



BJP MP's 'lungi wala' remark rocks Rajya Sabha, privilege notice filed

CPI(M) MP John Brittas accused BJP MP Sushmita Dev of calling him "lungi wala" during Rajya Sabha proceedings and filed a privilege notice. He alleged the remark was derogatory and unbecoming of a member of Parliament.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Rajya Sabha witnessed an uproar on Wednesday after CPI(M) MP John Brittas raised the matter of BJP's Sushmita Dev calling him a "lungi wala" during parliamentary proceedings. Brittas, who represents Kerala in the Upper House, has moved a privilege motion against Dev. He alleged that she made the remark against him



during an exchange on Monday. It wasn't merely a personal remark but an attempt to stereotype people based on their regional and cultural identity, he charged. Speaking to news agency ANI, Brittas said he took pride in his Malayali and South Indian identity, and the BJP MP's "lungi wala" barb was unacceptable and unbecoming of a member of Parliament.

"I have moved a privilege motion notice against Sushmita Dev for her derogatory remark, 'lungi wala,' which stereotypes South Indians and is not acceptable. It is a shorthand for othering," he said.

South will suffer: Vijay govt's big anti-delineation push and 3 demands

The resolution by the Vijay-led Tamil Nadu government comes amid the Centre's renewed push to get support for the delimitation bill, which it has linked to the implementation of women's reservation.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay moved a resolution in the Assembly against the delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies on Wednesday, even though he firmly backed women's reservation, urging the Centre to implement it within the existing 543 seats. The TVK chief warned that the representation of southern states such as Tamil Nadu, which have



successfully implemented population-control measures, could be hit if delimitation is carried out on the basis of population. The resolution comes amid the Centre's renewed push to get support for the delimitation bill, which it has linked to the implementation of women's reservation in Parliament and state assemblies. Over the past week, there has been strong buzz that the Centre might table the constitutional amendment bill on the last two days of the Monsoon session.

Amit Shah says will answer questions in Parliament, Rahul Gandhi says we don't care

New Delhi. (Agency)

As Parliament remained deadlocked over the Opposition's demand for a statement from Shah on the NEET student protest crackdown and a discussion on the Ram Temple donations theft, the Union Home Minister said they should formally submit a letter seeking a discussion, after which the government was ready to hold a debate in the House.

In an effort to end the continued Parliament logjam, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday offered the Opposition a 24-hour window for a discussion, saying he was ready to answer all their questions and would remain present in the House from 3 pm on Wednesday until 3 pm on Thursday. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, however, dismissed the offer, saying the Opposition was not interested in what Shah had to say but wanted answers on who ordered the police action against the NEET student protesters.

As Parliament remained deadlocked over the Opposition's demand for a statement from Shah on the NEET student protest crackdown and a discussion on the Ram Temple donations theft, the Union Home

Minister said they should formally submit a letter seeking a discussion, after which the government was ready to hold a debate in the House. "Write a letter and submit it.



We will discuss the matter from 3 pm today, and I am ready to discuss it until 3 pm tomorrow," the Union Minister said, adding that he was prepared to remain in Parliament and answer questions raised by

the Opposition. "I am ready to answer any question," he said and added that it was now for the Opposition to decide whether it wanted a discussion or continued disruption.

Responding to Opposition remarks accusing him of being "missing", "escaped" or a "fugitive", Shah said he had been attending Parliament regularly since the Monsoon Session began.

"I have been coming to Parliament regularly since the session began; I sit in my chamber, but since the Opposition is not allowing Parliament to function in either House, what is one supposed to do?" he said. Shah blamed the Opposition for preventing Parliament from functioning, saying there was little purpose in simply entering the building if proceedings were repeatedly disrupted.

Forgotten Heroes

The Dark Stain of Neglect on Ahmedabad's Martyrs

People and the System Have Forgotten Ahmedabad's Brave Martyrs Who Laid Down Their Lives for the Pride and Honor of the Country! An Awakening Call by 'Mahanagar Metro'

MAHANAGAR METRO

Ahmedabad: Those brave martyrs who sacrificed their precious lives for the pride, honor, and glory of the tricolor, for the defense of the motherland, and for the security of their compatriots are completely neglected and forgotten in their own city today. What could be more unfortunate and shameful than the fact that those great souls who gave up their lives for our peace, freedom, and security are today completely forgotten by the people and the government machinery in terms of appreciating their valor and giving them due respect. An Insult to Martyrdom or a Total Lack of Patriotism? Remembering those brave martyrs who were born on this sacred and historic soil of Ahmedabad, grew up playing on its streets, and sacrificed their lives for their country is not just an annual formality, but our supreme moral duty. But the bitter reality is that even on special occasions or Martyrs' Day, the local administration does not find the time to place two flowers or clean the statues or monuments of these heroes. In a city that has given several mar-

tyrs to the country, the memories, monuments, and plaques of martyrs lie in dusty and dilapidated conditions in every corner of the city. Where Has Our Gratitude Gone? Blinded by personal self-interest and the hustle and bustle of daily life, people, along with an event-management-obsessed and self-serving administration, have forgotten the basic fact that the peaceful and happy breath we take in open air today is soaked in the blood of these brave martyrs. Is our society and system repaying the invaluable sacrifice of families whose breadwinning sons, brave husbands, or beloved fathers sacrificed themselves on the border or in service in this manner? Our heads should hang in shame when the families of martyrs are still seen running around government offices. Direct, Harsh, and Sharp Questions from 'Mahanagar Metro' - Wake Up Rulers and Insensitive System! Are Speeches Sufficient Patriotism?: Has the existence of martyrs for the government and local administration been limited only to empty speeches delivered from stages on August 15 or January 26? Why the Lack of a Permanent

Policy?: Why is a concrete and permanent state-level policy not formulated to preserve the memories of Ahmedabad's martyrs and provide lifelong respectful assistance to their families? Where is the Inspiration for the New Generation?: Why are special martyr remembrance programs not organized in school-college textbooks or public places to introduce our new generation to the great sacrifices of these local heroes? Why Such a Dilapidated State of Monuments?: Why has the corporation or system become so stingy and insensitive in allocating budgets for the proper maintenance, lighting, and security of martyr monuments in Ahmedabad? An Awareness Appeal to Raise Voice to the Government and Home Department This report is not merely information, but the echo of the souls of the immortal martyrs of Ahmedabad and their forgotten sacrifices. 'Mahanagar Metro' clearly appeals and demands from the state government, home department, and Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation that: A grand and dignified 'Ahmedabad Martyr Memorial Complex' or a



heritage walk route should be developed in memory of all the brave martyrs of Ahmedabad. The heroic tales of the martyrs should be permanently presented to the public through audio-visual and digital mediums. A single-window system should be established to resolve all problems of the families of martyrs. If we cannot give due respect and place to the martyrs who laid down their lives for our country, we have no moral right to make big claims of patriotism. Let us wake the system from its deep slumber and take immediate steps towards giving due justice to the sacrifice of these brave martyrs!

A shortcut will cut you short: PM Modi's message to reel-loving Gen Z

Prime Minister Narendra Modi advised Gen Z to be wary of social media influencers and avoid taking shortcuts. The remarks came against the backdrop of the PM making Instagram central to his youth outreach campaign.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has a message for India's Gen Z: In an age of reels, influencers and instant gratification, beware of shortcuts. Drawing upon a familiar warning displayed at railway stations, PM

Modi urged young people to choose the longer, more meaningful path. He recalled how some people cross railway tracks rather than use footbridges because they see it as a quicker route.

The warning painted at such crossings, he remarked, captures a larger lesson. "A shortcut will cut you short," he said, advising youngsters to be wary of "influencers who often draw you in various directions". The Prime Minister made the remarks at the launch of former President Ram Nath Kovind's autobiography, Triumph of the Indian Republic: My Life, My

Struggles, in Delhi on Wednesday. His appeal to young Indians comes amid a push to connect with a generation that is chronically online. "If you do wish to find a way



forward, I would tell the youth: definitely read the autobiography of whoever you admire," PM Modi said.

Aap badal gaye ho: When Kharge, Gandhi siblings met PM Modi at wedding event

The wedding reception of NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule's daughter brought together the who's who of politics in Delhi on Monday. A video has now emerged showing Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and PM Modi engaging in a light-hearted exchange.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Political rivalry took a backseat on Monday as Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and the Gandhi siblings shared the same frame at the wedding reception of NCP(SP) MP Supriya Sule's daughter. Rare as the sight was, a video of the leaders sharing a light-hearted exchange has now gone viral on social media.

The casual interaction began with PM Modi asking Priyanka Gandhi Vadra about how she was doing. "How is Priyanka doing?" PM Modi



can be heard asking in the clip. "I am doing well, sir! How are you?" Priyanka, who is not visible in the video, replies. To this, the Prime Minister said, "I am just the same as always". PM Modi's reply drew a chuckle from the Congress president who was standing nearby. "Bhai saab, aap thoda badal gaye ho (Brother, you have changed a bit)," Kharge was heard telling PM Modi. He, however, did not elaborate on his remark. The Prime Minister appeared amused by Kharge's quip. "Oh really?" he responded before both sides broke into laughter.

News box

Gurgaon records light showers, wet spell likely on weekend

Gurgaon.(Agency)

The city is likely to see a prolonged spell of rain this week, with India Meteorological Department forecasting light to moderate rain at many places on Aug 14 and 15. The city is also under a light rain warning for Tuesday. IMD's seven-day forecast said heavy to very heavy rain is likely at isolated places in northern Haryana on Aug 14, 15 and 17. For the city, the district-wise forecast has predicted light to moderate rainfall at many places on Aug 12, followed by isolated rain on Aug 13. Rainfall activity is expected to increase again on Aug 14 and 15, with light to moderate rain likely at many places in the district. The district is among those where IMD has issued a warning of heavy rain at isolated places on Aug 11. The warning also covers Faridabad, Rohtak, Sonipat, Panipat, Jhajjar, Kurukshetra, Kaithal and Karnal. Panchkula, Ambala and Yamunanagar are likely to receive heavy to very heavy rain at isolated places. The weather department has forecast light to moderate rainfall at many places in the city and neighbouring Rewari, Jhajjar, Mewat, Palwal, Faridabad, Rohtak, Sonipat, Panipat and Jind. The city recorded a maximum of 30.7 degree Celsius on Tuesday which was 2.8 notch lower than the pervious day. Gurgaon recorded a maximum temperature of 33.5 degress Celsius on Monday. City recorded 1mm rainfall between 8.30am and 5.30 pm. Gurgaon KVK recorded a minimum temperature of 26.9 degrees Celsius on Tuesday, while Gurgaon AWS recorded 25.8 degrees Celsius and NorthCap University AWS 27.4 degrees Celsius.

Biker hits cow sitting in middle of the road in Gurgaon, killed

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 36-year-old resident of Faridabad died after his scooter collided with a stray cow around 4 am Tuesday. The incident, captured on CCTV, showed the animal sitting in the middle of the NIT-3 road before Ashu Khatri, who was returning home after meeting a friend, crashed into it. He was thrown off his vehicle and hit a divider. Ashu's uncle, Ashok Khatri, said the family believes he lay unconscious for some time before passersby spotted him and took him to a nearby private hospital. He was then referred to BK Hospital but died on the way. The Sector-3 police post in charge said cops collected statements from the family and initiated proceedings under BNSS Section 174. The body was handed over after a postmortem. Ashu had been working in the sale and purchase of two-wheelers for about a decade. He got married last year and lived in NIT-5 with his elder brother, parents and wife. Ashu's death has renewed concerns over the danger posed by unclaimed cattle roaming Faridabad's roads. Last week, a speeding truck ran over a herd of cattle sitting on Sector-18 Old Road, killing six cows on the spot. Locals and cow vigilantes set the truck on fire, following which police registered an FIR and arrested the 50-year-old driver from Nuh.

It's raining civic problems but MCG runs on 50% workforce

Noida.(Agency)

At a time when the city is grappling with damaged roads, sanitation, waterlogging, and a host of civic problems during the monsoon, MCG is operating with more than half of its existing sanctioned posts vacant. The corporation has 427 sanctioned posts, of which only 209 are filled, leaving 218 vacancies, which is a vacancy rate of 51%, according to MCG's staff position as of July 29. The manpower shortage assumes significance as the civic body continues to face pressure over basic services, particularly drainage, roads, sanitation and waterlogging. Heavy monsoon rains have repeatedly paralysed the city with waterlogging and traffic chaos, even as MCG faces a severe staff crunch. As of July 29, 2026, the health and sanitation wing has 13 vacancies out of 16 sanctioned posts (81.3%), and the accounts wing has 13 out of 19 posts vacant (68.4%). MCG's engineering wing, which had reported a vacancy of around 40% in previous years and was always among the departments with the largest shortfall, with key positions like junior engineers, executive engineers, and assistant engineers lying vacant, has now seen a marked improvement. As of July 29, 2026, the wing had 53 of its 62 sanctioned posts filled, leaving just nine vacancies (14.5%). Despite this improvement, the engineering wing remains crucial to MCG's ability to address roads, drainage, waterlogging, and other infrastructure-related works. "We are short-staffed and will send our requirements to the state government. We are pursuing this aggressively," MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya told.

Noida unrest: Activists hold nationwide demonstrations, demand release of jailed workers

Noida.(Agency)

Workers' groups and activists on Tuesday held demonstrations in Delhi, Hyderabad, Vizag, Patna, Kolkata, Mumbai, Vijayawada and other cities, demanding the release of industrial workers and supporters who were arrested after the Noida labour protest and have been lodged in jail for four months. In Delhi, police did not allow Campaign for the Release of Workers and Activists of Noida (CaRWAN) group to hold their protest at Jantar Mantar, citing "threat to law and order". The group later held their demonstration outside the barricades of Jantar Mantar. Apart from their release, the protesters also demanded the withdrawal of FIRs registered against all workers and

activists. Student activist Chiranshu questioned how Delhi Police could allow UP Police in plain clothes to detain students and put them behind bars for voicing their support for the protesting labourers. Jailed activist Aditya Anand's brother and a petitioner in Supreme Court against alleged illegal detentions Keshaw Anand said that hundreds are being punished through legal procedures only for asking for their rights. "The charges levelled against the workers and activists in the Noida case are not only baseless but also unconstitutional. It now seems that protesting, striking, and demanding minimum wages as per law has become a crime," he said. Students and activists in Hyderabad underlined



the need for a united voice against repression. "The NEET protest succeeded because of mass participation, whereas the matter of Noida workers and activists remains confined to one particular area. That makes its repression easier," said Sreeja, a student activist and member of CaRWAN. She said that the students

have been trying to create awareness among the working class and other concerned citizens about the unlawful detentions in connection with the Noida industrial workers' protest. Raising slogans to free all political prisoners and for the withdrawal of the cases, the activists said that the playbook of police has remained the same in every part of the country when it comes to repression of voices of dissent. Varuni, a student activist who led the demonstrations at the Buddha Smriti Park in Patna, addressed the protesters and explained to the public there how NSA was imposed on two people for raising voice in support of labourers who were demanding minimum wages.

