



NLSIU students oppose CJI, BCI chief attending convocation over NALSAR row

NLSIU students and alumni have opposed CJI Surya Kant and BCI Chairman Manan Kumar Mishra attending the university's convocation, citing the BCI's withdrawn order against NALSAR graduates. They demanded an apology from the BCI and expressed solidarity with NALSAR students.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Students and alumni of the National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru, have opposed Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Bar Council of India (BCI) Chairman Manan Kumar Mishra attending the varsity's upcoming convocation.

In a statement dated August 15, the students and alumni condemned the now-withdrawn BCI order directing state bar councils to halt the enrolment of 2026 graduates of NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad. They also expressed solidarity with NALSAR students, who they said had shown "exemplary courage and moral conviction" in speaking truth to power.

The statement was signed by 165 graduating students of the Class of 2026, 409 current students and 128 alumni.

"We are aware that the BCI has closed all proceedings against NALSAR. However, the fact that such unconstitutional and illegal 'proceedings' can be initiated by a statutory body against students and faculty members of a public university in the first place does not alter the nature or the larger impact of such actions or dilute the responsibility of the Chairman and the BCI," the statement said. The students and alumni said that even after recalling the enrolment ban and inquiry order, the BCI had acknowledged the "arbitrary" and "illegal nature" of its actions. They said a university convocation was a significant milestone in a student's academic life and an occasion to celebrate years of hard work and perseverance.

BJP leaders continue attack on Sonia Gandhi over her reaction to stop Vande Mataram song at Congress Headquarter

New Delhi (Agency)

The BJP has continued its attack on Congress leader Sonia Gandhi after a video clip has gone viral, allegedly showing her asking for the playing of Vande Mataram to be stopped at the Congress headquarters on Independence Day. Taking to X on Sunday, BJP IT chief Amit Malviya said, "Perhaps Sonia Gandhi will never fully understand the profound Indianness of Vande Mataram. But she must understand why India has embraced it; because it reflects our civilisational ethos, our history, our collective memory and, ultimately, who we are".

Taking a dig at the Congress, Malviya, who tagged the video clip showing Sonia Gandhi asking for what the BJP alleged was Vande Mataram to be stopped, said, "This single video has stripped away the carefully cultivated veneer of congeniality and exposed something far more troubling".

He further said, "The impulse to disrupt Vande Mataram, a song that stirred generations of freedom fighters and became one of the most powerful expressions of India's national awakening, will not sit well with Indians".

Describing Vande Mataram as an emotion of nation, Malviya asserted, "Vande Mataram is an emotion. It is the voice of a civilisation awakening to its own strength. It stirred the hearts of revolutionaries, gave courage to those who stood up to colonial rule, and became inseparably woven into India's freedom struggle".

In the same post, Malviya further wrote, "When its each words are sung, they evoke not just the land, but the rivers, fields, soil and spirit of Bharat. It carries the memory of sacrifice and the unmistakable yearning for freedom. Few songs possess the power to turn patriotism from an idea into an emotion felt deep within the soul". In an apparent reference to the Congress, he also said, "You can debate politics. You can disagree over

Proud to be dimaagi Naxal: P Chidambaram hits back at PM Modi's Red Fort remark

New Delhi. (Agency)

Chidambaram's remarks came a day after PM Modi warned against "dimaagi naxals" whom he accused of infiltrating the system and influencing policies, urging citizens to "identify and isolate" them.

Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Sunday took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his "dimaagi naxal" remark, saying, "I am proud to be a dimaagi naxal." Chidambaram's response came a day after PM Modi, in his Independence Day address, warned against what he described as "dimaagi naxals" — people with a Maoist mindset who, he alleged, had entrenched themselves in the system and influenced public policy. "I am proud to be a dimaagi naxal!" Chidambaram said in a post on X, hitting back at the prime minister's remarks.

Addressing the nation from the Red Fort on Saturday, PM Modi said India had succeeded in eliminating armed Naxalism from the forests but cautioned that its

ideological supporters continued to pose a threat by seeking opportunities to promote violence and anarchy.

"For years, people with a Maoist mindset had established themselves in the corridors



of power. They had served as advisers on government committees and influenced public policy," the Prime Minister said.

The prime minister urged citizens to "identify and isolate" such people, warning that the challenge should not be

underestimated and required continued vigilance.

PM Modi also highlighted the toll of decades of Naxal and Maoist violence, saying it had destroyed the lives and aspirations of millions of young people. He said more than 3,500 police and security personnel had been killed in the conflict. "Naxalism held a very large part of India and a huge population in its grip, at gunpoint," PM Modi said. He said his government, which came to power in 2014, had made ending Naxalism a priority and asserted that the decades-old challenge was now being brought to an end. "Decades-old challenges must be

brought to an end. Naxalism and Maoism have destroyed the future of millions of young people. They have taken away the sons of countless mothers, ruined families, and shattered the dreams of parents," he said. He added that areas once affected.

I'm not corrupt: TMC's Asish Banerjee found hanging at party office, note found

Asish Banerjee was a five-time MLA from Rampurhat, having represented the constituency for 25 consecutive years starting from 2001. He, however, lost the seat to Bharatiya Janata Party's Dhruba Saha in the 2026 West Bengal Assembly polls.

Kolkata. (Agency)

Trinamool Congress leader and former West Bengal Assembly Deputy Speaker Asish Banerjee was found hanging inside a party office in the state's Birbhum district on Sunday morning.

He was an ex-minister and also a five-time MLA from Rampurhat, having represented the constituency for 25 consecutive years from 2001 to 2026. Banerjee, however, lost the seat to Bharatiya Janata Party's Dhruba Saha in the 2026 West



Bengal Assembly polls.

His body was recovered from a TMC office adjacent to his Rampurhat residence. This came a day after the former TMC MLA participated in a local Independence Day celebration and hoisted the Tricolour there. A purported suicide note,

originally written in Bengali, has also been recovered. In the purported letter, Banerjee claimed innocence, stating he was never involved in corruption throughout his political career. He apparently referred to supposed allegations of wrongdoings related to the Tarapith Rampurhat Development Authority (TRDA), where he had served as the chairperson. Banerjee claimed that he had no role in the civic planning and development agency's tender-related decisions, cheque issuance.

