Bhatt is the latest celebrity to react to the development. She hailed Gen Z for standing their ground and applauded the unwavering resilience shown by students.



NEWS BOX

Iran accuses Ukraine of deadly attack on ship in Caspian Sea

TEHRAN.(Agency)

Iran accused Ukraine on Saturday of attacking one of its merchant vessels in the Caspian Sea, killing a sailor and wounding another, and warned it would not leave the incident unanswered. The accusation came after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Kyiv had carried out long-range strikes in the Caspian Sea against vessels involved in transporting military cargo involving Iran, underscoring the increasingly international dimensions of Russia's war in Ukraine. Iran's foreign ministry said the attack on Saturday morning caused the ship "to explode, killing one sailor and injuring another", according to the official IRNA news agency.

The Islamic republic "has never intervened in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine", it asserted. On Saturday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on social media that armed forces had achieved "very strong results with long-range strikes in the Caspian Sea -- including vessels used in military cargo shipments involving Iran, as well as a warship".

Ukraine's intelligence services (SBU), for their part, reported on Telegram that drone attacks had been carried out against "cargo vessels under international sanctions that were used to transport military cargo between Iran and Russia". According to Iranian state television, the foreign ministry summoned the Ukrainian charge d'affaires in Tehran on Saturday to protest this "hostile and criminal act". And in a conversation with the European Union's foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi called for a "firm response" by the EU and the United Nations Security Council to this attack, IRNA added.

Authorities in Germany issue a wanted notice for suspect in Berlin Pride van ramming

BERLIN.(Agency)

German authorities on Sunday issued a wanted notice for a fugitive suspect in the van ramming near Berlin's Pride festival that left one person dead and injured at least 16 others.

Police and prosecutors asked for help in finding the 21-year-old, whom they identified as Abdul B. They said he is believed to have injured several people with a moving vehicle, and that one or more people apparently then left that vehicle. Several people were also apparently stabbed, they added. Sunday's notice warned the public to avoid "direct contact" with the suspect, saying that he may be armed and dangerous.

Police had said earlier that they had identified a suspect who has ties to Islamic groups in the German capital. The suspect is known to police. He is known to us as a member of Islamic circles here in Berlin, and our search for this person is proceeding at full speed," police spokesperson Florian Nath said. Nath added that "we still have no information whatsoever regarding his specific motives, the exact sequence of events, or his role in the crime itself."

23 missing after Vietnamese ship sinks in South China Sea: Chinese state media

BEIJING.(Agency)

Rescuers are searching for 23 missing people after a Vietnamese ship carrying 62 crew members sank in the South China Sea, Chinese state media reported Sunday morning. The cargo vessel Khoi Nguyen 18 encountered trouble near Yongshu Reef, also known as Fiery Cross Reef, state broadcaster CCTV reported, adding that 39 people had been rescued. Chinese rescue vessel first spotted what was believed to be a distress signal from the endangered ship shortly before 6:30 pm on Saturday (1030 GMT), state news agency Xinhua said. Six Chinese vessels and a rescue helicopter as well as one Vietnamese vessel were conducting search and rescue operations in the area, Xinhua said. According to authorities in the Chinese island province of Hainan, the Khoi Nguyen 18 is a Vietnamese-registered ship measuring just under 70 metres in length, Xinhua added. Vietnam's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to AFP's request for comment. Beijing claims the South China Sea in nearly its entirety, despite an international ruling that its assertion has no legal basis. Vietnam, along with the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Taiwan, have competing claims to areas of the busy waterway, including the Spratlys, which are believed to sit on vast oil and gas resources.

Former President Juan Orlando Hernández returns to Honduras after arrest warrant suspended

Hernández's extradition marked a rare chance at justice for Hondurans, who feared his hold on the country's justice system would never allow a conviction on Honduran soil.

TEGUCIGALPA.(Agency)

Four years after being extradited to the United States for his drug trafficking trial, former Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández returns to his country Sunday to face corruption charges that lawyers fear will be a sham process. Hernández, once considered an ally by the U.S. in the drug war, led Honduras from 2014 to 2022, during which he boasted that he would "shove the drugs right up the noses of the gringos," according to U.S. prosecutors.

His extradition shortly after leaving office marked a rare chance at justice for Hondurans, who feared his hold on the country's justice system would never allow a conviction on Honduran soil. But the former leader, sentenced to 45 years in prison in the United States, was released in December, to the shock of many in the U.S. and Honduras, after receiving a presidential pardon from U.S. President Donald Trump. He said Hernández did not receive a fair trial and that it was a setup orchestrated by the Biden administration. Hernández now returns to the country to face corruption charges amid concerns that a weak justice system and his party's return to the presidency will ensure his impunity. "There is a social majority that is outraged, but doesn't speak out

because of fear," said Joaquín Mejía, lawyer and researcher for the human rights organization Reflection,

high-ranking officials from 2010 to 2013 participated in the expansion and approval of public funds

disbursements totaling more than 288 million lempiras (\$10.8 million) to various foundations, according to an investigation by the country's Specialized Prosecutor's Unit Against Corruption Networks, or UFERCO.