Decreasing Social Responsibility and Decline of Moral Values Among Today's Youth

Mahanagar Metro Desk
Author: Rupesh Solanki

Bhachau: In this modern era of the 21st century, it is a matter of joy that our young generation is making unprecedented progress in the educational and economic fields. However, along with this, the erosion of the sense of social responsibility and moral values among them is a matter of serious concern. According to Rupesh Solanki, Senior Vice President of Kutch District for the Akhil Bharatiya Rashtriya Shaikshik Mahasangh (Secondary Granted Cadre) and Senior Teacher of Bhachau, merely obtaining a degree is not true education, but becoming a cultured and responsible citizen is the real purpose of education. This detailed article, which gives a new direction to today's youth and awakens them against blind western imitation, is presented below in a single, continuous layout. Today, the young generation, running after the blind imitation of Western culture, is turning away from its magnificent Indian culture and family traditions. In the blind race to achieve personal freedom and material comforts, young people are losing respect for elders and the spirit of a joint family. Instead of becoming sensitive and helping when a difficulty arises in so-

ciety, today's generation prefers to remain engrossed in its own world. The contribution of youth in the development of the country and society should be paramount, but instead, a materialistic approach and narrow thinking of 'only my well-being matters' are dominating the youth mind, which can prove to be dangerous for the social system in the long run. The strength of any nation depends on the character of its youth. Today's young generation often adopts shortcuts in the mad desire to achieve a luxurious lifestyle very quickly, which leads them down the wrong path. Apart from this, the increasing rate of addiction, violation of moral boundaries, and quick anger among the youth are damaging their future. Young people are forgetting that moral values like truth, honesty, compassion, and restraint take life to true heights. If a student who scores high marks in exams is uncultured in practical life, then that education proves to be useless. Young people should use their power not only to earn a livelihood but also to make society better. An inspiring and beautiful poetic stanza that explains this ideological delusion of the youth generation and the necessity of character building is presented



here: "Do not blow away this grand heritage of values in the Western wind, do not lose your character in this temporary infatuation of material pleasures; awaken and recognize your duty towards the country and society, look 'Rupesh', on this path of morality itself you will get your true respect one day." These lines call upon the youth to come out of the illusion of materialism and join the sacred work of nation-building. Imparting values along with education is the biggest demand of the present time. As a teacher, Rupesh Solanki strongly states that instead of giving only bookish knowledge in schools and colleges, it has become absolutely indispensable to teach moral education and values. Parents should also instill qualities of social service, mutual respect, and humility towards elders in their children instead of just giving them expensive things or facilities. Young people should also awaken themselves and occasionally devote time to the service of the deprived and weaker sections



of society, so that the spirit of social harmony is strengthened among them. The final essence of this detailed article is that progress without morality is incomplete and short-lived. Our young generation has wonderful intellectual talent and capability. If this capability is combined with high human values and social responsibility, no one can stop India from becoming a world leader. Come, through this special ideological article today, let us all youth take a firm resolve that we will renounce blind Western imitation, keep our glorious family spirit alive, never leave the side of morality even in the most difficult circumstances, and with a positive approach, continue to give our best inspiring contribution to the rebuilding of the nation and society.

2 acres encroached in Mangar Bani buffer, makeshift hutments come up

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Dozens of temporary structures have come up inside Mangar Bani buffer zone, in an area covered by sections 4 and 5 of Punjab Land Preservation Act (PLPA). Around two acres of land in the Aravalis — in Mangar — have been encroached upon by a sprawling settlement of makeshift hutments. Mangar Bani — a sacred grove near Mangar village — and its surrounding buffer are among the most ecologically sensitive Aravali patches in the city-Faridabad landscape. A ground visit found a sizeable cluster of shelters made of tarpaulin sheets, plastic, cloth, bamboo and other temporary material spread beneath the dense tree canopy. Several structures have been tied directly to trees, with ropes, pipes and sheets being used to create walls and roofs. The location of the settlement is significant because the recent road work and the newly detected jhuggi settlement indicate two different forms of human intervention in the

same protected landscape: access infrastructure on the one hand and habitation on the other. The developments raise questions over when the settlement began, how around two acres came to be occupied and whether the authorities detected its expansion in time. They also raise concerns over whether improved access to the area could facilitate further occupation or other activities in the ecologically sensitive landscape. Faridabad divisional forest officer Jhalkar Uyake told TOI, "We have given them three days' time to vacate the land, or else we will take action." The area has been designated as a no-construction zone, while the land is also subject to PLPA restrictions that prohibit or regulate non-forest activities. The development comes weeks after TOI reported fresh road work inside Mangar Bani landscape, highlighting continuing pressure on an area where construction and changes in land use



are restricted. In that case, a roughly 1-km internal pathway in the Mangar Bani area had been paved with interlocking blocks. The forest department had stopped the work and removed labourers from the site on July 18. Fresh paver blocks were subsequently found stocked at the location, raising concerns that work could resume. The latest ground visit shows another form of pressure on the same landscape, with a sizeable habitation spread across around two acres beneath the forest canopy. The

ground situation is not of a few isolated temporary shelters. Multiple rows of hutments have spread through the wooded patch, with clotheslines, household articles, containers and other signs of regular habitation visible across the settlement. Several shelters have been constructed around existing trees, while tree trunks and branches have been used as supports. The ground around the structures has been cleared and compacted at several places, with plastic and other waste visible within the settlement. Mangar Bani has been the subject of protection measures for more than a decade. In 2014, ational Green Tribunal directed Haryana govt to take steps towards protecting the Mangar Bani area, while NCR Planning Board decided that Mangar Bani and an essential 500-metre buffer should be treated as a no-construction zone. The board's decision was subsequently incorporated into Haryana's planning framework.

Surat civic chief transferred over 2 months after controversial demolitions



Surat. (Agency)

Gujarat Municipal Commissioner M Nagarajan has been transferred out of Surat, more than two months after controversial demolitions in the city's Nasirnagar area left several people homeless.

The Gujarat government issued the transfer orders late Tuesday, posting Nagarajan to the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan department. The development comes as the Gujarat High Court is hearing a petition filed by people affected by the demolitions.

The court had questioned why Nagarajan continued to hold office while an inquiry into the demolitions was underway, observing that the inquiry would be "nothing but a farce" if senior officers continued to hold their posts. The court has sought a response from the state government on the matter.

Vasai Bypass rail project hits fresh hurdle as land survey delays acquisition

Mumbai. (Agency)

Before anyone is allowed behind the wheel of a BEST bus, they are first shown death. Inside a modest classroom at the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) training centre in Dindoshi, CCTV footage of recent road accidents flickers across a projector screen. An instructor pauses after every clip, rewinds the video and asks a room full of trainees the same question. What could the driver have done differently?

Around 30 trainees sit quietly, watching. Some are first-time recruits hoping to drive Mumbai's red buses. Others have returned after years away and are doing the course again. "Whenever an accident occurs, two families are ruined, theirs and yours. Financial compensation alone cannot placate a grieving family," Ninad Shirodkar, Deputy Depot Manager of Training at the Dindoshi centre, tells the class.

Maharashtra's Mahayuti government clears Rs 18 crore loan for sugar mill linked to BJP MLA

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Maharashtra Cabinet on Tuesday approved an Rs 18 crore loan from the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) for a sugar factory linked to BJP MLA Abhimanyu Pawar, continuing a recent run of state approvals for financial assistance to cooperatives associated with leaders of the ruling Mahayuti. The loan is for Killari's Shri Nilkantheshwar Sugar Factory and will be used for capital expenditure and working capital. Following the Cabinet approval, the proposal will be forwarded to the NCDC.

The factory had approached the Commissioner of Sugar, Pune, seeking the loan. The Cabinet approved the proposal with a specific rider that it be treated as a special case.

"Approval has been given on the condition that this proposal is treated as a special case, will not be considered a precedent, and is strictly a one-off instance," a cooperative department official said.

This is the third occasion on which a cooperative linked to the MLA from AUSA has received state approval for an NCDC loan. His Shetkari Cooperative Sugar Mill was earlier sanctioned NCDC loans of Rs 50 crore in August 2023 and Rs 22.97 crore in July 2024.

Awarded Rs 2.23 cr compensation, woman says not enough for mental trauma she faced

Pune. (Agency)

A woman, whose four-storey house collapsed during work on a four-lane highway project in Shimla, Tuesday said she will challenge the Himachal Pradesh High Court order to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and M/s Gawar Shimla Highway Pvt Ltd to pay her Rs 2.23 crore for her loss. Ranjana Verma said the compensation was inadequate considering that she not only lost her house, but also went through mental agony in the year-long ordeal that followed.

Verma's house at Sanjay Van Colony near Chamiana in Bhattakuffar collapsed on June 30, 2025, during heavy rain, while hill-cutting work for the four-lane project was underway below it. The High Court, in its order on Monday, held that NHAI could not

"wash off its hands" of responsibility for the project and directed immediate payment of Rs 2,23,55,924, based on a district-level assessment.

"I am thankful to the High Court which took suo motu cognisance of the tragedy, but I will challenge the compensation as it does not reflect the cost of the four-storey structure which fell like a pack of cards.

She alleged that she and other local residents had repeatedly warned NHAI and the private contractor about the manner in which hill-cutting was being carried out.

"We pleaded with them many times that this unscientific hill-cutting would result in a disaster. And finally, it happened," she said. "The rubble of my house, which we had named Raj Niwas

after my late husband Rajesh Verma, is still there." The court assessed the value of her house at Rs 1.65 crore and the



belongings inside it at Rs 58.38 lakh. It said NHAI could not escape responsibility for the highway project "whether the cutting was being done in the right manner or not, under proper supervision", when such work led to a

four-storey building "collapsing and disappearing in seconds".

Verma, a mother to two daughters, has been living in rented accommodation since the collapse. Her husband, an SDO (electrical), died in a road accident near Tara Devi, Shimla, in January 2015. She too had received injuries in the accident. One of the couple's daughters, after completing her education from Mumbai, recently shifted to Chandigarh where she has joined a private firm.

Verma said her house stood beyond the Right of Way (RoW) acquired by NHAI, a fact acknowledged by the court, but argued that residents outside the RoW had nevertheless suffered the consequences of the project.

Why Amritpal Singh's party has fielded the son of Indira Gandhi's assassin

Chandigarh. (Agency)

The Punjab Assembly elections may be months away, but Amritpal Singh's Akali Dal (Waris Punjab De) has made plain its intention to make a play for Panthic votes by fielding Satwant Singh as its first candidate. Satwant is the son of Kehar Singh who was executed for his role in the 1984 assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

With this, family members of the three men involved in the Indira assassination case have found a prominent place in the pro-Khalistani outfit. The Faridkot MP, Sarabjit Singh Khalsa, is the son of Beant Singh, one of the assassins. The outfit's parliamentary board member Sukhwinder Singh Aghwan is the nephew of Satwant Singh, the second assassin who was hanged alongside Kehar Singh.

Announcing Satwant Singh's candidacy from Bassi Pathana in Fatehgarh Sahib district on Monday, the party's working president and Amritpal's father Tarsem Singh said, "The politics of the ADWPD is not limited merely to gaining power, but is committed to advancing panthic principles, Punjab's rights, and the honour and respect of families who have made sacrifices for Sikhs."

Tarsem Singh said the candidacy of Satwant Singh was a direct rebuttal of recent claims that the party was ignoring such families.

Satwant Singh, a former bank manager, told The Indian Express, "For a long time, Sarabjit Singh, Sukhwinder Singh Aghwan, and I have been meeting at functions where we are honoured due to the shared background of our families. I had joined the campaign for Sarabjit Singh Khalsa in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Now, both Khalsa and Aghwan have recommended my name for the party ticket."

Himachal rave party row: Top officers transferred, probe points to laxity in implementing rules

A five-day "festival" held in a forested area in Kasol had wrapped up two days before schedule, after the High Court ordered a probe and a police party that raided the site seized drugs.

Shimla. (Agency)

With the Supreme Court now seized of the matter of "rave parties" organised near Kasol in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu district, a detailed spot inspection carried out by a probe panel into a "festival" in June has thrown up several findings of lax implementation of rules.

The report, by Vishal Tiwari of the District Legal Services Authority, notes that the 'Ananda Festival Pre-Party', originally scheduled from June 7 to June 11, was held in a secluded stretch big enough to hold around 5,000 people inside a forested area, which was difficult to reach, was given "sound permission" despite police warning about the possibility of drugs and psychotropic substances being widely available there, and its events stretched

way past the permitted time of 10 pm.

The report also speaks about the death of a Russian DJ, Daria Kuminykh, 29, at a home stay in Kasol on June 11, believed



to have been caused by a drug overdose. The exact cause of death is yet to be determined.

The five-day Ananda Festival had wrapped up two days before schedule, on June 9, after the Himachal Pradesh High

Court ordered a probe and a police party that raided the site seized drugs. Kasol-based Yashpal and Ishwar Singh, who had obtained the sound permission, were charged on grounds of allegedly serving liquor without a licence, and are out on interim bail. Two other FIRs were filed against two men allegedly caught with narcotics during the police search.

Subsequently, at a hearing on June 24, the High Court ordered the transfer of senior officers, including the Kullu Deputy Commissioner (DC), Superintendent of Police (SP) and Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM); directed the registration of an FIR; and ordered a probe by a Special Investigating Team headed by an officer not below the rank of deputy inspector general.

'There could well be many more wives': UP MLA 'cheated' by daughter's in-laws

Lucknow. (Agency)

As he prepares to retain his Seva Assembly constituency in Sitapur for the third time in a row, having won it handsomely in 2017 and 2022, BJP MLA Gyan Tiwari has more pressing issues than the coming elections on his mind.

Tiwari has filed an FIR against his daughter's father-in-law Anuj Trivedi, accusing him of concealing a "criminal" past before the wedding was fixed, and of "entering into multiple marriages, faking his identity each time". This is one month after Trivedi was arrested by the Maharashtra Police, which said they were also probing similar charges against his son and Tiwari's son-in-law Prakhar. The latter is wanted, as per Sitapur police. Tiwari has announced severing of all ties with Trivedi and

Prakhar.

Tiwari's daughter, Pragya, a doctor, and Prakhar, 31, were married in February 2024. In his FIR, the MLA has said that



Trivedi, who is settled in Sitapur like him, had introduced himself as a real-estate businessman with operations in Mumbai. Trivedi said Prakhar managed a school as well as oversaw agricultural and

horticultural activities in their village.

The MLA told The Indian Express he had made enquiries about the Trivedis before the wedding through several local people, including public representatives, and that all described the family as well-off, respectable and well-connected.

Tiwari said he never suspected anything till the Maharashtra Police arrived in Sitapur making inquiries. The authorities said they were investigating claims by two women each that the father and son had married them under false pretences and duped them of money, though no FIR has been registered in the matter yet. Police also said there may be other "victims". Tiwari believes so too. "There could well be more victims out there," he said.

'Glass piece' in Ahmedabad school meal leads to ruckus over 'Malala Yousafzai in syllabus'

The District Education Officer (DEO), Ahmedabad, issued a show-cause notice to the school, seeking a clarification on the "glass chip" found in the food. Later, in a message to parents, the school declared a holiday for primary sections on Wednesday.