After facing political backlash over his derogatory remarks against CM C Joseph Vijay and his mother, BJP state president Nainar Nagendran now also faces a complaint over the remarks.

Complaint against Tamil Nadu BJP chief over remarks on CM Vijay's mother

New Delhi. (Agency)

A complaint has been filed with the Tamil Nadu Director General of Police (DGP) against BJP state president Nainar Nagendran over his derogatory and defamatory remarks about Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay and his mother during a public event in Tamil Nadu.

The complainant has sought the police to preserve digital evidence, investigate the remarks under relevant legal provisions, and initiate appropriate criminal proceedings for defamation and public misconduct.

The complaint comes amid a political row

triggered by Nagendran's remarks on Saturday at the BJP's state headquarters,



Kamalalayam, in Chennai where he took a swipe at Vijay over the chief minister's earlier "kutti kathai" (short story) targeting DMK president MK Stalin.

Speaking at the party event, Nagendran mocked Vijay's repeated references to "father" in the Assembly, saying that those wanting to know "where their father is" should ask their mother at home rather than look for the answer in the Assembly. The complainant has described the BJP leader's remarks about Vijay and his mother as derogatory and sought legal action against him. The complaint also urged the police to examine and seize the audio and video recordings of the event as part of the proceedings. The controversy stems from Vijay's earlier remarks in the Assembly following the DMK's defeat.

Mohan Yadav accuses Sonia Gandhi, Rahul of insulting Vande Mataram, seeks apology

CM Mohan Yadav accused Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi of insulting Vande Mataram at a Congress event and demanded they apologise to the nation.

Bhopal. (Agency)

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has accused Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi of insulting the national song Vande Mataram and demanded an apology from them. Yadav's remarks came after the BJP

alleged that Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge showed "utter disrespect" to Vande Mataram during the Congress' Independence



Day event on Saturday.

Several BJP leaders also alleged that Sonia Gandhi objected to the singing of the complete version of Vande Mataram at the event. The Congress, however, denied the

allegation.

Yadav claimed that the singing of the national song was disrupted and that Vande Mataram was consequently "insulted".

He also highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day address, during which the complete version of Vande Mataram was sung at the Red Fort. "Vande Mataram was the slogan and song that freedom fighters sang while sacrificing their lives for the country's freedom. Therefore, insulting the song is condemnable," Yadav said. He said the song had gained widespread recognition through the film Anand Math and was associated with the freedom struggle.

True freedom: Arvind Kejriwal is 'happy' Gen Alpha is fighting for school rights

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Former Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said that after Generation Z (GenZ), children from Generation Alpha (Gen Alpha) have begun raising their voices for better facilities in government schools, calling it a sign of "true freedom" on Independence Day.

In a post on X, Kejriwal said children across the country were demanding basic infrastructure and better educational facilities in their schools, citing recent protests by students in Hamirpur in Himachal Pradesh, Dehradun in Uttarakhand and Barmer in Rajasthan.

"This August 15 is even more special. After Gen Z, now Gen Alpha has taken up the charge.

Children across every corner of the country are fighting to get their schools fixed. They are demanding basic facilities for their schools like desks, clean water, toilets and teachers. Our children have learned to fight for their rights. That's what true freedom is," Kejriwal wrote while extending Independence



Day greetings. The AAP chief said it was unfortunate that even after nearly eight decades of Independence, many government schools across the country continued to suffer from inadequate infrastructure, including dilapidated buildings, leaking roofs, a shortage of teachers, insufficient toilets and a lack of drinking water.

District and Sessions Judge establishment honoured Superintendent Rajiv Kapoor for exceptional devotion to duty, professional commitment and concern for preservation of judicial records. Athlete Shashank Singh Kataria, para-athlete and para-shooter Devershee Sachan and archer Jiya were also honoured for their sporting excellence.

Anakapalle weavers keep handloom tradition alive

VISAKHAPATNAM. (Agency)

The looms may no longer hum as they once did, and weaving returns barely justify the hours spent at the loom.

Yet in Payakaraopeta, Nakkapalli, Yelamanchili and other parts of Anakapalle district, families continue to work with yarn, shuttle and thread, keeping alive a craft passed down for generations.

Despite low incomes, weak demand, rising raw material costs and climate challenges, many remain committed to handloom. For most, it is no longer a dependable livelihood but a tradition they refuse to let disappear.

Payakaraopeta offers a glimpse into both resilience and decline. Once known for delicate silk and cotton sarees, the town still has more than 300 handloom families, though only a fraction weave regularly.

The Andhra Pradesh State Handloom Weavers Cooperative Society once described Payakaraopeta sarees as lightweight creations of intricate beauty, weighing barely 600 grams. GV Nageshwar Rao, manager of the local cooperative, says the description still fits, though it belongs largely to a bygone era.

Villagers name road after CM Vijay in gratitude for Parandur call

CHENNAI. (Agency)

After a minister vowed that the state would not go ahead with the proposed greenfield airport at Parandur, the villagers of Ekanapuram – a settlement that faced extensive acquisition (land takeover) for the project – have passed a resolution to rename their main road ‘Thalapathi Vijay Road’ as an expression of gratitude to Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay.

The decision was taken unanimously at a grama sabha on Saturday, marking a striking turn in a three-year-old resistance to the airport project, which residents said threatened their homes, multi-crop farmland and local waterbodies.

G Subramanian, secretary of the Ekanapuram Village People and Farmers Welfare Board, said after the G.O cancelling the project, the road will be renamed. “We are waiting for the G.O,” he said. Ekanapuram, the largest village affected by the proposed Parandur airport, with around 2,500 residents lay directly in the planned runway alignment. The project would therefore have required the relocation of the settlement itself, rather than merely the acquisition of surrounding farmland.