According to UFERCO, Hernández benefited from these disbursements, receiving at least 62 million lempiras (\$2.3 million) for his political campaign through various schemes, including the creation of shell companies, the use of straw men and fictitious contracts.



Research and Communication Team. "We're talking about the boss of all drug bosses." Hernández, 57, faces charges related to a case known as Pandora I, which alleges that a network of former

Iran-Oman talks on reopening Strait of Hormuz make progress: Report

NEW YORK.(Agency)

There has been progress in talks between Iran and Oman on the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and their respective territorial waterways in that area, two regional sources told CBS News.

The report, citing sources, said that while things are headed in a positive direction, the diplomacy requires more time to reach a deal.

It said that Omani officials had travelled Friday to Tehran for talks, and that diplomatic outreach coincided with President Donald Trump's decision to pause US bombings on Iran, which the CENTCOM had been carrying out for 13 consecutive nights. As per the CBS report, the regional officials both indicated that the US bombing was intentionally paused so as not to disrupt the delicate in-person

diplomacy. It added that the White House and CENTCOM did not reply to requests for comment. The American broadcaster further said



that the Omani-Iranian talks are being tracked closely by Washington. Trump on Friday yet again reiterated that Iran would "love to make a deal", while speaking at the White House Correspondents' dinner. "I don't think they're ready to. I don't think it's time yet, but I'm willing to listen," he said. Meanwhile, Iranian

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Saturday accused the United States of deliberately violating the Iran-US memorandum of understanding by establishing an unauthorised alternative shipping route in the Strait of Hormuz and redirecting commercial vessels away from corridors designated by Tehran. Citing the Foreign Minister's remarks from an interview with the Iran daily, Press TV reported that Araghchi emphasised that Article 5 of the memorandum was unambiguous and that Washington's actions went beyond a simple misunderstanding. The US Central Command said earlier in the day that the American naval blockade against Iran remains in full effect, emphasising that two ships that didn't comply with orders were "disabled," while two others were boarded "to ensure total compliance."

One killed, 16 injured as van slams into crowd at Berlin Pride festival; police identify suspect

BERLIN.(Agency)

A van slammed into people gathered for Berlin's famed Pride festival on Saturday night, killing one person, injuring at least 16 others and prompting police to call off the celebrations and a concert in the German capital hours after they had begun. Berlin police said they have identified a suspect who has not been arrested and he has ties to Islamic groups in the German capital. "The suspect is known to police. He is known to us as a member of Islamic circles here in Berlin, and our search for this

person is proceeding at full speed," said police spokesman Florian Nath. He did not identify the suspect by name. Nath added that "we still have no information whatsoever regarding his specific motives, the exact sequence of events, or his role in the crime itself." Earlier, police said some of the victims had life-threatening injuries. In a post on X, police called on everyone to leave the site of the event immediately as ambulances and firefighters attended to the victims. White van hit people in Tiergarten park According to police, a white van had driven into

the Tiergarten park around 10 pm, which is next to the route that the pride march had passed along earlier, and hit several people before colliding with a tree. Police could not say how many officers had been deployed to the scene but that it was "definitely a lot of police." Overall, more than 2,200 police officers have been on duty in Berlin since Saturday morning to protect the pride parade and other LGBTQ+ events in the city. Police were conducting witness interrogations at the park during the night and were investigating accounts.

Typhoon Noul makes landfall in southern China, with over 700,000 evacuated and flights cancelled

HONG KONG.(Agency)

Typhoon Noul made landfall early Sunday bringing winds and heavy rain to southern China, including Hong Kong, over the weekend. It prompted the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people in Guangdong province, with the region on high alert and hundreds of flights canceled.

China's national weather center said Noul made landfall along the Huidong county coast in the city of Huizhou in southern Guangdong province at approximately 3:50 a.m. Sunday. China's official Xinhua News Agency said Noul was the strongest typhoon to make landfall in China so far this year. Hong Kong's Observatory said Noul, with maximum sustained winds of 110

kph (68 mph) near its center, was moving Sunday into inland Guangdong and weakening progressively, bringing strong winds and heavy rain to parts of the region. More than 715,000 people had been relocated for safety in Guangdong province, according to state-owned China National Radio. Train services in the province were canceled for Sunday, according to the China News Service. China's National Meteorological Center expected parts of southern Guangdong and southeastern Fujian provinces to experience heavy rain and strong winds over the weekend. Many trees were seen uprooted in Huilai county, located on

the coast of Guangdong province, state broadcaster CCTV reported. Hong Kong's airport authority said around



350 flights were canceled Sunday. At least nine people were injured across the city during the typhoon period, according to Hong Kong authorities. As

Noul approached Hong Kong, parts of a large scaffolding on a high-rise building collapsed Saturday afternoon, local police said, although initial reports indicated there were no injuries. Taiwan's Central Weather Administration said Noul was bringing rainfall to parts of southern and eastern Taiwan. It was passing over waters south of Taiwan, and was moving away from the island Saturday.

Earlier this month, Typhoon Bavi brought strong winds and rain to eastern China, leading to the evacuation of more than 2 million people. It made landfall on July 11. Another, Maysak, made landfall in southern China on July 3.