Palghar. (Agency)

SEVERAL PARENTS protested outside a private school in Ahmedabad's Shilaj area on Tuesday over the issue of a "piece of glass" allegedly found in the food served to primary students a day earlier.

The issue, however, spun into allegations that the Anand Niketan School, Shilaj campus, was "discriminating" against a particular religion and students being made to read books by Nobel Prize winner Pakistani education activist Malala Yousafzai, and German diarist Anne Frank. The school then issued a statement saying that it had taken

"immediate corrective measures, including changes in supervisory responsibility and a comprehensive review and further strengthening of hygiene, food-safety and quality-control protocols."

The District Education Officer (DEO), Ahmedabad, issued a show-cause notice to the school, seeking a clarification on the "glass chip" found in the food. Later, in a message to parents, the school declared a holiday for primary sections on Wednesday.

On Monday, a Class 8 student of the school "felt something hard in the mouth" while having his lunch of ladyfinger, dal chapati and rice served on the school campus and realised he

had chewed onto a "piece of glass". His father Malav Shah told The Indian Express that the student reported the matter to the teacher: "He swallowed



part of it but handed over the remaining (glass chip) to the teacher."

On Tuesday several parents reached the school demanding that the "glass piece"

be handed over to them, to show the doctor treating the child. According to Shah, his son was taken to a hospital instead of the school infirmary and they (the boy's parents) were asked to reach the hospital. "We accept that there can be human error but the school management has been behaving in a very irresponsible manner," the parent alleged. "The doctor wanted to see the piece for further diagnosis and treatment whether to go for an endoscopy or not else there is a risk of bleeding. No teacher was present at the hospital at that time. A child's life is not that cheap. The school should take responsibility that this has happened but they are not doing so.

Myth of BJP's unbeatable organisation

The BJP's losses in the recent Bankipur and Datia bypolls carried several messages, but the most significant warning for the world's largest and perhaps richest political party was the vulnerability of its famed organisation, widely regarded as its guarantee against electoral defeat. By-elections are not always a harbinger of broader political trends in a state, but their outcomes cannot be brushed aside insouciantly. The setback in Bihar's Bankipur, which lies in Patna West, was more galling to the BJP because it retained this seat in good and bad times for over 30 years. It was a family borough of the Sinhas, who are Kayasthas in a constituency dominated by the community. The last election was won by BJP president Nitin Nabin, who vacated Bankipur on being nominated to the Rajya Sabha. Nabin inherited the seat from his father, Kishore Prasad Sinha, in 2010. A reversal of this magnitude could erode Nabin's authority, if he is allowed to exercise it in the present regime.

The verdicts delivered in Bankipur and Datia, won thrice by the BJP (2008, 2013 and 2018), were the result of a botch-up in candidate selection and, in Datia, the bruised ego of Narottam Mishra, the former legislator, who is said to harbour ambitions of becoming chief minister. Mishra was denied a ticket, triggering uproarious protests from his supporters against the BJP's central bosses, which is unthinkable in a hermetically sealed organisation intolerant of dissent. He wept publicly, and local lore has it that the tears sealed the BJP's fate in a sure-fire seat. In Bankipur, too, a person close to Nabin was first chosen with fanfare, but once the allegation that he was a beneficiary of the 'fodder scam' gained ground, the former candidate was dropped for someone picked by the central command. The episode is a telling reflection of the BJP chief's lack of judgement: he went for someone embroiled in a scam whose central protagonist was former CM Lalu Prasad. The BJP's political capital in Bihar was primarily based on its campaign on the 'charaghotala'. It is likely that Nabin, barely known outside Bihar until the other day, will have no say in candidate selection for the impending elections. However, the perception—mainly created by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, his chief political strategist—of the BJP organisation being foolproof and impermeable is a quasi-myth. Ironically in the nineties, Gujarat was the first to bust the illusion. The BJP split into two factions and the dissenters, led by veteran Shankersinh Vaghela, asked for incumbent CM Keshubhai Patel's head. Modi organised the street protests against Vaghela, who was branded a "renegade". In the end, Vaghela lost. In Uttar Pradesh, prized by the BJP for its electoral dominance in the Lok Sabha, the BJP was always torn asunder by caste, leading to conflicts between upper castes and other backward classes for control and supremacy.

Even today, in an era of centralised control, the organisation is subject to stress because, come what may, parallel power centres emerge after a point. Take the states headed for elections. In Punjab, which the BJP once ruled with a bigger ally, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), an organisational shuffle recently forced a spate of resignations and open dissent. The BJP leadership was accused of ignoring grassroots workers, integral to the party's governing system. Seniors, who had kept the BJP afloat in Punjab where the party does not have high stakes except in conjunction with the SAD, were cast aside for "imports" from the Congress, SAD and Aam Aadmi Party. The influx of fair-weather friends happened after Shah, euphoric after the West Bengal victory, declared that Punjab was high on the BJP's agenda and claimed it would form the government in 2027. West Bengal has coined a phrase to describe the import-versus-original syndrome: "Trinamoolisation of BJP". Not content with sweeping the Assembly election nearly three months ago, the BJP stamped the seal of its supremacy by coveting a chunk of the elected legislators from the Trinamool Congress.

In repairing the lock we forgot the room

PART I : Macaulay to Vivekananda: The curse of the single door and the cruel arithmetic

FOR a fortnight, Parliament debated education with unusual seriousness. The trigger was a young generation's anguish over the integrity of its examinations, and that anguish was just. An examination is the Republic's promise that talent will be weighed and birth will not. When a paper leaks or a seat is sold, the promise breaks, and faith in the Republic breaks with it. Say the position plainly. An honest examination is necessary, but it is not enough. It guards one door where a nation needs a house. The task before the Republic is not a fairer door. It is a second way in. Begin with the harder question. Suppose every examination became honest tomorrow. Every leak stopped, every corrupt official gone, every result pure merit. Would opportunity then be equal? It would not. For even a perfectly honest examination guards a single narrow door. Consider the one that provoked this debate. In 2024, more than 23 lakh young Indians appeared for the medical entrance examination. Over 13 lakh crossed the qualifying threshold. Against them stood roughly 1,15,000 MBBS seats. An honest examination would still have denied an MBBS seat to more than nine out of every ten candidates it had declared qualified. Nor is medicine an exception. In two recent Railway recruitment examinations alone, some 2.37 crore candidates competed for approximately 1.31 lakh eventual recruitments. The same young person may, of course, appear in several examinations; that duplication is itself evidence of repeated attempts to enter the same narrow passage.

Parliament debated the young who were cheated, and rightly. But it never counted the far larger number who were not cheated at all, who sat a fair examination and found that fairness had no seat to give them. The arithmetic is not corrupt. It is merely cruel. We have mistaken uniformity for fairness, and scarcity for merit.

A philosophical compromise

This is not an administrative fault. It is a philosophical inheritance, and it has two fathers and a date apiece. In 1835, Thomas Macaulay wrote his Minute on Indian education and sought to create a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, who would serve as interpreters between the colonial administration and the millions it governed. The individual mattered because the system needed him. In 1893, from a platform in Chicago, Vivekananda presented a different conception of man to the world. He would define education as "the manifestation of the perfection already in man." One

design begins with the requirements of the system. The other begins with the person. India kept Macaulay and quoted Vivekananda, which is the most Indian compromise of all.



We built Macaulay into the machinery, the schools, the services, the whole apparatus that turns a person into a qualification, and we kept Vivekananda for the convocation address. One we obey every working day. The other we quote on ceremonial occasions and forget by the afternoon. The credential runs the country. The perfection within is left on the platform in Chicago. A philosophy of education never stays in the classroom. It becomes a mindset, and the mindset becomes the social order, deciding what a people honours and whom it rewards. Macaulay's order made the credential the measure of a man, and the effect reaches all the way into the home.

The kitchen table choice & dying crafts

Consider a boy born into a welder's family. His father knows the trade to its depth, and knows too what it has earned him, which is skill without standing, which is another way of saying skill without a decent wage. So the father spends every rupee he has to lift the boy off the welding floor and set him at the foot of the only staircase that carries respect. He is not choosing medicine. He is fleeing welding. Now change one thing. Let the trade have a summit. Let a certified welder be able to end his

working life as a professor of practice, teaching the craft and then certifying it. Two things shift at that kitchen table. The boy who would make a fine welder may never be pushed toward a doctor's gown at all, and the boy who

would make a poor one now has a second staircase to climb rather than a single desperate bet. Ascent does not merely reward the craftsman. It rescues the household's judgment. This is why an argument about examinations is really an argument about survival. While we guard the one door, the crafts behind the others are dying, one anxious father at a time. The official censuses differ in definition, but their direction is unmistakable: India's handloom workforce has contracted, aged and become increasingly precarious. In Varanasi, hand weaving has steadily surrendered ground to the power loom. Across craft clusters, children are turning away because inherited mastery offers neither predictable income nor social ascent. This is not modernisation. It is amputation. Skill that took three generations of hands to build, and that no syllabus can hold, is being lost not for want of demand but for want of standing. History and the craft dies for a reason more curable than fashion. The weaver's poverty is not written into his loom. It is taken from him on the way to the market. Between the hands that make and the

buyer who pays stands a line of intermediaries, each taking his cut of a margin the maker never sees, so that the man of skill ends poor while the man of access grows rich. Standing, then, is not honour alone. It is the wage the work would earn if it reached the market whole. This is where the new instruments earn their keep. The platform and the phone have begun to do to the middleman what no policy ever could, letting the weaver in Varanasi and the potter in Khurja sell to the world directly and keep what the sale is worth. That disintermediation is not a convenience to be admired. It is a lever to be seized, by deliberate policy and steady advocacy, until it is the maker the market pays, and not the man in between. A developed India cannot keep losing its capability to a mindset, and the loss cannot be repaired by improving the ladder alone. Better schools, fairer papers, cleaner admissions—each have value, and none of them builds a second way up. The remedy is not a kinder examination. It is a second instrument.

We have given the fortnight to the lock. The room is the harder question, and the more important one. What that second instrument is, and how a country already owns the tools to build it, is where this essay turns next.

Bid to monetise UPI must not be at the cost of its success

UPI's greatest achievement has been to make digital payments almost invisible in everyday life—instant, ubiquitous and free at the point of use. Any revenue model that introduces friction, however small, risks weakening that advantage

The government is right to clarify that the amendment to the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, doesn't mean that users will suddenly have to pay for UPI transactions. UPI will remain free for consumers, person-to-person transactions will continue without charge, and any future merchant discount rate (MDR), if introduced, will be nominal and limited to a specified category of merchant transactions. Most merchant transactions, the government assures, will remain outside its ambit. That clarification is welcome. But the amendment nevertheless marks an important shift: it creates the legal space for a departure from the zero-MDR regime that has been central to UPI's phenomenal growth since its introduction. The question is no longer whether UPI can be monetised, but how far, and at whose cost.

There is a legitimate case for a sustainable revenue model. UPI has grown into the backbone of India's digital payments ecosystem, processing enormous volumes at a cost that cannot indefinitely be met through government incentives. Banks, payment-system operators and other



participants bear substantial expenses on infrastructure, technology, cybersecurity and fraud prevention. The payments industry has consequently been pressing for an MDR regime for several years. Also, a system of such scale cannot remain permanently dependent on taxpayer-funded support. If UPI is to continue expanding into smaller towns and rural India, and if its infrastructure is to keep pace with technological and security demands, there

must be adequate resources for investment and innovation.

But this is where caution is imperative. UPI's greatest achievement has been to make digital payments almost invisible in everyday life—instant, ubiquitous and free at the point of use. Any revenue model that introduces friction, however small, risks weakening that advantage. An MDR imposed on merchants may not be a direct charge on consumers, but costs have a way of travelling through the economy. Merchants may absorb some of the burden, but some could eventually be reflected in prices or passed on to customers. If MDR is introduced, it should target those best placed to absorb it, with clear thresholds and safeguards against its cascading into consumer charges. The government must resist the temptation to view UPI primarily as a revenue opportunity. Beyond the economics of transactions, it has become an important piece of India's public digital infrastructure. India should monetise the ecosystem with care, but it must not tax the success of UPI.

Do not let the debate around reservation derail Gen Z

Political leaders, including Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, condemned the alleged use of force against protesting students and demanded a fair investigation.

The recent nationwide protests by students marked one of the most significant youth-led movements in recent years. What began as a demand for transparency and accountability in public exams quickly evolved into a larger assertion of Gen Z aspirations.

In Delhi and several cities across the country, young people from diverse social, linguistic and religious backgrounds came together to voice their concerns. Political leaders, including Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, condemned the alleged use of force against protesting students and demanded a fair investigation.

For a government that has successfully mobilised young voters over the past decade, the scale and intensity of these protests were undoubtedly a matter of concern. The political response, including the resignation of the Union education minister amid mounting criticism, reflected the seriousness of the crisis.

It is against this backdrop that a sudden social media campaign headlined 'Remove reservation' has gained traction. Whether spontaneous or organised, such campaigns risk diverting public attention from pressing concerns like education reforms, employment opportunities and institutional accountability.

Instead of addressing the structural challenges confronting students, the debate shifts to one of the most sensitive social issues. History offers an important lesson. When the recommendations of the Mandal Commission were implemented in 1990 to provide reservations for other backward classes, they triggered widespread political and social mobilisation. The debate over reservations has resurfaced repeatedly ever since, often during periods of political uncertainty. Therefore, the demand to abolish reservations is not new. Yet, the constitutional framework has consistently recognised



affirmative action as an instrument of social justice designed to correct centuries of historical discrimination and unequal access to education, employment and public institutions. B.R. Ambedkar's vision of equality has today transcended caste boundaries. The Constitution is increasingly viewed not merely as a legal document, but as the foundation of democratic rights and equal citizenship. His advocacy for social justice continues to shape public discourse, particularly among younger generations. India's caste system, despite decades of constitutional safeguards, continues to influence social and economic opportunities. Untouchability, caste-based violence, 'honour' killings and discrimination remain painful realities. In such a society, the question is not whether reservations should exist, but whether the conditions that necessitated them have truly disappeared.

Had historically privileged sections voluntarily ensured equal access to education, property and employment over generations, affirmative action might not have been required. Reservation became necessary precisely because equality of opportunity did not exist. Nor is affirmative action unique to India. Countries such as the US adopted affirmative action policies to improve opportunities for historically disadvantaged communities. Brazil, Canada and several other democracies have also introduced targeted measures in education and public jobs to address historical inequalities. Critics frequently question the competence of candidates benefiting from reservation. The more relevant question is whether India's institutions have achieved equitable representation. Data from higher educational institutions continue to show that the

Scheduled Castes and Tribes remain significantly underrepresented, particularly in senior faculty positions. Similarly, centralised admission systems and highly competitive national entrance examinations have posed additional challenges for many first-generation learners from marginalised communities. Without strengthening school education and ensuring equal access to quality learning, merely arguing against reservations ignores the deeper structural inequalities within the system. The youth of today are increasingly seeking quality education, meaningful employment and upwards social mobility. Their aspirations cannot be reduced to divisive identity politics. Attempts to polarise young people on caste lines only distract attention from issues that genuinely affect their future. The debate over reservation should therefore not become a tool for political mobilisation. Rather, it should encourage a deeper national conversation on how India can create a society where affirmative action eventually becomes unnecessary—not by abolishing it prematurely, but by eliminating the inequalities that made it necessary in the first place. Reservation was never intended to be an end in itself. Its purpose is to ensure that historically disadvantaged communities gain access to education, employment and public institutions on equitable terms. As long as systemic discrimination and unequal opportunities persist, the constitutional commitment to affirmative action will continue to remain relevant. Instead of encouraging divisions over reservation, governments, institutions and political parties should focus on dismantling the social barriers that perpetuate inequality in society. India's young generation deserves policies that unite them around education, employment and equal opportunity—not narratives that pit one section of society against another.