Two TNCSC officials suspended in 6K tonne PDS rice scam in Kancheepuram

CHENNAI. (Agency)

The Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC) has suspended a regional manager and a quality controller in Kancheepuram for allegedly colluding with private rice mills (hulling agents), which supplied 6,000 MT of old PDS rice instead of freshly milled rice to the corporation for distribution through the Public Distribution System (PDS). The freshly milled rice from the paddy supplied by the TNCSC for hulling may have been diverted to private market, sources said.

The scam took place between May and July during the 2025-26 kharif marketing season (KMS) and is suspected to have occurred in several districts.

Four private rice mills functioning as TNCSC hulling agents supplied the said volume of rice valued at Rs 10.82 crore, while allegedly retaining the freshly milled rice on their premises. The TNCSC regional manager and quality controller, who were responsible for verifying the quality of rice received from the hulling agents, allegedly colluded with the mills and allowed the old PDS rice to be received and stored in TNCSC warehouses.

Britain’s first Sikh fighter pilot since World War II: ‘I want my success to inspire others’

Ludhiana. (Agency)

With his roots in Punjab, Indian-origin Flight Lieutenant Arshdeep Singh Dang, 28, has become the first Sikh to graduate as a fighter pilot in Britain’s Royal Air Force (RAF). He is the first Sikh to attain wings from a Fighter Squadron of the RAF since World War II, according to the RAF.

A fast jet pilot graduation ceremony was held at RAF Valley in North Wales on Friday (August 14), where the British air force announced Arshdeep’s achievement.

Speaking to The Indian Express over the phone, Arshdeep said: “It was my paternal grandfather Sardar Santokh Singh Dang’s dream that my father should be a pilot. But my grandfather died when my father was just 6. So my

father never really had those opportunities or resources to fulfil his wish. My parents encouraged me, and I started to believe that I could be a pilot. And it happened.”

Chandigarh to Royal Air Force Arshdeep’s father Jagdeep Singh Danis a native of Ludhiana, and his mother Gagandeep Kaur is from Amritsar. However, Arshdeep was born in Chandigarh in 1998, and the couple moved to the UK when he was just 6. “I attended a school in Mohali for 2 years or so, but I don’t really remember much. However, we keep visiting Punjab to meet our families. Two years ago, I visited Amritsar and Ludhiana,” says Arshdeep. In the UK, the family lives in Southall, England.

Arshdeep attended the University of

Bristol, earning a BSc (Hons) in mathematics and philosophy. He graduated from Officer Training in February 2022 and Elementary Flying



Training in 2023. After serving in Cyprus, Dang was streamed to Fast Jet in 2024. He commenced his Fast Jet lead-in training in March 2025, followed by Basic Fast Jet training in July the same year.

He was sent solo to Texas in October

2025 and passed his wings test in July 2026. Next, he will undergo another year of intense training before handling fighter jets on the front line. Arshdeep was the only pilot of Indian origin in his batch. “I am privileged to represent my community on an international stage. I am the first Sikh to achieve this since World War II, but I don’t want to be the last.” “Sikhs made a major contribution to the British Indian Army during World War II. Several Sikhs were awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest British gallantry honour. But since then, there haven’t been any notable achievements. I want my success to inspire others. We always have a chance to create history, not just in the UK, but in the entire world,” says Arshdeep.

Expired meat seized from Mysuru hotels, KFC outlet also raided amid crackdown

Karnataka food safety teams seized expired food and issued notices during statewide inspections. The drive widened to hotels, government canteens and storage hubs as violations mounted.

Mysuru. (Agency)

A statewide food safety crackdown has exposed serious hygiene and quality violations at hotels, restaurants, resorts and public food facilities across Karnataka, with authorities seizing large quantities of expired and unsafe food items and issuing multiple notices to establishments found flouting regulations.

As part of the intensified inspection drive, food safety officials conducted checks in Mysuru city and district on Saturday. At the Rio Meridian Hotel, authorities seized 9 kg of chicken after finding it beyond its expiry date. Inspections at four other hotels led to the seizure of 68 kg of meat from the Grand Mercure Hotel, while 4 kg of

mushrooms were confiscated from Q Star Hotel.

Separate inspection drives in Mysuru and Nanjangud taluks covered three

survey samples. Around 16 kg of expired and perishable food items were discarded during the operation.

The latest action is part of a wider campaign by the Karnataka Food Safety and Drug Administration Department to ensure compliance with food safety norms across the state.

In coastal Karnataka, officials carried out a surprise inspection at a KFC outlet in Mangaluru’s City Centre on K.S. Rao Road following a consumer complaint. The customer alleged that a Chicken Peri Peri Leg purchased online tasted stale and was unfit for consumption. Food safety teams inspected the outlet’s kitchen, storage areas, cold rooms, freezers and cooked food stocks as part of the investigation.



Army jawan killed wife, tried to pass it off as fall from roof; arrested

Hoshiarpur, Punjab. (Agency)

A woman was allegedly beaten to death by her husband, an Army personnel who had returned home on leave, in Punjab’s Hoshiarpur district. Police have arrested the accused and booked two of his relatives for allegedly helping him cover up the crime. The incident took place in Sunehra village near Hajipur in Hoshiarpur district. The deceased has been identified as Rama, who was married to Army jawan Amarjeet Singh. According to police, Amarjeet allegedly assaulted his wife to death after returning home on leave on the night of August 13. Police said the

accused initially tried to pass off the incident as an accidental fall from the roof. According to the victim’s family,



they were informed around 4 am that Rama had fallen from the rooftop and had been admitted to a hospital in Hajipur.

However, when family members reached the hospital, they found that Rama had died. They alleged that her

body bore multiple injury marks, leading them to suspect that she had been brutally assaulted rather than injured in an accidental fall.

POLICE ARRESTS HUSBAND, HIS UNCLE

Based on a complaint filed by the victim’s family, police registered a case against Amarjeet Singh, as well as his uncle Kuldeep alias Kuki and aunt Sonia, alleging their involvement in the incident. The complainant told police that Rama had been subjected to physical abuse since her marriage.