1. Apply sunscreen regularly

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

2. Don't wash your face too often

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

3. Nourish your skin

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

4. Get adequate sleep

Sleep is extremely important not only for your skin but your overall health. This doesn't mean you sleep all day, just get adequate sleep of around 8 to 9 hours. Also,

Anti-ageing tips for oily Skin

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

fatty acids like salmon, halibut, eggs, soy milk and yogurt. They are not only delicious but also do a lot of benefit to your skin.

6. Avoid sugar, smoke and alcohol

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

sleep on your back as sleeping on your face can wrinkle the skin and age skin at a faster rate.

5. Consume Omega-3 fatty acids

Omega-3 fatty acids revitalises your skin and repairs it from inside. Eat foods rich on omega-3



Home remedies

to bring the glow back



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

Hair care tips:

Home remedies for grey hair

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

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

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

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

The black tea remedy for grey hair. Make one cup of black tea without addin

g milk to it and add one tablespoon of salt to this mixture. Now massage the lukewarm tea on your head, making sure that your hair roots are nicely nourished. Let the mixture stay on your hair for at least half an hour, before washing your hair thoroughly with a good quality shampoo.

Henna powder can come to your rescue. Make a paste with henna powder, yogurt, methi seeds, coffee, basil juice and mint juice and boil it nicely. Let the mixture stand overnight before you apply it on your hair. Wash your hair with shampoo in about 3 hours for natural black hair colour.

Dried sage for premature greying of your hair. Boil some water and add 4 tablespoons of dried sage. Let the mixture stand for 2 hours and drain it further. Now add a few drops of glycerine power to the mixture, which will provide your hair with nourishing Vitamin E. Mix well and massage on your scalp for natural shine and long, healthy black strands.

Massage your scalp with coconut oil. Boil one cup of coconut oil. Add hibiscus leaves, almond oil and methi powder to the mixture. Cool and strain and keep it in a glass jar to apply at least 3-4 times in a week.



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

- A little bit of sandalwood and turmeric powder mixed with some rose water can work wonders for the skin giving it baby-like softness.
- Triphala contains polyphenols, flavonoids and other antioxidants that possess both anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties, clearing acne as if it ceased to exist.
- Sandalwood, gram flour and turmeric powder have antimicrobial properties that reduce skin inflammations, clear acne and reduce sunburn.
- Orange peel acts as an astringent and skin-toning agent, clearing acne, age spots and skin blemishes.
- Lemon juice is acidic with exfoliating properties helps to peel away the skin's top layer, there by removing existing pigmentation or dark spots. Lemon juice can be mixed with a little bit of sugar, which is an excellent cleansing agent.
- Winter cherry (Ashwagandha) soothes skin abrasions caused due to environmental conditions. One of the best ingredients that nature has to offer for dealing with skin irritation.
- Peppermint, basil and neem leaves have cooling properties that reduce skin inflammation, insect bites, skin burn and rashes. You can also mix in a little honey. It contains antioxidants and antibacterial agents that help reduce skin irritation.

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

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

The perfect recipe

- Grind four almonds, soaked in water overnight
- Mix one tablespoon gram flour and two tablespoons of raw milk or milk cream to this
- Add five-six drops of lemon juice and honey
- Apply this paste to your face and neck, avoiding the eyes and allow it to dry
- Wash with cold water after about 25-30 minutes
- Do this twice a week and see the change in your skin tone and texture

Post a comment



Let your Eyes speak with these Makeup tips

If your eyes are the window to your soul, they deserve to be dressed up. Our selection of the season's favourite eye makeup looks is a good place to start. The humble eyeliner and mascara are two makeup essentials that you'd find in every woman's makeup bag. But the casually-applied line has now graduated to cat-eyed, winged and blocked. Take your pick and let your eyes do the talking this festive season.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

What could be better than one perfect sweep of eyeliner? Two perfect sweeps! While the darker shade helps define the eyes, a colourful liner adds a fun pop of colour to the entire look. Damian Garozzo, makeup artist, who created the look for the Clinique Colour Pro Program shows how to get this look.

Apply a thin layer of black eyeliner across the outer two thirds of your upper lash line, slightly winging it at the outer corners. Follow this by layering a blue eyeliner tightly on the inner third of your lash line.

Apply two coats of a volumising mascara to get a contrast with the colours.

Complete the look by grooming the brows.

WINGWOMAN

The swinging 60's gave us one of our favourite eyeliner trends- the winged eyeliner. Ever since, this look has seen different versions in every decade. Asha Hariharan, colour consultant for hair and makeup says, "The look can be glamorous or sultry. Keep the look 'Indian' and young for this festive season. The most important part is the angle of the wing." She shares her secrets for nailing the look.

The first step is doing your natural line. A lot of people make the mistake of starting with the wing. Start with a thin line at the inner corner of the eye. This line should gradually become thicker, being the thickest at the outer corner.

Now, take a 45 degree angle from the bottom lid and create the wing. (We often mistake this angle to be taken from the top lid) The wing can be short or long depending on whether or not you want drama.

Once you've got your desired length, it's a question of attaching the wing to the line on top of your eyelid. With so many trends to choose from, you'll be spoilt for choice. And even if you're a novice, there's nothing a little practice won't fix.



5 tips for winter Lips

Say goodbye to dry, flaky lips this winter. We give you five easy to follow home remedies to get soft baby lips.

-Moisturise your lips throughout the day by massaging them with a lip balm containing vitamin E and beeswax. You can also use a regular moisturising cream.

-To get rid of the dead skin on your lips, you need to exfoliate your lips with a gentle scrub. Make your own lip scrub by mixing sugar with petroleum jelly. You can also use a toothbrush with soft bristles to scrub your lips. Once you are done exfoliating, moisturise your lips with the lip balm.

-While applying your lipstick, first apply the balm and let it get absorbed on the lips. You can choose a lipstick with extra moisture benefits.

-Don't lick your lips to moisturise them. This will further dry the skin on the lips. Also, never pick on the peeling skin of the lips. Not only will your lips become sore, they will also start bleeding. It's tempting to lick your lips in order to moisturise them.



-You need to protect your skin from the harmful UV rays of the sun evening during winter. To protect your lips, opt for a lip balm or lipstick with SPF protection.

Just like our body, our skin too

needs a detox. Thanks to the fact that we are exposed to so many chemicals and toxic substances daily, our bodies and skin go through a lot of abuse affecting our health in a bad way.

Our skin takes the brunt of it. Dr KE Mukadam, dermatologist and laser surgeon says, "Overload of toxic materials causes skin eruptions, allergies, dry skin, pigmentation, eczema and psoriasis." The skin acts as the backup organ of elimination for the kidney and bad skin is usually an indication of toxicity in the body.

Dr Apratim Goel, dermatologist and laser surgeon adds, "Toxins could be those produced within the body and not eliminated naturally, or they are the ones ingested orally or inhaled or another way of penetration of toxin is through skin i.e. makeup, skincare products as well as pollution." Some of them are... Free radicals Cosmetologist Dr Rashmi Shetty says, "Free radicals are singlet oxygen cells and are produced due to various chemical reactions in the body like breathing, digestion or when you are stressed, or are smoking." They can cause a lot of damage by harming the good cells of the body including affecting collagen production and pigmentation pathways. Dr Shetty adds,

Kitchen remedies for a glowing Skin

With the year end festival excitement in the air, everyone like to have a clear skin. Let's take some help from the kitchen and use natural ingredients which will lighten, brighten & even out your skin tone while at the same time reduce dark spots, acne marks, pigmentation & sun tan for your true complexion to stand out.

Fresh fruit

Take one tsp of pineapple juice, one tsp of coconut milk and half a tsp of honey to this. Mix well and apply this for 20 minutes. Wash with normal water.

Turmeric

With its lovely antiseptic properties, it's no wonder that turmeric is part of ceremonies before marriage. Take one tsp of milk cream, a pinch of turmeric and 2 drops of almond oil. Mix well and apply on face



avoiding eyes. It is recommended to use ambe haldi (stocked in ayurvedic stores). Wash with lukewarm water when dry.

Lentils

Take 1 tbsp of red masoor or green moong dal powder, add curds and few drops of coconut oil to this. Mix well and apply this on your face, leave till dry. Use lukewarm water and see the glow.

Fruit peels

Take orange and lemon peels and dry them under the sun. Powder them and store them to be used for use as and when required. You can mix a tsp of both these powders with rose water and use it twice a week. Keep it on for 20 minutes and then wash with normal water.

For healthy skin, get rid of these toxins

"This can be treated either by topical application of Vitamins A, E and C, Q10, aster xanthine, glutathione, (orally or serum). Glutathione is a powerful antioxidant but its absorption is poor so it is given as an intravenous drip, along with vitamin C. Tablets, serums and creams are available over-the-counter."

Heavy metals

Bismuth, lead (in lipsticks), arsenic, copper and other heavy metals can be ingested through food as well as through makeup and skincare products. They produce toxicity when their levels rise beyond a critical level and the body is unable to eliminate them.

Environmental pollutants Pollutants like sulphur gases, carbon monoxide, dust particles,

bacteria, viruses, fungus, moulds make skin sensitive, intolerant, dry, dark and patchy.

Contaminated drinking water

There has been a lot of emphasis on water purification processes with carbon, UV light as well as reverse osmosis technology. Water ingested could be contaminated with toxins, bacteria, fungus, spores, parasite, ova etc.

Medications

Most medicines are metabolised by the liver or kidney or both. In case of reduced function either, or in case of cumulative over dosage of chemicals, they tend to accumulate and cause harm to the skin as well as other organs. Iron ingested for a long time (years) can produce black pigmentation on skin.



110 decibels of devotion and the asuras in Kanwar Yatra

The Kanwar Yatra brings lakhs of devotees onto roads across north India each Sawan. It's not just some of the hooligans among the kanwariyas who are a problem. Their music can leave commuters with palpitations. Here's what the kanwariyas said about themselves and their gigantic DJ sets.

Delhi. (Agency)

“Who was the first Kanwar?” one of the young men from a group of Kanwariyas asked as I hesitantly approached them on the outskirts of Delhi. I guessed Shiva. They laughed at the answer. "No. Ravana. Ravana was the first Kanwar. And who was Ravana?" A Shiva bhakt, I said. "Yes, but what else?" they asked rhetorically, adding, "He was a Brahmin. He was also an asura. We are also asuras. Have you seen any educated, employed person carrying the waters in a Kanwar? It is just us. We are paying for our past sins.”

The words were rather poignant, coming from a group of youths who could pass off as ruffians, or to some, kabaddi players. These young men, all of them in their 20s, seemed to have



found asura as a way to appropriate devotees' arrival, as they travelled from their place in the Kanwar Yatra. The Har Ki Paudi in Haridwar to their thumping bass from their Mad Max villages, "seeking redemption". On the trucks was seemingly a sign of Shiva streets of Kalkaji in South Delhi, the

music from their trucks registered 93 to 110 decibels on the Decibel Meter app. Legally, normal daytime levels of noise sit around 55 decibels in a residential area. A jet engine operates in the same range as the Kanwariyas' Mad Max trucks. A shotgun blast is around 120 decibels. The bass is deliberate. "Dhammak honi chaahiye, sheesha hilne chaahiye (The earth must shake. Windows must rattle)," one of them said. "That is the measure of arrival for us Shiv bhakts," the Kanwariya added. For people stuck behind these trucks for hours, the constant bass and nerve-racking can trigger palpitations and anxiety. The trucks often move slowly, or stop without warning. The men on them are sometimes high on alcohol or other substances. The combination turns ordinary traffic scary, sometimes

deadly.

This is not to say that Kanwar Yatra is about hooliganism and chaos. It's just that the high-powered DJ systems and chest-thumping participants make some in the Kanwar Yatra stand out. Kanwar Yatra is the annual pilgrimage in which devotees carry Ganga water from Haridwar to offer at local Shiva temples in their villages, towns and cities. In recent years, large sections of it have taken the form of processions built around sound systems, Mad Max-style trucks, and open displays of intoxication. Kanwariyas India Today Digital spoke to said police in some stretches now restrict speaker size to 10X12 feet, and allow them only on the front sides of vehicles. The groups treat these limits as a "challenge".

India blocks over 3,700 apps, flags 32 lakh mule accounts in cybercrime crackdown

Delhi. (Agency)

India has blocked 3,718 mobile applications, including fake loan apps, as part of a nationwide crackdown on cybercrime, the Ministry of Home Affairs said in Lok Sabha. The action was taken through the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) in coordination with various government agencies and technology platforms. Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar said that more than Rs 11,158 crore involved in cyber fraud had been saved through the Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System (CFCFRMS) as of June 30, 2026.

According to the ministry, 32.80 lakh cybercrime complaints had been registered through the system by the same date. The CFCFRMS enables authorities to coordinate with banks, payment gateways and financial institutions to stop or freeze suspicious transactions after a fraud is reported. The government has also intensified action against mule bank accounts used by cybercriminals to route and conceal stolen money. As many as 32.08 lakh suspected mule accounts have been identified, while transactions worth Rs 25,698 crore have been stopped, the ministry said. Authorities have further blocked 15.75 lakh mobile SIM cards and 5.77 lakh IMEI numbers linked to suspected cybercrime activities. The measures are aimed at preventing criminals from using fraudulent connections and devices to carry out cyber fraud. The Ministry of Home Affairs has also introduced a new Standard Operating Procedure for the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP) and CFCFRMS to speed up complaint resolution, improve coordination between agencies and expedite the freezing and restoration of defrauded funds.

Examining implications for national security: MEA on Pak-Saudi-Turkey defence pact

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Ministry of External Affairs on Tuesday said India is assessing the implications of a new defence pact between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, including its potential impact on New Delhi's national security and regional stability. The three countries signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement on August 7 after Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan held talks. External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India was closely examining the agreement.

"As far as this agreement is concerned, we are examining its implications both from the perspective of India's national security and considerations of regional peace and stability," Jaiswal said at his bi-weekly media briefing. "India remains fully committed to safeguarding its national interests and will take all necessary measures in this regard," he added.

PACT PLEDGES COLLECTIVE DEFENCE

A joint statement issued by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey said the agreement was based on shared strategic interests and longstanding defence cooperation among the three countries. "The agreement is intended to strengthen collective deterrence against any act of aggression, and stipulates that any armed attack against any one of the three states shall be regarded as an attack against them all," the statement said.

Delhi welcomes monsoon rain, but landfill cleanup, waste recycling affected

The MCD began biomining in 2019 after directions from the National Green Tribunal to scientifically process and remove legacy waste that had accumulated over decades.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Monsoon rain has slowed biomining operations at Delhi's three largest landfill sites, potentially delaying the Municipal Corporation of Delhi's (MCD) effort to meet deadlines for clearing decades-old waste from the city's towering garbage dumps. According to the civic body's dashboard, the slowdown has been most pronounced at the Okhla landfill, where daily biomining output — which had averaged between 6,000 and 9,000 metric tonnes per day (TPD) — fell to around 650 TPD between August 3 and 11 with several days showing no legacy waste has been lifted. During the same period, around 2,800 TDP

of municipal waste continued to arrive at the site daily, offsetting much of the progress. At Bhalswa landfill, daily processing has declined to roughly 1,700 TPD last week, after averaging between the



usual 6,000 and 11,500 TPD, according to the MCD dashboard. Around 4,300 TPD of fresh waste is being dumped daily at the landfill. The drop is significant as MCD has

set a goal of eliminating both the Okhla and Bhalswa landfill by December.

The Ghazipur landfill, the city's largest, has also fallen short of its target. The MCD has set a daily biomining goal of 7,000 TDP of legacy waste there, but official data shows that only around 1,400 TPD was lifted over the last nine days. Meanwhile, another 2,400 TDP of fresh municipal solid waste are deposited at the site each day. Urban Development Minister Ashish Sood had directed the MCD to ramp up the biomining capacity from 7,000 TPD to 12,000 TPD by July 31 to meet the December 2027 deadline, while on his visit to the Ghazipur landfill site in June.

'I can use UPI, text to check if they are open': Inside IIT Delhi's 'Gen-Z' post office

Delhi. (Agency)

At IIT Delhi's Hauz Khas Post Office, there are no grim walls or rows of hard chairs. Instead, sunlight streams through wall-length glass windows and a coffee machine sits in a corner. There are pink cushioned chairs, potted plants and even a painting titled "That's so IIT Delhi" on a wall by the entrance. Last year, it was redesigned as India's first "Gen Z post office" — an attempt to make a traditionally bureaucratic space more welcoming to young people and to introduce them to services beyond letters and stamps. On a Saturday afternoon, Ravendra Kumar, 31, stood at the counter with his 11-year-old daughter Kavya, dressed in her school uniform, to update their Aadhaar cards. Kumar first visited the post office about six months ago. "It is always a great place to visit," he said. "I

never feel like coming here is a hassle." Inside the makeover

One of the walls and the ceiling are panelled in red; the other walls stand in a complementary white. Behind the red-



and-white desk, a doodle mural covers a white wall: painted human figures, cats, a pizza, a burger, and, placed between sketches of the India Gate and the Qutb Minar, the Mona Lisa. The names of the IIT Delhi students who painted it are

written in red paint in the corner of the wall. There is also a framed picture showing the post office as it used to look next to how it looks now.

A weighing machine for parcels sits next to a transparent display case containing post office merchandise such as bottles and fridge magnets. One-year-and-nine-months-old Akshita had found her own amusement in pressing its buttons while her father, Manoranjan Baditya, filled out forms to enrol her in the Sukanya Samridhhi Yojana. His wife, Hemangi, and 4-year-old son Rudraj were sitting on the chairs. "When we come here, we can bring our kids without any tension; there is no rok-tok (no nagging)", Hemangi said. "Our kids can be who they are, and no one complains." "Yaha aakar mind fresh ho jata hai (our minds are refreshed after we come here)," she added.

IMD corrects 'entry error', Delhi still 29.6 mm short of normal August rain

New Delhi. (Agency)

Citing an "entry error", the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday revised the rainfall recorded for August 6 from 56 mm to 18.7 mm, bringing down cumulative rainfall recorded at Safdarjung weather station — the base station for the Capital — for August to 197.2 mm. Until Monday, the figure was recorded as 230.5 mm on the IMD website, as per which Delhi had already crossed its August average normal rainfall in just the first eight days of the month.

However, the revised figure meant Delhi has received about 87% of its normal August rainfall so far. As per IMD's long period average (1991-2020), Safdarjung receives 226.8 mm of rainfall in August, leaving the city about 29.6 mm short of the monthly normal this year as of now. Speaking to The Indian Express, IMD Director Dr Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said



the discrepancy was likely due to a human error in data logging and that the reason behind the mistake was being checked.

After an inspection on Tuesday, D R Pattanaik, Scientist G at IMD, said, "Safdarjung's cumulative rainfall data displayed yesterday was 230.5 mm, which happened due to incorrect rainfall entry of 56 mm instead of 18.7 mm for August 6 in a table under the link."

He added that the rainfall figure had, however, been correctly displayed in the Delhi bulletin issued daily since August 6. "The same has been corrected today and 197.2 mm is the correct figure which is being displayed currently," he said. IMD senior scientist Krishna Mishra said the meteorological parameters at the Safdarjung observatory are manually measured and logged. "Once an incorrect value was entered into the system, it was picked up and retained in the cumulative calculation, leading to the higher figure being displayed," he added.

Bhagwant Mann video row: Another gets bail as Gurgaon court flags lack of evidence

Arjun was arrested on June 23 following allegations of being part of an organised crime syndicate that allegedly pressured a digital forensics worker to fabricate a report on the video.

Gurgaon. (Agency)

Days after a contractual cyber expert — arrested amid a controversy over a video allegedly linked to Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann — was granted relief, a Gurgaon court Monday granted bail to another accused in the case. The court noted there was lack of evidence hinting at organised crime.

Additional Sessions Judge Sudeep Goel granted the regular bail to Arjun alias Arun. He was arrested on June 23 following allegations of being part of an organised crime syndicate that allegedly pressured a digital forensics worker to fabricate a report on the video. While explaining the application of Section 111 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) that pertains to organised crime, the court noted that there must be legally

admissible prima facie evidence to constitute any continuing unlawful activity. The judge observed that without such evidence "the State cannot make any suspect undergo custodial interrogation to hunt for such evidence against the suspect or others". The order detailed that evidence must first be gathered to establish a prima facie case under BNS Section 111. The judge ruled that without legally admissible accusations, the state cannot use a suspect as "custodial bait by any hook, line, and sinker" to bring the case under the organised crime provision. During the proceedings, the investigating agency conceded that the accused had clean criminal antecedents with no other pending FIRs, and that the forensic report on the seized electronic equipment was still awaited. Ankit Bhardwaj, a

contractual cyber expert with the National Investigation Agency, was earlier granted bail by the same court after the judge



noted that organised crime charges could not be invoked without a forensic laboratory report.

Granting relief to Arun on the basis of parity, the court noted that the investigating agency failed to distinguish

his case from that of co-accused Ankit. The judge stated in the order, "Moreover the co-accused Ankit has been granted the concession of bail vide order dated 30.07.2026. The present accused is also entitled to bail on the ground of parity."

The court granted Arjun bail on the condition of furnishing bail bonds of Rs 1 lakh with one surety in the like amount. Under the bail terms, the accused must surrender his passport, appear before the trial court during hearings, and provide working mobile numbers to the investigating officer and must not change them without prior intimation.

Further, the accused was directed not to directly or indirectly make any threat, inducement, or promise to prosecution witnesses.

Shares are mostly higher in Asia, with Kospi up 4%, while oil prices gain

BANGKOK. (Agency)

Asian shares were mostly higher Wednesday after U.S. stocks slipped a bit further from their records, while oil prices advanced as doubts persisted over when the war with Iran will allow crude to flow freely again.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 gained 0.6% to 67334.94.

In South Korea, the Kospi gained 4% to 6,597.90 on renewed buying of computer chipmakers. Samsung Electronics gained 7.7% and memory chipmaker SK Hynix was up 7.1%.

Taiwan's Taix advanced 0.8%.

The Shanghai Composite index added 0.3% to 3,946.51, while the Hang Seng in Hong Kong slipped 1.2% to 25,352.13.

In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 lost 0.6% to 9,197.00. The price of a barrel of Brent crude, the international standard, was up 0.9% at \$89.67 early Wednesday. U.S. benchmark crude oil picked up 0.9% to \$83.98. Iran has rejected U.S. President Donald Trump's comment that since Iran is seeking compensation as part of any talks on ending the war, he would demand the same.

The United States and Israel attacked Iran in late February, which led to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and kept much of the world's oil pent up in the Middle East. Last month alone, Brent's price veered between \$72 and \$102 per barrel. Meanwhile, an attack by Iran-backed Houthi rebels on a vessel in the Bab el-Mandeb strait, at Yemen's southern tip, has raised concerns that the violence could reignite civil war and further threaten regional shipping routes. Higher oil prices make inflation worse, and they have sent the average cost for a gallon of regular gasoline to \$4.01, according to AAA. That's up from less than \$3.14 a year ago.

Rupee falls 6 paise to 95.42 against US dollar in early trade

MUMBAI. (Agency)

The rupee fell 6 paise to 95.42 against the US dollar in early trade on Wednesday, weighed down by the sharp rise in Brent crude toward USD 90/bbl, as hopes of a quick US-Iran agreement and reopening of the Strait of Hormuz faded. Forex traders said the principal driver behind the rise in Brent crude prices is the uncertainty over the Strait of Hormuz. Markets are increasingly sceptical about a quick US-Iran agreement, while reports of attacks on shipping have renewed concerns about physical supply, they said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 95.40 before slipping further to 95.42, down 6 paise from its previous close.

On Tuesday, the rupee declined 6 paise to settle at 95.36 against the US dollar. With Brent now near USD 90 per barrel, INR/USD at 95.50 becomes the immediate level to watch, followed by 95.80-96.00 if oil remains elevated, Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading higher by 1 per cent at USD 89.80 per barrel in futures trade. Rupee opened at 95.42 with oil prices slightly down at USD 89.36 per barrel while the dollar index was at 99.83 virtually unchanged. Oil companies continue to buy US dollars for their daily requirements while RBI continues to support the rupee at various levels daily," Bhansali added.

Will govt revert from National Pension System to Old Pension Scheme? Finance Ministry responds

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Finance Ministry has ruled out any move to revert from the National Pension System (NPS) to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) due to its 'unsustainable fiscal liability' on the exchequer. Government has clarified in the Lok Sabha that the decision to restore the OPS for state employees falls entirely under individual state policy discretion, while the Centre will stick to the NPS.

Lok Sabha MP Aditya Yadav raised question in Lok Sabha on August 10, on the official stance, fiscal calculations, and policy analysis conducted by the Central Government regarding the growing demands from Central and State Government employees for the restoration of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS). Yadav sought answer from the finance ministry on the core structural infirmities, market risks, and annuity deficits identified by employee federations within the current National Pension System (NPS). He also asked whether any high-level review committee has been constituted to modify the NPS to guarantee a defined.

Himachal Pradesh adds 60-paise fuel cess to fund widows and orphans

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Himachal Pradesh government has imposed an additional 60 paise per litre on petrol and diesel, effective from August 12. Instead of having its root in crude oil price or domestic inflation, the increase comes from a new levy called the "Widow and Orphan Cess." With the charge, the government aims to fund welfare measures for widows and orphans in the state. The state government notified the cess this week through the State Taxes and Excise Department under the state's Value Added Tax (VAT) law, with the approval of the Council of Ministers. The levy will be collected at the first point of sale, when an oil company sells fuel to a dealer.

For consumers, the immediate impact will be minor. However, the notification allows the state government to levy up to Rs 5 per litre. The current 60-paise charge, therefore, may not be the final rate and could be increased in the future.

WHEN DID HIMACHAL INTRODUCE THE CESS?

The story of Himachal Pradesh's new fuel cess began in March 2026, when Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu introduced a bill in the Assembly. It proposed to create a dedicated cess to fund welfare measures for widows and orphans. The bill was passed through a voice vote, while the Opposition walked out of the Assembly. The government's reasoning was that

these welfare schemes need a steady source of funding. Instead of depending entirely on annual budget



allocations, the state wanted a dedicated stream of revenue that could continue to fund these programmes. But the new cess also raises a bigger question of who is actually paying for this welfare measure and if there are any benefits?

WHO PAYS THE LEVY?

The government has said that the cess is aimed at creating a dedicated and steady source of revenue for welfare schemes to support widows and orphans from economically weaker sections. The 60-paise charge applies to every litre of petrol and diesel sold in the state. This means that the cost is borne by the very people the scheme is intended to support, including widows and families caring for orphaned children. Moreover, the cess will also be paid by fuel-dependent consumers, including taxi operators and farmers, who are already sensitive to changes in fuel prices. The new levy will be charged in addition to the existing VAT on petrol and high-speed diesel.

Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran quits. Here's full text of resignation letter

Kolkata. (Agency)

Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran on Wednesday said he will not seek reappointment when his current term ends on February 20, 2027, ending months of uncertainty over the leadership of the Tata Group's holding company. The development comes amid reported differences between Tata Sons and Tata Trusts over Chandrasekaran's reappointment. Read the full text of N Chandrasekaran's letter announcing his resignation here: I have completed 40 years of professional life at the Tata Group. I am grateful for the immensely satisfying opportunity to contribute to this venerable institution. Leading Tata Sons over the past decade has been a great honour and a profound responsibility. My current tenure as the Chairman of Tata Sons comes to an end on Feb 20, 2027. Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and Sir Ratan Tata Trust had unanimously resolved and recommended the extension of my next term for a period of five years, which was recorded and recommended by the Tata Sons Nomination and Remuneration Committee and the Board. Subsequently, the resolution was tabled in the Tata Sons Board on Feb 24, 2026. However, the proposal was not carried through because one of the Board Members did not support it, and in the absence of unanimous support, I chose to defer the decision. It has been 6 months since that Board meeting, and no resolution has been reached till date. Tata Sons is a very large institution and there are many strategic projects that are under critical stages of execution. It is not only necessary to have a leader in place to lead the Group beyond Feb 2027, but also clarity on leadership is important for employees, investors, partners and other stakeholders.

Under these circumstances, earlier today, I have communicated to the Tata Sons Board that I have decided not to offer myself for reappointment when my term ends on Feb 20, 2027. I have asked the Board to decide on the succession soon to ensure a proper transition.

Why Godrej Consumer shares fell 10% after CEO Sudhir Sitapati's sudden exit

New Delhi. (Agency)

Shares of Godrej Consumer Products fell sharply on Wednesday after CEO Sudhir Sitapati resigned from the company with immediate effect. The sudden leadership change has raised concerns among investors about the transition and the company's future execution.

The stock fell as much as 10% in pre-open trading. At the time of writing, Godrej Consumer Products was down 9.45% at Rs 928.10.

SUDHIR SITAPATI RESIGNS BEFORE TENURE ENDS

Sitapati stepped down as Managing

Director and CEO despite his tenure having been extended until October



2031. His resignation came only a few months after his reappointment, making the sudden exit a surprise for investors. The company has appointed Aasif Malbari, its Group Chief Financial Officer and CEO of the Africa

business, as the new Managing Director and CEO. Malbari will take charge for a five-year term starting August 12, 2026.