8-year-old killed as school canopy collapses during I-Day event in UP’s Sambhal



Sambhal. (Agency)

A joyous Independence Day celebration at a private school in Uttar Pradesh’s Sambhal district turned tragic on Saturday when the canopy at the school’s main entrance collapsed, killing an eight-year-old boy and seriously injuring two students.

The accident occurred during an Independence Day programme at Al Hasnain Public School in Madala village under the Asmoli police station area. A CCTV recording of the incident has surfaced, showing the moment the structure gave way as children gathered around it to watch the celebrations.

According to officials, several local children had come to the school to watch the Independence Day function. Some of them climbed onto the entrance canopy while others stood below it. Unable to bear the weight, the structure suddenly collapsed, trapping children under the debris.

Local residents rushed to the spot after hearing screams and launched a rescue effort. The trapped children were pulled out from the rubble and taken to a nearby hospital.

The deceased was identified as Nizamuddin, an eight-year-old boy who had come to watch the programme. Doctors declared him dead on arrival. Two students of the school, Saif Ali and Shaidana, sustained serious injuries and were referred to a higher medical centre for treatment.

Villagers, police clash ahead of Haryana CM’s I-Day event; video shows cops throwing stones

Clashes broke out in Hansi after villagers protested the delay in arresting the main accused in dairy operator Jeevan Kundu’s murder.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Several people, including policemen and villagers, were injured in clashes in Haryana’s Hansi on Saturday after villagers reached the town to stage a protest over the alleged delay in arresting the main accused in the murder of a dairy operator.

The protest was scheduled to coincide with the Independence Day function at which Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini was to hoist the Tricolour.

According to initial information, several villagers were injured in the police lathi charge, while Hansi Superintendent of Police Vinod Kumar

and a DSP sustained minor injuries in the stone-pelting. A police officer said the SP was seen covering his injured hand with a handkerchief to stop the bleeding.

The protesters were demanding the arrest of the main accused in the murder of dairy operator Jeevan, who was allegedly attacked by nearly a dozen people in neighbouring Hisar on August 4. The police have arrested nine accused, while the main accused, who is allegedly close to an influential MLA, remains absconding. Despite the clashes and protests before the Independence Day function, the event with the chief minister as the chief guest concluded

without disruption.

Controversial clip

Meanwhile, a purported video clip of



the clash shows Hansi Superintendent of Police Vinod Kumar, accompanied by some policemen, throwing stones towards the protesters.

When asked about the video, the SP said the police had responded to keep the protesters at bay as stones were being pelted by the protesters. He said five to six police personnel sustained injuries in the clashes.

The police have also registered an FIR against nearly 200 persons, including women and farmer leaders. The SP said several persons had been detained in connection with the incident. The police action has drawn sharp criticism from Opposition leaders, who have condemned the lathi-charge on villagers protesting to demand the arrest of the main accused in the murder case.

An unhealthy diet of saturated fat in external affairs

One of the many Communist era jokes in Poland featured an American and a Pole in animated conversation in Warsaw's Old City, which has symbolism associated with the country's blood-soaked history. The American tourist tells the Polish citizen: "I can stand in front of the White House, shout slogans and protest against the American President. That is how we cherish our freedom." Replies the Pole: "I can also stand in front of my President's office, shout slogans and protest against the US President."

Debate in India about this country's foreign policy has become just like the above encounter between the American and the Pole. India's think tanks and media thunder daily and incessantly against Pakistan, China, the regressive acts against women by the Taliban in Afghanistan, Islamists in Bangladesh and, occasionally, against US President Donald Trump. But rarely, if at all, can any meaningful or worthwhile criticism of India's current external relations be seen anywhere on these domestic platforms. Once in a while, foreign newspapers and other outlets are also at the receiving end of Indian public ire. When the foreign media demands accountability to truth from the Indian government, or when New Delhi's policies are hauled over the coals in great detail, or if books and movies not to the liking of vocal—but splendidly ill-informed—sections of local society are brought out abroad, such critics are trolled as agents of India's destabilisation.

This shameful and dangerous practice of keeping its own citizens in ignorance about real issues of national security and external affairs—as opposed to perceived interests and propaganda—is not entirely new or the product of the present ruling dispensation. When I returned to India three-and-a-half decades ago after working abroad for many years as a journalist, a joint secretary in the ministry of external affairs (MEA), whom I had known since my teenage years, called me home and gave some advice. Because I had started writing against the official MEA line, this well-meaning official was concerned as a friend. "Look, I can summon any journalist on the foreign policy beat, whatsoever senior, and dictate a story to him. It will appear in print tomorrow without even a change in comma or full stop." There were no TV channels then other than the sole official one. K Subrahmanyam, who has long been considered in India as the guru of today's defence and foreign policy analysts, was once approached by George Tanham of the RAND Corporation's National Defense Research Institute for his views on Indian strategic thought. "What can I say about something that doesn't exist!" Subrahmanyam had retorted to Tanham's query. On another occasion, when Subrahmanyam was Jawaharlal Nehru Visiting Professor at the University of Cambridge, students at Wolfson College had asked him a question similar to Tanham's. "That would be a good idea," Subrahmanyam had said about strategic thinking in India, paraphrasing Mahatma Gandhi's answer to his thoughts on Western civilisation. Subrahmanyam's son S Jaishankar was foreign secretary and is now the minister for external affairs. It may be unfair to speculate on what the father would have thought of his son's foreign and security policies. But it is fair from an analyst's point to view to argue that a low type of pragmatism has replaced ideology as MEA's core policy today. Pragmatism brings success, but more often than not, such successes are short-lived. Pragmatism cannot substitute strategic thought, which alone can craft policies that reflect India's growing stature in the world. Robust strategic thought must honestly take into account that India is a long way from fulfilling its destiny.