INVESTORS WORRY ABOUT LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

The unexpected change at the top has led to concerns about how smoothly the company will move from one leadership team to another. Godrej Consumer Products has been working on its growth strategy across several markets. While there is no immediate indication of a change in the company's broader strategy, investors are now watching closely to see how the new leadership handles execution.

UPI became India's invisible lifeline. Now, who should pay for it?

New Delhi. (Agency)

You probably do not remember the last time you paid a fee for a UPI transaction. That is precisely what makes the current debate around UPI so interesting. For millions of Indians, paying Rs 30 for chai, Rs 200 for groceries or sending Rs 500 to a friend has become so routine that the payment itself barely registers. You scan a QR code, enter your PIN and carry on with your day. The machinery that moves the money from one bank account to another is almost completely invisible. That invisibility is not a fluke. It is the result of a policy choice that helped UPI grow from a relatively small payment system into something that now looks more like public infrastructure. And after a decade of keeping the basic payment experience free,

India is beginning to ask a question that was always going to become harder to avoid as UPI grew: who should ultimately pay for the system that has made digital payments so cheap and easy? The immediate trigger is a change to the law that opens the door to charges on some digital-payment transactions. But if you are wondering whether your Rs 500 payment to a friend is about to come with a fee, the answer, for now, is no. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said consumers will not be charged for UPI transactions and that no final Merchant Discount Rate, or MDR, framework has been decided. The legal change is just an enabling provision, and it does not itself impose a UPI fee. To understand why the government is even considering a change, though, it

helps to go back to the beginning — to a time when UPI was not something you used to pay your neighbourhood shopkeeper, but a new system that only 21 banks had signed up for.

HOW UPI WENT FROM A NEW IDEA TO A DAILY HABIT

Unified Payments Interface or UPI was launched in April 2016 by the National Payments Corporation of India, or NPCI. There were 21 banks on the platform when it began, and its first month produced just 373 transactions. The numbers today almost make that first month look like a different era. In May 2026, UPI processed 23.20 billion transactions worth Rs 29.90 lakh crore, with 720 banks live on the network. Across FY2025-26, UPI processed about 24,162 crore transactions worth more than Rs 314 lakh crore.

Marijuana found in sample of Air India pilot whose flight fell 300 feet, injured 24

New Delhi. (Agency)

The confirmatory drug test of the Air India pilot-in-command of a Phuket-Delhi flight that fell 300 feet, leaving 24 people injured, has come in as positive for marijuana, according to sources. The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) had said on Sunday that the preliminary drug screening gave a "non-negative" result. The samples were sent for confirmatory testing, and the result has come as positive with the substance identified as marijuana, it is learnt. Confirmatory tests are required in the case of a non-negative preliminary screening as certain foods and medications can throw up false positives in initial screenings. Emails sent to MoCA, Directorate General of Civil Aviation

(DGCA) and Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) regarding the confirmatory drug test did not elicit any response. Air India didn't comment on the development. The Air India Airbus A320 aircraft, operating a flight from Phuket to Delhi on August 4, encountered a sudden altitude drop of about 300 feet, leaving 20 passengers and four cabin crew members injured; 17 of the 24 had to be hospitalised.

The aircraft had 137 passengers, six cabin crew members, and two pilots on board. The incident was classified as serious and is under investigation by the AAIB. According to sources, the conduct of the pilots is also under the scanner, particularly in view of the positive drug test. Moreover, the

aircraft may have faced some snags with its hydraulic and control systems, which will also be investigated by the AAIB, it is learnt. Aircraft manufacturer Airbus and French aviation accident investigation authority BEA will be assisting in the investigation. Earlier on Tuesday, a team of Air India management led by the airline's outgoing CEO, Campbell Wilson, met senior MoCA officials, according to sources. Apart from Wilson, former aviation secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola, who is currently executive advisor to Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran, and Air India's flight safety head Deepak Joshi also attended the meeting, it is learnt. From the ministry's side, Civil Aviation Secretary Samir Samir Kumar Sinha,

Director General of Civil Aviation Vir Vikram Yadav, and AAIB Director General GVG Yugandhar are learnt to have been present. Asked about the meeting, Wilson told reporters outside the ministry that the Air India team was there to provide the ministry with "an update on the status of the investigation".

As per DGCA rules on testing for psychoactive substances, in case the confirmatory test is found positive, the medical in-charge of the concerned organisation is required to consult a medical review officer (MRO) to determine if the result was due to a legitimate therapeutic treatment or some other innocuous source, and not drug abuse. For instance, pain relief medication containing codeine may trigger a positive result for opiates.

Boy goes to fill water bottle in school, dies after touching live wire

Chennai.(Agency)

An 11-year-old Class 6 student died after he was electrocuted inside a government school in Tamil Nadu's Erode district, prompting more than 300 locals, students and relatives to stage a protest demanding action over the incident.

According to a police source, the boy was on his way to fill his water bottle when he came into contact with a live



wire and suffered a fatal electric shock. The incident triggered protests in the area, with school students and relatives staging a road

blockade.

More than 300 locals reportedly participated in the protest, demanding justice and action in connection with the boy's death. Police have begun an investigation into the circumstances that led to the electrocution, including how the live wire was exposed inside the school premises.

MP High Court seeks funds for Indore girl's Rs 9.55 crore treatment

BENGALURU.(Agency)

The Madhya Pradesh High Court has said it expects the Centre and the state government to find a way to provide financial assistance for the treatment of a three-year-old girl suffering from Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) Type-2, a rare medical condition. The court noted that about Rs 1 crore more is needed for the treatment even after central government assistance and money raised through crowdfunding. The court also said the bill from Novartis, the company that manufactured the injection, must be made available to AIIMS for necessary action. It noted that even after adding the Centre's assistance of Rs 50 lakh to the nearly Rs 8 crore raised through crowdfunding, an additional Rs 1 crore is still required.

In its order, the high court said, "It is also expected that looking to the special circumstances, the government can also find out some way to consider such cases under exceptional case to provide further financial assistance which is also to the tune of Rs 1 crore after adding Rs 50 lakh as by the government and Rs 8 crore which are already collected through crowd funding by various institutions." The court added, "It is also open for the state government to find out some way to provide some financial assistance.

‘Order to shoot anyone, anytime?’: Father of Ludhiana man shot 5 times

Ludhiana.(Agency)

Jawahar Singh is not ready to accept that his son Harjinder Singh will never return home. The 55-year-old autorickshaw driver continues to replay in his mind the phone call that the family received four days ago about Harjinder, 25, being "in an accident".

On the night of August 7, Harjinder left his home in Jot Enclave area of Ludhiana after telling his mother to cook lady fingers for dinner. He promised to return soon. Hours later, the family received that phone call.

"I rushed to the hospital...At least five bullets were pumped into his body. Darkness spread in front of my eyes. I kept begging the doctors to save my son, to see if anything could be done, but he was dead," Jawahar told.

Harjinder, a property dealer and cloth businessman, was allegedly waylaid in Swatantra Nagar while he was dropping off three friends — Sandeep, Ravi and Janu — in his car. CCTV footage of the attack, which surfaced later, shows a group of men dragging him out of the vehicle, firing multiple round at him and continuing to assault him with sticks and sharp-edged weapons.

Happy you are recovering: Ayushman Bharat's message to cop 42 days after death

Forty two days after a police constable died during treatment at Ambikapur Medical College Hospital, his family received a WhatsApp message from Ayushman Sarathi saying that he was recovering and would be going home.

Ambikapur.(Agency)

A police constable in Chhattisgarh who died 42 days ago was still "recovering" in the Ayushman Bharat health insurance system. His family had performed his last rites and received his death certificate. His wife, still mourning his death, then received a WhatsApp message on his phone saying that he was healthy and on his way home.

"Dear Dev Narayan Ram, we are happy that you are recovering and going home. We hope that you are satisfied with the free healthcare services provided under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)," the message read, according to his wife, Seema Kujur, who posted a video on

social media questioning how such a timely updating of patient records but also message could have been sent. The constable, Dev Narayan Ram, was



admitted to Ambikapur Medical College Hospital in Surguja on June 26 and died during treatment four days later, on June 30. The message, sent 42 days after his death, not only raised questions over the

whether his continued status as a patient could have allowed Ayushman Bharat benefits to be unlawfully availed for an extended period. The hospital, however, has denied that any payment was claimed for treatment after Narayan's death and attributed the lapse to a delay by the data entry operator in closing the patient's record."My husband was being treated at Ambikapur Medical Hospital and died during treatment. We have performed his last rites, and now, 42 days later, we are receiving messages saying he is recovering and returning home. How can such a major technical flaw occur? I want an investigation into this," Seema said.

A funeral under tarpaulin: Thane tribal hamlet still awaits cremation ground

Maharashtra.(Agency)

Heavy rain poured over an open field as villagers struggled to give a dignified farewell to a woman who had spent her life in a tribal settlement in Maharashtra's Thane district that, even 79 years after Independence, does not have a proper cremation ground.

When Jayabai Wagh, a gram panchayat committee member, died, her final journey ended not at a designated cremation ground but in the open field. As the rain showed no respite during her funeral on Tuesday, villagers had no choice but to hold up tarpaulin and plastic sheets over the pyre in an effort to keep it alight. The distressing incident captures a reality that villagers say they have been living

with for years: There is simply no proper place in the primitive Umbharai settlement. The locals claim that they have been approaching the administration for nearly two years for a cremation ground. Around two years ago,



an official came to inspect a proposed site and assured the residents that a cremation ground would be constructed. But the promise, villagers allege, has remained

unfulfilled.

The Umbharai settlement has a population of around 100 people. Residents say that every funeral forces them to depend on whatever open space is available, regardless of the weather or terrain. Meanwhile, the plight of Umbharai is not an isolated one, villagers and social organisations claim. They allege that more than 250 villages and hamlets across Shahapur taluka, where Umbharai is located, face problems related to the availability of cremation grounds.

In some places, land is unavailable, while in others, funds and basic infrastructure are lacking. Several remote settlements remain poorly connected by roads, making even the transportation of a body to a cremation ground difficult during the monsoon.

Mumbai high-rise fire kills toddler, 23-year-old woman; 4 injured

Mumbai. (Agency)

A 23-year-old woman and a 2.5-year-old boy were killed, while four others were injured after a fire broke out at a residential building on Baptista Road in Mumbai's Vile Parle (West).

According to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) disaster management cell, the deceased have been identified as Ankita and 2.5-year-old Abir. The four injured have been identified as Parth (32), Hiren (64), Yashasvi and Abhishek.

The Mumbai Fire Brigade (MFB) said the blaze broke out on the 11th floor of a ground-plus-12-storey

building at around 10:08 pm. As the flames intensified, the fire was classified as a Level 2 blaze at around 10:16 pm. Fire officials said



several residents were trapped on the 11th floor after the fire broke out. They were rescued and evacuated by MFB personnel. "All

six persons were injured one after another, and during the rescue operation, two individuals were found unconscious," a fire official said.

Following the rescue, the injured were taken to Nanavati Hospital in Bandra, where two were declared dead. The four others are undergoing treatment and are currently in stable condition. Authorities said the blaze was brought under control around midnight after nearly two hours of firefighting, following which cooling operations were initiated.

Mumbai rain triggers landslide in Kurla; 2 dead, several feared trapped under debris

Mumbai. (Agency)

Two people died while two others were injured after a landslide hit a residential area in Kurla on Tuesday morning. According to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) disaster cell, the incident was reported at Gaushiya Chawl in Chirag Nagar, Kurla West, around 3:48 AM. Several others are still feared trapped and a rescue operation is underway.

The incident comes in the wake of the incessant heavy rainfall that has now returned to Mumbai at the fag end of the monsoon this year. Civic officials said the incident took place after a large section of a hill adjoining a slum collapsed.

A search and rescue operation was immediately launched by civic authorities and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel. According to the local authorities 4-6 people are feared trapped underneath the debris.

No beds at Gadchiroli tribal school, a night of horror leaves 3 dead of snakebite

2 girls hospitalised, one on ventilator; Maharashtra govt orders cancellation of licence of school

Nagpur.(Agency)

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis Tuesday ordered permanent cancellation of the licence of a government-aided residential school for tribal children in Gadchiroli after three girls died of a snakebite there.

A month more, and the incident may not have come to pass. The children at the school – which was started in 1992 and has 233 students on its rolls currently – slept on mats spread on the ground. A teacher said they had been raising the issue of lack of beds with the principal. "We were told that the students would get the beds after the Pola festival (in September)."The deaths, at the school located in Japtalai village, has drawn outrage, with the Opposition raising questions over the



state of tribal residential schools in Maharashtra, and the Mahayuti government announcing a third-party audit of over 500 'ashram' or residential schools for tribal children in the state. The school is run by a trust whose secretary is local Congress leader Vishwajeet Marotrao Kowase.

There were 65 girls on the premises of the co-ed residential school, Anudanit Prathamik/Madhyamik Ashram Shala in tribal-dominated Japtalai, when the snake bit six of them in the early hours of Monday. While two died, another succumbed on the way to hospital, and a fourth is critical and on ventilator

supports. The nearest hospital is 10 km away and, as per sources, poor road conditions, worsened by the rains, delayed the journey. Deepika Madavi, 12, who was also bitten, was airlifted to Nagpur, and is now admitted to the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit at Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH). Doctors said she is stable.

Fifteen other students, sleeping in the hall along with the injured girls, are believed to be in shock and are under observation. The snake, a common krait, was caught and killed.

A Class 5 student, Deepika was rushed to Nagpur along with a teacher and her grandfather, Chaturshah Madavi. Sitting by her bedside, gently stroking Deepika's hair, Chaturshah says: "This was Deepika's first year at the school."

NEWS BOX

ICC Test Rankings: Babar Azam returns to top 10 after 2 years



New Delhi. (Agency)

Babar Azam's return to the top 10 of the ICC Men's Test batting rankings has added another marker to his comeback as Pakistan captain, with the right-hander climbing five places to No. 10 after a productive series in the West Indies earlier this month. Babar was handed back the Test captaincy last month, replacing Shan Masood, as Pakistan began a new phase under their former skipper. The 31-year-old scored two fifties across four innings in the West Indies, leading Pakistan to a 1-1 draw against the home team. The start to his second spell was far from straightforward. Pakistan lost the first Test in Tarouba by 90 runs, despite Babar remaining unbeaten on 58 in the second innings. The defeat extended Pakistan's run of consecutive Test losses away from home to eight.

But Babar and Pakistan responded in the second Test in Port of Spain. The Pakistan captain scored 88 in the first innings before remaining unbeaten on 24 in the successful run chase as Pakistan won by eight wickets to level the series 1-1. The victory also ended Pakistan's wait of more than three years for an away Test win. That performance has taken Babar back inside the top 10 for the first time since September 2024. He had slipped down the rankings during a prolonged lean spell in Test cricket, making his latest rise particularly significant. His return to the upper reaches of the rankings comes just as he begins another stint as Pakistan's Test captain, with England next on the itinerary. Abdullah Shafique was the biggest mover among Pakistan's batters, jumping 25 places to No. 32 after an unbeaten 160 in the second Test. Sajid Khan also made notable gains, moving five places to No. 30 among Test bowlers and to No. 32 among all-rounders.