States slow-walking into a fiscal trap

An old audit report of West Bengal's finances tabled recently shows ballooning debt despite impressive growth. The phenomenon, made worse by hidden debt in the form of guarantees, is quite common among states. Blaming only subsidies and cash transfers distorts the picture

Late last month, West Bengal's new government tabled in the Assembly 28 Comptroller and Auditor General reports that had been pending since 2020-21. The state's finance minister termed the delay a "constitutional lapse". Among the revelations in the reports was Bengal's debt standing at over ₹8 lakh crore despite recording an almost 9.6 percent compounded annual growth over a decade. Growth and rising debt moving together is not unique to Bengal. Delhi has seen its own version of this fight, with lieutenant-governors pressing chief ministers to table overdue audits. What has changed is the scale of what these audits are now uncovering at a moment when every state—irrespective of who governs it—is quietly renegotiating how much of its own budget it actually controls. States, which cannot print money or run their own monetary policy, can only borrow within limits set largely by the Centre. Once salaries, pensions, interest and subsidies are paid, little room is left for anything new. What gets sacrificed in the process is capital expenditure. States allocated only 16.59 percent of their total spendings to capital assets like roads, hospitals and educational institutions in 2024-25. This is a significantly low proportion that has continued to linger between 13 percent and 20 percent over the past decade. For every rupee spent, barely a sixth builds the roads, hospitals and classrooms meant to drive future growth.

High interest payments seem to be the primary reason for reduced capital expenditures. Interest payments by all states have skyrocketed manifold, increasing by 160 percent over the last decade.

In 2024-25, 11 states—Punjab, Haryana, Kerala, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Gujarat—allocated more than 10 percent of their total budgets to pay for interest. Only Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Odisha allotted less than five percent of their state budget to pay off their liabilities. Karnataka has the largest share of 14 percent allocated for subsidies, signifying that a single category cannot be solely held responsible for fiscal stress. A less visible liability has grown just as quickly. Guarantees extended to power utilities and state corporations convert into real debt the moment they are invoked, yet sit outside headline deficit figures until then. As of March 2025, outstanding guarantees crossed ₹13 lakh crore or 4 percent of gross state domestic products (GSDP)—more than three times than a decade ago. It varies between over 14 percent of the GSDP in Telangana and less than 0.5 percent in Gujarat, Odisha and Uttarakhand. State governments are also increasingly dependent on market borrowings to fund their deficits. As per the Reserve Bank of India, they accounted for 76.3 percent of the combined gross fiscal



deficit in the 2025-26 budget estimates. This compares to 71.8 per cent in the previous fiscal. Over 1,000 separate loans were issued to state governments in 2025-26.

Every additional rupee raised this way locks in a future interest bill, feeding directly back into the committed expenditure trap described above, regardless of whether the underlying spending funded a hospital or a subsidy.

The trend of states recording a revenue surplus has reversed sharply, as the number of such states came down strikingly between 2018-19 and 2024-25, as the Economic Survey 2025-26 states. The overall revenue deficit of all states put together widened from 0.1 percent of GDP in 2019 to 0.7 percent. It worsened by another 40 basis points in the last fiscal year alone. States' own tax revenue did rise as a share of total revenue receipts, from 46 percent in 2022 to close to 50 percent by 2025, but this improvement has been concentrated in states with diversified, GST-friendly manufacturing and service sectors. The sharper divide runs between states that can tax their own growth and those that cannot, not between generous spenders and austere ones.

A related finding in the same survey deserves more attention. Drawing on state-level data going back to

1980-81, it found that the size of Central transfers does not reliably predict faster growth in poorer states; what does correlate is the share of a state's own spending that goes into capital formation. Higher fiscal deficits are linked to weaker growth down the line, and social spending pays off more reliably when paired with actual investment rather than delivered alone.

The West Bengal episode is as much about fiscal architecture as it is about political point-scoring. A state that delays tabling its own audit reports for years denies its Legislature and citizens the chance to debate the trade-offs laid out: how much goes to interest, how much sits in contingent guarantees and how much is left for capital spending. Timely, transparent reporting is a precondition for credible fiscal correction. Beyond that, it means that the instinctive reflex to blame subsidies and cash transfers oversimplifies a problem rooted in tax capacity, legacy debt and a national borrowing architecture that offers states few tools beyond the annual budget. A state with a narrow tax base and rising interest costs will struggle to fund capital investment, however it redesigns its welfare basket. Until India's federal fiscal architecture confronts these path-dependent constraints directly, the weight of old baggage will keep increasing in new state budgets.

Tata Group needs steady hand at helm to steer through choppy seas

The succession comes at a challenging time for the group. Its challenges extend beyond financials, with boardroom battles adding to the pressure

After months of intense boardroom drama, Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran has announced his intention of stepping down next February, ending a 10-year tenure at the helm of the group. Chandrasekaran, who had the backing of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and Sir Ratan Tata Trust for a third term, could not secure the support of Noel Tata, Chairman of Tata Trusts, which collectively own 66 percent of Tata Sons. Under the holding company's bylaws, the chairman's appointment requires unanimous support. Noel's objections reportedly stemmed from concerns over steep losses in several new ventures, excessive capital expenditure on high-risk businesses and mounting losses from acquisitions such as Air India and BigBasket. Unable to resolve the deadlock, Chandrasekaran deferred a vote on his reappointment at the February 24 board meeting. With no resolution in sight after months, he decided against seeking another term when his tenure ends on February 20, 2027. The exit leaves the ₹16-lakh-crore Tata Group facing a crucial question: who will lead the conglomerate into the future? In his



statement released Wednesday, Chandrasekaran too stressed the need for clarity on the group's leadership beyond February 2027.

The succession comes at a challenging time for the group. Air India incurred a net loss of ₹22,238 crore in 2025-26,

more than double the ₹10,859-crore loss in 2024-25. Tata Digital, which houses new-age businesses such as 1mg and BigBasket, deepened its loss to ₹4,974 crore from Rs 4,610 crore a year earlier. Even TCS, the group's cash cow in recent decades, faces an uncertain future as artificial intelligence reshapes the technology services industry.

The group's challenges extend beyond financials, with boardroom battles adding to the pressure. Tata Sons is also facing regulatory pressure from the RBI to get the entity listed—a scenario the group has been trying to avoid. Amid such internal strains and leadership churn, the group needs to make tough choices to steer the conglomerate through an increasingly challenging and rapidly evolving business environment. With the clock already ticking on getting the succession right, the group needs to be careful to avoid repeating mistakes of the past, particularly the leadership crisis that followed the appointment and subsequent removal of Cyrus Mistry, who had the shortest tenure as Tata Sons chairman. A steady hand at the helm is needed for the choppy seas ahead.

'Operation Safed Sagar' brings Kargil alive

➔The focus on the much-underplayed role of the IAF in the Kargil conflict through the lens of one squadron is a masterstroke

Very rarely does one get to view a gripping Indian web series on OTT based on war or a conflict that has a well-researched and credible script, tight direction and a storyline that blends the geopolitical and military dimensions. 'Operation Safed Sagar', airing now on Netflix, is one such offering that portrays the 1999 Kargil conflict with finesse. SouthAsians & DiasporaAdding to the positives is the restrained and accurate portrayal of characters, including those of Indian and Pakistani politicians, senior military leadership on both sides, and the entire band of pilots from the Golden Arrows squadron of the IAF. The focus on the much-underplayed role of the Indian Air Force in the Kargil conflict through the lens of one squadron is a masterstroke that prevents cinematic overreach and clutter. It has allowed for a storyline that showcases the finer nuances of life in a typical IAF squadron and offers a close look at operational and tactical vignettes, camaraderie and leadership in a combat environment. Fighter squadrons all over the world are tight-knit units, with the Commanding Officer and the Flight Commander bearing onerous responsibilities, particularly in stressful training and combat environments.

The IAF squadrons in the 1990s, particularly the MiG-21s, had a disproportionately large number of young officers who needed to be trained and moulded into operationally proficient fighter pilots, ready for combat. The series portrays Wing Commander Tony Dhanoa and Squadron Leader Ajay Ahuja as good leaders—firm, empathetic and bold risk-takers with a sense of duty that ultimately leads Ahuja to take one risk too many and pay for it with his life. Siddharth as Ajay Ahuja comes across as a flight commander who means business, leads from the front and quickly understands his boys well. Another impressive portrayal is that of Gen Pervez



Musharraf and his band of conniving generals, with their obsession with Jammu and Kashmir. The General demonstrates the absolute supremacy of the Pakistan Army in strategic decision-making. Nawaz Sharif's portrayal as a bumbling but opportunistic politician kept in the dark by a cunning Musharraf is quite convincing. So is PM Vajpayee's portrayal as a well-meaning Indian PM who is blindsided by Musharraf and then goes on to demonstrate firmness by staying with a long military campaign to evict the Pakistani forces from the Kargil heights. SouthAsians & DiasporaAcknowledged as one of the IAF's best operational commanders in recent decades, Air Marshal Vinod Patney's character is played very well by Adil Hussain, with his clipped English accent and bold

decision-making.

There are several authentic and heartwarming episodes in the series that reflect the human dimension of life in a fighter squadron, both in peacetime and during war. Among those that stand out are bachelors 'bouncing' their newly posted and seemingly aloof, soft-drink-consuming flight commander (Ahuja). Then late at night, they end up cutting vegetables for a delectable pulao that is served to them, even as they empty the bar.

Another episode shows a young pilot being distracted by a determined girlfriend, who leaves her home to be with him. She is temporarily adopted by the squadron till they get married. The briefings, tactical discussions, exhilaration after coming out tops in an exercise and the disappointment of not being in action come across with

honesty and in an 'as-it-happens' manner in a typical fighter squadron. The areas where the director has chosen to exercise his imagination and take liberty with the actual occurrence of events during the Kargil conflict have been well chosen. For example, the exact details of Squadron Leader Ahuja's capture after he ejects, his brutal torture and killing. This part is very well handled in the episode that creates a sequence of events from his ejection, attempted escape and capture to his interrogation and, finally, his execution.

The aviation sequences are well orchestrated and credible, barring a few over-the-top ones, such as the manoeuvring of the MiG-21 in narrow snow-covered and rocky valleys and the conduct of the night operation in the final episode that portrays a large formation of MiG-21s manoeuvring at high altitude by night in close formation. If Tom Cruise can execute several almost-impossible manoeuvres in 'Top Gun' and 'Top Gun: Maverick', Wing Commander BS Dhanoa ('Tony'), effectively played by Jimmy Shergill, and his boys from the Golden Arrows, can do one better! The dialogues are crisp and very military-like, with little rhetoric or chest-thumping beyond the very real manifestations of nationalism on both sides.

Overall, this series is one of the finest Indian productions in the war-and-conflict genre in recent decades. It is on the same plane as films such as 'Vijeta' and 'Sam Bahadur'. SouthAsians & DiasporaThe series is also a befitting farewell to the MiG-21, the IAF's longest-serving and best-loved fighter aircraft.

'Operation Safed Sagar' is a must watch for anyone wanting to recall events of the Kargil conflict and understand the IAF's role in the joint operation that decisively evicted the Pakistani forces from the heights in the Kargil sector.

How to decorate your home with Mirrors

If mirrors fascinate you more than anything, here's how using mirrors differently can make your home look playful and classy at the same time.

Mirrors as art work

Mirrors are not always a utility or random piece of decor that is just only used in wardrobes or dressing tables. Mirrors can be creatively used as artwork at home to lend an artistic look. You can either have a collection of small or different-sized mirrors, hung haphazardly to create an artsy look on the wall. You can also use a single statement mirror on a highlighted wall to add to its charm.

Brighten your living room with a mirror wall

Since, space crunch is something we all face while living in a city like Mumbai, ideas that make the home look spacious are always welcome. Living rooms make for a great place for installing a super-large mirror; especially mirror walls. Use one wall in your living room to install a simple wooden frame mirror, to open up the space with the entire reflection of the room. Make sure you use a wall near the window, so that it also

reflects enough sunlight to make your home look bigger and brighter.