Centre of Excellence crisis: Why don't experts want to join the BCCI?

New Delhi. (Agency)

Former India cricketer Mohammed Kaif is baffled by the fact that the Indian Cricket Board (BCCI) has struggled to find a Head of Sports Science and Medicine for its Centre of Excellence (CoE), despite the board's financial strength and resources.

Kaif's comments come on the backdrop of CoE head VVS Laxman's admission that the BCCI has been unable to fill the key position since Nitin Patel vacated it in March 2025. The position, key to the well being of Indian cricket's ecosystem, remained vacant even after the BCCI reached an agreement with Andrew Leipus, the Head of Sports Science at



Punjab Kings. According to Laxman, Leipus backed out at the last moment due to family reasons.

WHY NO ONE WANTS TO JOIN BCCI?

Kaif was perplexed by the development and questioned why some of the world's leading medical and sports science professionals would not want to work with the BCCI. "I am surprised because so many people are eager to work with the BCCI. We have so much money that if we call someone, they will come running. They do, don't they? Just look at the players. Players leave their countries' matches to come and play in the IPL. They come, don't they? So, I was a little surprised that we haven't been able to work things out with some of the world's best physiotherapists and medical professionals and get them to work with the BCCI. I am surprised because we pay so much. We offer such good contracts. If someone comes and works here, they are bound to make a lot of money."

What will India gain from winning SL Tests? Not WTC points, but a breather

India return to the World Test Championship with their campaign hanging by a thread. Beyond the crucial WTC points, the Sri Lanka series offers Gautam Gambhir's team a chance to rebuild confidence, find clarity in their roles and address their struggles against spin.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The fans of Test cricket can take a sigh of relief as India return to the World Test Championship fold once again. The Shubman Gill-led side is playing a two-match Test series against Sri Lanka, their first WTC assignment since the sobering 0-2 drubbing against South Africa at

home. India did play Afghanistan in a one-off Test match in June, but that was outside the WTC framework. This island tour marks the real, high-stakes resumption for a young Indian team that has struggled conspicuously against spin. Back-to-back home whitewashes at the hands of New Zealand and South Africa have sent alarm bells ringing among fans and former cricketers alike. Yet, Sri Lanka augurs well as a venue for a reset. India has been in the islands for a week now, seasoning themselves through rigorous practice sessions and a warm-up fixture. Conversely, Sri Lanka is wrestling with injury concerns that have complicated their selection, so much so that the hosts are yet to announce their squad just three days out from the opening game. India are currently fifth on the WTC points table and need to make up for lost ground if they want to remain in the hunt for the WTC Final 2027. Since mid-2024, their WTC campaign has been a rocky ride.

They have managed just a single series victory, against the West Indies at home, while also suffering home defeats to New Zealand and South Africa, an away loss to Australia and a drawn series in England that hinged on a dramatic final-day



turnaround. Sitting fifth in the current cycle with less than 50 percentage points, India's chances of making the WTC final hang by a thread. Yet, as much as they need the points to stay alive, India stand to gain something far more valuable from a successful tour of Sri Lanka: a moment to breathe, reset and regroup.

Here is what is truly at stake for Gautam Gambhir's men over the next fortnight.

REBUILDING LOST CONFIDENCE

Successive home setbacks against New Zealand and South Africa did more than just dent India's position in the World Test Championship; they jarred the team's collective psyche. When a side accustomed to fortress-like dominance at home suddenly gets dismantled, self-doubt creeps into the dressing room. An away series victory in Sri Lanka could act as a crucial binding agent. It offers this transition-era squad a chance to shake off those lingering mental shackles before tougher assignments against New Zealand and Australia arrive. Winning away from home fosters team cohesion. It teaches a young group how to stick together when the pressure mounts and pull through sticky situations. Before they can conquer the big narrative battles ahead, India simply need to remember what winning feels like again.

Hardik Pandya seeks return to Gujarat Titans, franchise shuts doors after hearing demands

Asan. (Agency)

After a failed move to Mumbai Indians, Hardik Pandya is seeking greener pastures at another Indian Premier League franchise. Indian Express reported that the Mumbai captain held talks with his former franchise Gujarat Titans, but the move failed to go through due to the demands made by the Indian all-rounder.

Pandya and Gujarat were both open to the idea of the player returning to Gujarat Titans, considering the fact that he had led the franchise to a title win in their maiden season in 2022. However, his return came with one condition: he wanted to be reinstated as captain. That demand proved to be a deal-breaker for Gujarat Titans.



According to the report, the franchise had even discussed the possibility with current captain Shubman Gill, who was understood to be open to the move. But with Pandya making the captaincy role a condition for his return, Gujarat Titans decided against pursuing the deal.

"The franchise was fine with him making a return. They had even discussed the same with its captain Shubman Gill, and he, too, had agreed that the franchise could trade him back. But when his condition of captaincy was put up, everyone said no to it," a source told Indian Express.

Fans keeping ODI cricket alive, but format will be in trouble in future: Jonty Rhodes

New Delhi. (Agency)

Former South Africa cricketer Jonty Rhodes believes passionate fans are keeping 50-over cricket relevant at the moment. However, the former cricketer warned that the format could face increasing challenges as franchise T20 cricket continues to expand. Rhodes' comments come at a time when national associations are playing less and less ODI cricket against each other. There have also been opinions, including from broadcasters at times, that the middle phase of ODI cricket can get boring for viewers who do not have seven hours to sit through a single game. "For me, it is always understanding that 50-overs cricket might be the one format where, because we bring in such a fresh crowd and a different perspective into the game, possibly 50-overs cricket might be in

trouble in the years ahead," Rhodes told the media during the jersey launch of European T20 Premier League (ETPL) team Rotterdam Dockers in Mumbai on Tuesday. The 50-over format, however,



continues to have one major advantage in Rhodes' eyes: its supporters. "From a point of view, we're really fortunate that what 50-overs cricket has is that you've got really passionate fans who will support their team no matter what format or version it is," he said.

DIFFICULT TO THINK CRICKET WITHOUT ODIs

Rhodes, who co-owns Rotterdam Dockers, said the rise of T20 cricket had not necessarily come at the expense of Test cricket, but felt the future of ODIs could be more uncertain. "When T20 cricket first started, people were saying it is going to put pressure on Test cricket and amazingly it has not. Some of the Test cricket looks like T20 at times, there is some aggressive batting and bowling," he said. The South African added that while the landscape of international cricket could change, the 50-over format remained too deeply embedded in the sport to disappear easily. "At this stage, I think there will be fewer and fewer bilateral series... but it is very difficult to think of cricket without the 50-over version," Rhodes said.

Afghanistan to host India for three-match T20I series in Delhi

MADRID. (Agency)

The Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) have confirmed that Afghanistan will host India for a three-match T20I series at the Arun Jaitley Cricket Stadium in Delhi from September 13 to 17. The series will get underway on September 13, with the second T20I scheduled for September 15 and the third on September 17. All three matches will be played at the same venue. The series is part of Afghanistan's Future Tours Program and will be played in India, where Afghanistan has hosted its home fixtures in recent years, according to BCCI. Speaking on the series, Mithun Manhas, President, BCCI, said, "The BCCI remains committed to supporting

the growth of cricket in Afghanistan and providing its players with opportunities to compete at the highest level. Bilateral



cricket is an important part of this, as it allows teams to play regularly against quality opposition and gain valuable experience. We welcome the Afghanistan Cricket Board to India for this series and look forward to working closely with them to make it a successful one. We believe there is scope to do more together and will continue to

support Afghanistan cricket while strengthening the relationship between the two cricketing nations."

Devajit Saikia, Secretary, BCCI, said, "The BCCI is pleased to support the Afghanistan Cricket Board in hosting this T20I series in India. The India-Afghanistan cricketing rivalry has produced some thrilling encounters over the years, with both teams boasting quality cricketers. Afghanistan's players are also quite popular among fans in India, which is a reflection of the strong bond that has developed between the two cricketing nations. India hosting Afghanistan for their historic first Test in 2018 was another significant milestone in this journey, and since then, we have continued to see regular bilateral engagements between the two teams."

Australia pull out big guns in Darwin Test: Cummins, Hazlewood, Starc start vs BAN

New Delhi. (Agency)

If you thought Australia would take it easy against Bangladesh, think again. Pat Cummins' side have pulled out their biggest guns for the opening Test in Darwin, naming a full-strength XI featuring Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon for the two-match series opener on Thursday, August 13. Australia's selection sends a clear message ahead of the first Test, with the hosts opting for their strongest available combination despite a gruelling year ahead that could see them play as many as 21 Tests. The match will also be a significant one for several key players returning to the Test side, while Australia have made some interesting calls in both their bowling attack and batting order.

LYON TIPS BALANCE

Nathan Lyon's return has been central to Australia's team selection, with the veteran spinner back in the Test side after recovering from a hamstring injury. His inclusion came at the expense of Scott Boland, despite the seamer's outstanding run during the last Australian summer. Boland played a key role in Australia's dominant Ashes campaign in the absence of Cummins and Hazlewood, but the return of the two frontline quicks has left him on the sidelines in Darwin.

Cummins admitted the decision between Boland and Hazlewood was a tight one, but revealed that Australia's determination to play Lyon helped

determine the final combination. They're both pretty class, aren't they?" Cummins



said, as quoted by Cricket.com.au.

"We were pretty certain we wanted 'Lyon' in the side, so (it came down to) working out what the make-up of the quicks were." It's always a pretty tight call.

It's one of those ones where there's not much you can say to Scotty other than obviously there's a lot of cricket coming up. But he knows his worth and how good he is. I'm sure he'll be out there at some point pretty soon. "With Lyon expected to become increasingly important as the Test progresses, Australia have opted to pair him with their premier pace attack of Cummins, Starc and Hazlewood.

GREEN MOVES UP

Australia have also reshaped their middle order, with Cameron Green taking over at No. 5. Green finished the Ashes two places lower at No. 7, but Beau Webster's continued presence at No. 7 has allowed Australia to move the all-rounder up the order.





Priyanka Chopra

Seeks Blessings At Siddhivinayak Temple In Mumbai, Video Goes Viral

Desi girl Priyanka Chopra landed in Mumbai with her daughter Malti Marie recently. The actress, who had been shooting for SS Rajamouli's upcoming film 'Varanasi' in Hyderabad, shared a photo on her Instagram stories as she arrived in Mumbai. Now, a day later, the actress was spotted by the paparazzi as she visited the iconic Siddhivinayak Temple in Mumbai to seek Lord Ganesha's blessings.

Priyanka Chopra Visits Siddhivinayak Temple In Mumbai

Videos shared by the paparazzi on Instagram show Priyanka exiting Siddhivinayak temple after offering prayers. She looked gorgeous in a pink ethnic suit, and was all smiles as she made her way out of the temple premises. She greeted fans with a warm smile and waved at those waiting to catch a glimpse of her outside the temple before getting into her car and leaving. Check out the video below!

Meanwhile, just a day ago, Priyanka shared a photo of her daughter Malti Marie looking out at the Mumbai skyline from their flight as they were about to land in the city. "Seeing Mumbai thru her eyes hits different," wrote the actress.



Priyanka Chopra Will Next Be Seen In Varanasi

On the professional front, Priyanka will next be seen in SS Rajamouli's upcoming film Varanasi, starring Mahesh Babu and Prithviraj Sukumaran. The film is scheduled to arrive in cinemas on April 7, 2027.

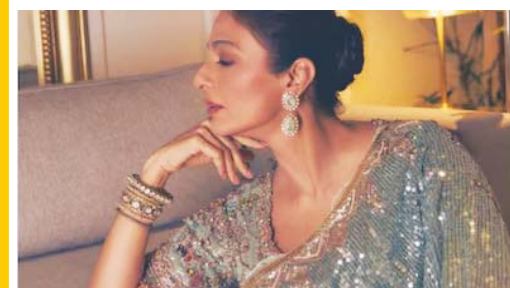
While the makers have largely kept details of its story guarded, a reported synopsis has now surfaced online, offering a possible glimpse into the scale of Rajamouli's time-travel action adventure.

As per the synopsis, Mahesh Babu reportedly plays Rudhra, an archaeologist and explorer who is recruited for a mission involving an ancient cosmic artefact. Priyanka Chopra's Mandakini, described as a historian and skilled marksman, joins him on the journey. Their search reportedly takes them through Africa, Antarctica and Europe, while Prithviraj Sukumaran's Kumbha emerges as the antagonist. The makers have not officially confirmed the reported synopsis.

Priyanka Chopra's Hollywood Projects

Apart from Varanasi, Priyanka also has several exciting international projects in the pipeline. She is set to star opposite Oscar winner Russell Crowe in the upcoming sci-fi action thriller 'Bluefly'. The film will be directed by Nimrod Antal.

Tabu Gets Delhi HC Protection From AI Deepfakes, Obscene Content And Identity Misuse



The Delhi High Court has granted an ex-parte interim injunction protecting Bollywood star Tabu from unauthorised use of her name, image, voice, photographs and other personality attributes, including through Artificial Intelligence, deepfakes, face morphing and other digital technologies. Delhi HC orders removal of objectionable content relating to Justice Jyoti Singh, who heard a petition filed by Tabu, directed major digital platforms including Google, Meta, X and Reddit to remove or disable access to a large number of URLs allegedly carrying unauthorised and objectionable content relating to Tabu.

The Court further ordered certain platforms and domain service providers to disclose Basic Subscriber Information and IP log details connected with the accounts or content.

The Court's order came on Tabu's suit seeking protection of her personality and publicity rights. The actress had alleged that her identity was being commercially exploited online through fake event booking accounts, unauthorised merchandise, fabricated statements and AI-generated or manipulated obscene content. The Court observed that Tabu's name and stage name 'Tabu', along with her image, voice, likeness and other personality attributes, have acquired unique distinctiveness and are instantly associated with her by the public.

Justice Singh held that Tabu had made out a prima facie case for grant of an ex-parte ad-interim injunction and that the balance of convenience lay in her favour. The Court further found that she was likely to suffer irreparable harm if interim protection was not granted. The Court noted that personality rights have previously been recognised and protected by the Delhi High Court in cases including D.M.

It said unauthorised use of a famous person's name, image or other distinctive attributes for commercial purposes can amount to infringement, dilute the individual's unique identity and result in unearned commercial gain by third parties.

A significant aspect of the case was Tabu's allegation that AI-generated obscene images, videos and GIFs were being circulated online by manipulating excerpts from her films, interviews and public appearances.

Sonu Nigam Sings 'Suhaani Raat' Mid-Surgery: How Was It Possible & Is It Safe? Explained



A video of singer Sonu Nigam, singing Mohammed Rafi's classic 'Suhaani Raat Dhal Chuki', on an operating table has gone viral. Is it safe? Is it possible? The singer has clarified that it was during a safe, routine procedure.