A mirror cabinet for a bigger looking kitchen

Using a mirror instead of tiles for your kitchen wall against the sink or the platform will help open up a small area. You can also use mirrors as a sliding door for your cabinets so that they do not look like one. Especially if you have an open kitchen, this mirror will help you talk to people in the living area without facing them as well as increase the brightness of the space.

Create optical illusion in the hallway

If you always thought a hallway is something you just quickly pass by, you got to think again. Adding mirrors to the space will open up the area so that you don't feel confined within it. If you creatively place them, they can also serve as hallway utilities, like the ones here. Drawers and cabinets with mirror doors in the hallway can make the home look lively and colourful, as they would reflect everything around it. No to mention, you can always stop by to have a good look at yourself while passing.

A statement mirror at the dining area

Now, you would ask why do we need a mirror in the dining area? We say, why not? As mentioned before, mirrors are not just an utility, its a style statement. Using a statement mirror with a beautifully carved wooden or metal with filigree worked frame on one of the walls of your dining space, will add to the motif of the room without taking away from the more interesting things, like food. Although an attention-getter, the mirror will only enhance the look of your enclosed dining area.

Make a statement with your Sofa

Two-seaters are cosier

A comfortable two-seater sofa can double up as a space to take a nap on or watch your favourite show on TV. Bright upholstery works. Choose bright upholstery to jazz up your otherwise simple and minimalist decor.

Paisley shaped settees

Take paisley to another level with a bright settee. There are some available that are in the shape of a paisley too. Try different shapes.

Stylish recliners

Single recliners can add personality to your decor.

Lounge on your L-shaped sofa

An L-shaped sofa is not just comfortable but can also work as a lounge

Style or trends can be thought of later when it comes to sofas, rather comfort and personality are priorities. Modern settee, sofa, lounges can give you that special 'my space' in any room with a decor that is stylish but impersonal. These usually are furniture that are functional — a lounge in front of the television set, a recliner in front of your bookcase to sit down and read, a settee for knitting, an armchair to take a quick nap on, or a comfortable sofa for your guests to sit. The latest design trends for living room furniture have to offer many traditional and contemporary sofa designs and myriad options of using colours, textures and designs to enhance the feel of a room.



The latest design trends for living room furniture have to offer many traditional and contemporary sofa designs and myriad options of using colours, textures and designs to enhance the feel of a room. Here are a few ideas



How green is your home?

What story can the dust collected from your house tell?

These organisms can indicate not just the geographical location of your residence, but also the proportion of male and female members in the house, and can also reveal if you have a pet, says a new study.

The new findings highlight the impressive amount of microbial diversity in the average household.

"Every day, we are surrounded by a vast array of organisms in our homes, most of which we cannot see," said co-author of the study Noah Fierer, associate professor at the University of Colorado Boulder in the US.

"We live in a microbial zoo, and this study was an attempt to catalog that diversity," Fierer said.

The study examined roughly 1,200 homes across the US. On average,

each home contains more than 5,000 different species of bacteria and around 2,000 species of fungi.

Fungal communities tend to be more predictive of a home's location while bacterial communities provide clues about the identity of its residents.

"Geography is the best predictor of fungi in your home," Fierer noted. When it comes to bacteria, however, where you live may be less important than whom you live with.

From the dust samples, researchers could confidently predict which homes had pets such as cats or dogs and, to a slightly lesser extent, the gender ratio of the residents.



Tips to buy rustic furniture

If you are the one who likes rugged and country-side look in a house, doing up your pad with rustic furniture is your best bet. It makes your house look unique and interesting. Here are a few options

For your living room

Instead of having a sofa in your living area, opt for light-weight wooden arm-rests. To add comfort, you can add a few cushions. To jazz up the look, you can also paint the chairs in quirky



colours.

For your bedroom

Choose a teak wood bed, instead of rot iron one. For the country-side charm, you can also have a piece of log placed in the room, near the bed to make your bedroom look interesting.

For your balcony

A few wooden chairs in the balcony along with an unpolished table looks great. To complete the look, you can have a wooden or a cane swing chair placed near the

How to add Life to your Walls

Be a little creative and add more colour and vibrancy to your wall. Walls with a dash of colour and imagination can change the look of your room. And there are simple not so expensive ways to add more life to your walls. Just let your creative juices flow. And then see the change.

Art power: Nothing brightens up the wall like a canvas. So, if you have an artwork then display it. Choose the perfect place to showcase it so that it becomes the centre of attraction. And if you don't have the money to buy original art, don't lose heart. You can always buy a print and with a stylish frame, it can change the look.

Colours of life: Interestingly, fabrics add much colour to a wall. India is a country of great textile heritage. So, you can choose from the ikkats to mangalgiris for adding a completely different, vibrant look to your



Ahmedabad, you will definitely know the power of textile in adding a warm rich look. Learn to use saris, dupattas, rugs in adding more colour and texture to your decor.

Stringing memory: Memories are great to have as company in your intimate space. Dig into your album for your favourite family photos and then arrange it to bring in a sense of personal touch to your space. How about being a little different and creative? Write your favourite poem on a nice handmade paper and then frame it. You can also make a collage out of your kids' paintings and then frame it to hang on the wall.

Shelve it: Do you think shelves are boring? Well, you couldn't be more wrong. These days there are many colourful shelves in different shapes available in the market. Even you have an ordinary shelf, paint it in warm colours with different motifs and see the result yourself. Arrange your favourite books, DVDs and knickknacks on the shelf and see the transformation.



Floor colours can enhance your decor

Your floor can add a lot to your room not just by way of dimensions — larger, smaller, wider, narrower — but can also add abstract emotions to it, like making it look warmer and happier. Here are tips to keep in mind when you are doing up your floors....

Light-coloured floors Brighten a dark room using a very light floor. This also makes it look larger. The reflected light will make the room look lighter. Pale floors can make your room look great when paired with dark furniture.