He later clarified that he was wide awake under local anaesthesia for a minor surgery to treat a recurring growth on his left ring finger. He sang spontaneously to ease his discomfort and entertain the medical team.

In broader medical science, singing mid-surgery is actually a highly controlled, safe, and deliberate technique used in awake brain surgeries (awake craniotomies).

IS IT SAFE? HOW IS IT DONE?

1. For Minor Surgeries such as Sonu Nigam's case In case of local anaesthesia, only the specific body part being operated on is numbed. The patient remains completely conscious, breathes on their own, and can talk or sing normally.

Singing does not interfere with the surgery as long as the patient remains still. In fact, it acts as a powerful psychological tool to reduce anxiety and distract the mind from pain.

2. For Awake Brain Surgeries (Neurological Mapping)

Medical science utilises singing or instrument playing during brain surgeries for specific, life-saving reasons: When a patient needs a brain tumour or epilepsy lesion removed near areas that control speech, language, or musical ability, surgeons prefer the patient to be awake.

The brain itself has no pain receptors. While the patient is singing, the surgeon uses minor electrical stimulation on the brain. If the patient's singing suddenly falters or stops, the surgeon instantly knows that specific spot is critical for musical or language function and avoids cutting it.

This active participation significantly minimises the risk of permanent neurological damage or loss of speech after surgery.

Preity Zinta

Reacts To Backlash Over Batwara 1947 Women Remark: 'Too Quick To Judge'

Preity Zinta has responded to criticism surrounding her comments about playing a woman in 1947 in Rajkumar Santoshi's upcoming period drama Batwara 1947. The actress, who is returning to the big screen after eight years, said



her remarks had been taken out of context and urged people to watch the film before judging its portrayal of women. The discussion began after Preity spoke about the everyday activities her character performs in the film, including cooking, cleaning and stitching. Her account of a conversation with Santoshi subsequently triggered a debate online.

Preity Zinta Says Her Comments Were Taken Out Of Context

Preity reacted after ThePrint shared an opinion piece titled, "Dear Rajkumar Santoshi, Indian women before 1947 weren't just wives, mothers, or rebels."

Responding to the article, she wrote, "I feel your take on my experience while filming is totally taken out of context."

She questioned why conclusions were being drawn about the film before its release. "I'm surprised how everyone is so quick to react to any comment without fully understanding the context. This is a film and it deals with a particular family. There are no broad strokes here," Preity wrote.

The actress added, "Judging the film or director like this without seeing it, is both unfair and unjust. Journalism should be responsible and fair."

She then invited viewers to make up their minds after watching Batwara 1947 when it arrives in cinemas on August 14.

What Preity Had Originally Said About Her Role

The controversy followed Preity's recent interview with SCREEN, where she discussed her excitement about finally getting an opportunity to work in a period film. "I was dying to do a period film. I always romanticized with the kind of era it would've been, the clothes, and the food," she said.

While recalling her conversations with Santoshi on set, Preity said she would repeatedly ask the filmmaker what her character was supposed to do in different scenes. According to her, his instructions would often be simple: "Preity, aap khana banao." In another scene, she was asked to clean, followed by stitching in the next.



NEWS BOX

US court postpones Nikhil Gupta sentencing in Pannun assassination plot to November 20

world.(Agency)

A US federal court has postponed the sentencing of Nikhil Gupta, who pleaded guilty to his role in an alleged plot to assassinate Sikh separatist leader Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, to November 20. The 54-year-old Gupta had earlier admitted to attempting to contact a hitman to carry out the killing of Pannun, who holds dual US and Canadian citizenship. The US District Court for the Southern District of New York had originally scheduled Gupta's sentencing for September 25. However, prosecutors sought an adjournment after the "intended murder victim" requested to participate in the sentencing hearing. Meanwhile, according to a report, Gupta's sentencing had previously been scheduled for May 29. While court filings do not name the victim, Pannun's counsel has publicly identified him as the target of the alleged murder-for-hire plot. In a letter filed with the court, prosecutors said the unnamed victim "wishes to participate in the sentencing" but would be out of the country on September 25. They therefore asked the court to postpone the hearing. Judge Victor Marrero granted the request and rescheduled the sentencing for November 20 at 10 am. Gupta pleaded guilty on February 13 to all three charges against him: murder-for-hire, conspiracy to commit murder-for-hire, and conspiracy to commit money laundering in connection with the alleged plot to kill Pannun. The murder-for-hire charge carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison, while the conspiracy to commit murder-for-hire charge

New York woman pleads guilty after picking up Indian migrants who crossed US-Canada border

world.(Agency)

A 43-year-old New York woman has pleaded guilty to her role in an international human smuggling conspiracy that illegally brought people, primarily from India, into the United States through its northern border. Stacey Taylor of Plattsburgh was involved in a failed smuggling operation in January 2025, when she attempted to transport four people who had illegally crossed the US-Canada border. According to court documents, US Border Patrol agents stopped Taylor's vehicle near Churubusco, New York, during the early morning hours of January 20, 2025. Four men were found inside the vehicle—three from India and one from Canada. Authorities determined that the men had crossed the border on foot without inspection in freezing weather, traveling through a wooded area before getting into Taylor's waiting vehicle. Investigators later found coordinates and pickup instructions on Taylor's cellphone, indicating that she had been directed to the men's location. Taylor told law enforcement that she had picked them up and expected to be paid for transporting them farther into the United States..

North Korea launches another missile toward sea ahead of US-South Korean military drills

SEOUL.(Agency)

North Korea on Wednesday performed its second ballistic missile test in less than a week, its neighbors said, a likely protest of the upcoming South Korea-US military drills that North Korea views as an invasion rehearsal. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said a ballistic missile fired from the North's eastern coastal Wonsan area around 6 am flew more than 700 kilometers (435 miles). The Japanese Defense Ministry also detected the launch, saying the weapon landed in waters outside its exclusive economic zone, between the Korean Peninsula and Japan. The launches, within days of each other, were seen as part of North Korea's extended run of weapons tests as the country has refused to return to talks with the US and South Korea for years. Experts say North Korea often uses its rivals' military training as a pretext to boost its own testing activities. It is aligned with authorities based in Benghazi, while the internationally recognised Government of National Unity is based in the capital Tripoli and controls much of the west. South Korea's military said it remains ready to repel any provocation by Pyongyang in cooperation with the United States. South Korea's national security council called North Korean ballistic missile launches "acts of provocation" and urged the North to halt them immediately.

Judge bars Trump administration from implementing order to limit mail voting

BOSTON.(Agency)

A federal judge on Tuesday ruled against President Donald Trump's executive order that sought to create a federal voter list and directly involve the U.S. Postal Service in election operations in a way that would limit mail voting. U.S. District Court Judge Indira Talwani had already halted the order Trump signed in March, his second one attempting to set national election rules. On June 25, she sided with Democratic state attorneys general in granting summary judgment, preventing the core parts of Trump's order from taking effect. Tuesday's ruling creates another legal hurdle for the Trump administration to overcome should it get the initial injunction lifted by the U.S. Supreme

Court. "That it is now less than 90 days before the November 3, 2026 midterm elections underscores the critical need for an injunction to prevent Defendants from changing election rules on the eve of the election," she wrote. The Trump administration in late July requested that the Supreme Court halt lower court decisions that have blocked the sweeping changes in nearly half the country. In the latest lawsuit, Talwani, who was nominated by Democratic President Barack Obama, sided with the League of Women Voters and other voting rights groups. Her ruling granting a preliminary injunction barred the Postal Service from taking any steps to implement the order for this year's midterm elections. She said the administration has so far declined to

defend the constitutionality of the executive order. "The executive branch has no authority to regulate elections,"



she wrote. In response to the ruling, the White House noted that Trump has called for Congress to pass a stalled bill to restructure American elections. "The entire Trump Administration will continue lawfully enacting the agenda President Trump was elected to enact —

which includes the safety and security of American elections," White House spokeswoman Lauren Bis said in a statement. "This campaign pledge from the President is why millions of Americans sent him back to the White House. Voting rights groups hailed the decision. This ruling is a victory for voters and for the Constitution," Marcia Johnson of the League of Women Voters said in a statement. "Neither the president nor the U.S. Postal Service has the authority to rewrite election rules." Plaintiffs argued in two lawsuits, both filed in federal court in Boston, that the Republican president's order should be found unconstitutional because the states and Congress, not the president, have the power to set election rules.

Bill in US Senate to ensure support to Tibetan cause beyond lifetime of Dalai Lama

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

A bipartisan group of US Senators have introduced a bill to ensure American support for the cause of Tibet beyond the lifetime of the 14th Dalai Lama. Senators Jeff Merkley, a Democrat from Oregon and Jim Risch, a Republican from Idaho, introduced the Assuring the Future of Tibet Act (AFTA) in the US Senate recently.

The bill seeks to recognise the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) as the legitimate representative of the Tibetan people and the continuity of governance established by the Dalai Lama. It also seeks to direct the US Secretary of State to engage with Sikyong, the political leader of the Tibetan government-in-exile

and designated representatives at the most senior levels. The bill also seeks to support the Tibetan people's human rights and right to



self-determination by advocating at the UN for CTA observer status and equal access across the UN system. The bill has been co-sponsored by Senators Tim Kaine, Todd Young, Jacky Rosen, and Rick Scott. The legislation is the Senate companion to the bill introduced

on May 22, 2026, in the House of Representatives by Congressmen Jim McGovern and Michael McCaul. "I tank Senators Merkley and Risch for introducing this vital bill and Senators Kaine, Young, Rosen, and Scott for serving as its original co-sponsors.

The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) looks forward to working with Congress towards its swift passage," said ICT President Tencho Gyatso. "At a time when China is accelerating its campaign to erase Tibetan identity, this bill sends a powerful message—that America's support for the Tibetan people, their democratic institutions, and the Tibetan people's right to determine their own future is unwavering," she said.

Candlelight vigil in Islamabad honors 10 climbers killed on Broad

ISLAMABAD.(Agency)

Mountaineers, diplomats and members of civil society gathered in Pakistan's capital Tuesday evening for a candlelight vigil honoring 10 climbers killed in an avalanche on Broad Peak, as rescuers described an arduous mission to bring their fellow climbers down from one of the world's highest mountains. Rain fell as mourners lit candles and prayed for the dead, shielding the flickering flames from the downpour as they gathered on the open lawns of a sports complex in Islamabad to remember the climbers who never returned from the mountain. The vigil came days after search teams ended an operation that recovered the remains of eight climbers. Two

bodies have not yet been recovered. Among the dead was renowned British-Nepali mountaineer Nirmal Purja. Nepal lost six climbers in the July 30 disaster, when a massive avalanche struck an international expedition. Nepal's ambassador to Pakistan, Rita Dhital, joined the vigil and paid tribute to the climbers as candles were lit in their memory. She recalled meeting Purja at her Islamabad home before the expedition and said he would often tell her, "Giving up is not in my blood." She thanked Pakistani climbers and rescuers who went onto the mountain in dangerous weather to search for the missing climbers and recover their bodies. Dhital particularly praised renowned Pakistani mountaineer Sirbaz Khan, who led the recovery

team, as well as the Alpine Club of Pakistan, the military and government officials involved in the operation. The bodies of all six Nepalese climbers have been returned to their families, she said. Khantold The Associated Press that he and his team had set out hoping they would find the missing climbers alive. "I had hoped that I would hug them after finding them alive," he said. Instead, the rescuers found climbers buried beneath the avalanche. Khan said the team used shovels to dig through the snow and pull out the bodies one by one. Seeing fellow mountaineers dead on the mountain was difficult, he said, but the rescuers composed themselves and began the equally difficult task of bringing the bodies down, using ropes and makeshift stretchers.



Communist Party. "This move is, in reality... aimed at creating the false impression for the international community that the CCP has jurisdiction over waters east of Taiwan and blatantly infringing upon our national sovereignty and maritime rights and interests," the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) said in a statement. The Indonesian military did not immediately respond to AFP's request for comment. China's announcement came as Taiwan holds its largest military drills of the year, aimed at preparing its population for a potential Chinese invasion. Beijing deploys warships, fighter jets and coast guard vessels around Taiwan on an almost daily basis to assert its claim of sovereignty.

In June, Chinese ships began to patrol an area of the Western Pacific near Taiwan's east coast, which Taipei branded as "provocative" and "expansionism in disguise". During that operation, the China Coast Guard for the first time radioed cargo ships passing Taiwan for information about their crew and destination.

Iranian-backed Houthis kill six in attack on vessel in Bab el-Mandeb

Bogota.(Agency)

Yemeni authorities said six people were killed by Iran-backed Houthi rebels attacking a vessel in the Bab el-Mandeb strait, while U.S. forces fired on a ship they said was trying to break a blockade of Iran's ports. Four crew members and 2 allied fighters killed, Yemen says Yemen's coast guard said the dead included four crew members and two members of the government-allied National Resistance Forces. Houthis fired three ballistic missiles at the Yemeni commercial vessel, according to the Transportation Ministry of Yemen's internationally recognized government. They are the first known deaths from Houthi attacks on shipping off Yemen in the latest bout of fighting in the Arab country. With the Strait of Hormuz effectively shut down by Iran, there has been a renewed focus on the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb strait at Yemen's southern tip, which is an alternate route for Saudi Arabia to ship

its oil. The deadly vessel strike came amid Houthi attacks on the government-held port city of Mokha on the Red Sea and other areas of the country. Dozens of government troops and civilians have been killed in attacks since last week, according to the Yemeni military. The strikes are part of an escalation by the Houthis against government forces in Yemen and oil facilities in neighboring Saudi Arabia, which supports the Yemeni government, and the kingdom's shipping in the Red Sea. The Houthi attacks could reignite Yemen's civil war following a 2022 truce, and open a new front in the Middle East war.

Mohammed Abdul-Salam, the Houthis' chief negotiator and spokesperson, accused Saudi Arabia in a social media post of exploiting the ceasefire to tighten an air and sea blockade it imposed in 2015.

He said the Houthis are open for negotiations but any settlement must include lifting the blockade. US fires on



ship it said was trying to break blockade of Iran. The U.S. military said Tuesday that its forces fired on a Panamanian-flagged ship in the Gulf of Oman that tried to evade the American blockade on Iranian ports. The move came as U.S. President Donald Trump tries to keep economic pressure on the Islamic Republic. U.S. Central Command said

the vessel had ignored warnings to stop, prompting an American helicopter to fire missiles into the engine room of the M/V Vela Nova, disabling the ship. The statement did not say whether the ship's crew suffered any casualties. Trump on Tuesday night insisted that the U.S. military has "total control" over the Strait of Hormuz, despite the fact that Iran has kept up its attacks on ships in the waterway, largely impeding traffic there. "Iran is going fine, going just absolutely fine," he told reporters after a trip to Ohio. "We totally control the Strait of Hormuz. We have control over it. Nobody else. Only us," Trump said. Central Command said it has redirected 55 commercial vessels attempting to run the blockade, disabled three noncompliant vessels and boarded two. The U.S. Navy currently has more than 15 warships, including two aircraft carriers and an amphibious assault ship, stationed in the waters of the Arabian Sea.