Dark floors Dark hardwood floors can add immense character to a large room and dark floors have the incredible ability to embrace all kinds of decor schemes. You could choose to have light-coloured furniture for a dramatic effect. With dark floors, it would be good to avoid dark walls.

Floor skirts Floors look larger when the skirtings are of the same colour. When the floor skirtings are of the same colours as your walls, it gives the opposite effect.

Floor and furniture Your floor colour should be two shades lighter than your furniture. With dark floors, use furniture that is pale. If needed, use a rug that helps to provide this contrast.

Moods to go with floors Beige or orangish floors that have a yellow tinge, look cozy and are warm and happy. Brown floors are earthy and sober. Dark floors have elegance and character. All white or pale floors can make your home look calm and peaceful.

7 things to help organise your Living area



If you have been thinking to renovate your home and get rid of the clutter for the longest time, then this is the right time to start. However, if do not want to spend a lot and still want your house to look organised, then just get rid of these seven simple things and you can change the look of your living room instantly.

Bills, envelopes and invites:

Most living rooms have a stack of unimportant papers lying everywhere. From various utility bills to credit card statements, and from envelopes to wedding invites, we always tend to dump all this on our coffee table or our TV cabinet in the living room. Get rid of empty envelopes and bills older than three years, and organise the rest in drawers, so that they're hidden.

Extra cushions:

Cushions lend a sense of style to the living room; vibrant coloured and abstract design cushions help the living area come to life. However, too much of anything is a bad idea. Do not overcrowd your living rooms with cushions, limit them to your couch or a baithak. Don't overdo it by keeping them on chairs, window seats, recliners or by simply increasing their number.

.Big-size music system and Cds:

That big four-CD-changer home theatre system with four massive speakers covering a complete wall of your living room, might have emotional value, but it definitely adds to the clutter. Simply replace it with a sleek sound bar that would be hardly noticed but has effective sound quality, and you will notice that the room looks less cluttered.

5.Candles:

You definitely had a romantic evening in mind when you picked up those scented candles. However, they are now lying unattended in various corners coated with loads of dust. Get rid of those candles and buy lights that are easy to clean and can be used for a longer duration. Make sure they are all hanging lights so that the floor remains de-cluttered.

Bean bags:

A lot of people buy bean bags to create a relaxed sitting arrangement, however, they are rendered redundant after a while as they trigger back problems. They then just lie there in clumps, occupying a lot of space and we end up dumping things on bean bags which adds to the clutter. Make way for a smart pair of antique wooden or recliners that will occupy less space and will prove useful as well.

Artificial plants:

This is one of the most useless things in anybody's living room, as they do not add any charm to the room whatsoever. In fact, Feng Shui and vastu experts warn about keeping artificial plants in homes as they have some kind of negative energy. Get rid of them as they attract a lot of dust and occupy unwanted space. Invest in real plants instead.

Miniature artifacts:

Not many people can maintain art-house like interiors, as it needs a lot of cleaning. Miniature artifacts and handicrafts enhance the look of your living room and make it look arty. These objects makes your house look dingy and unkempt if they are not dusted and maintained from time to time. If de-cluttering your house means having a clear space, then miniature artifacts need to be got rid off. In fact, a less-cluttered house looks bigger and better.

Ever seen a garden in a bottle? Only a genie might be able to do that, right? Well, not anymore. Even you can conjure one at home now. Don't believe us? Do it yourself...

Commonly used as a form of decoration, a bottle garden is perhaps a brilliant substitute of balcony or terrace gardens for city apartments. A plastic or a glass bottle with a narrow neck is just what you require to get started. Plants are grown inside the bottle with little exposure to sunlight, and can be contained indefinitely inside the bottle. You may wonder how the plants survive without air or water. It's pure science. When the plants are initially planted in a bottle, a small quantity of water is added. The air in the bottle provides the plants with necessary oxygen and carbon dioxide for photosynthesis. Sunlight is used to convert water and carbon dioxide into sugar. Oxygen that is liberated as a byproduct, remains trapped in the bottle and is, in turn, used for respiration by the plants. The cycle continues and thus, the plants can easily survive in a self-sufficient ecosystem.

Green therapy Creating a bottle garden is simple. All you need to do is select a plant with a slender stem, tolerance for lower indoor light, humidity and features of visible interest like appealing leaf colour, shape etal. Get a pretty-looking bottle and you are all set.

- Put a tablespoon of coarse aquarium gravel at the bottom of the bottle. That way you'll be able to see if there is stagnant water below the soil.

- Fill the bottle up to an inch with fine potting soil just above the gravel. Let it settle down by gently adding water, but just enough to moisten the soil.

- To prevent getting water on the mouth of the bottle and to prevent over watering, use an eye dropper. Using distilled water will help limit the amount of salts going into the soil.

- Keep adding soil and water until the level of the soil is correct and all of it is moist.

- Once the stem extends beyond the top of the bottle, gradually add more soil to give the stem and roots time to adjust being covered. With such a small opening, the soil may not be able to take in enough air at times and may sour due to over-watering. Now, that might be fatal to the roots.

- If the bottle is big enough, a layer of brick pieces of about 10 mm thickness should be laid (instead of gravel) at the bottom. This will absorb accidental application of excess water. Preparing the soil.

- The soil mixture should be porous and friable. This helps in aeration of roots. In case of a bottle garden, it is not easy to loosen the soil at regular intervals. Hence porous soil is essential.

- For this, take one part red garden soil, one part crushed brick pieces and one part leaf mould. In case leaf mould is not available, ½ part of well-decomposed manure may be used in the mixture. It is not necessary to sterilise the soil mixture.

How to make your own Bottle garden



- To take care of fungus and insect infection, add a small quantity of fungicide and insecticide to the soil mixture. It is advisable that these chemicals are mixed in water and then added to the soil.

- Making the soil moist has certain advantages. The dust will not fly while you fill the bottle with soil. And when you plant the saplings, the soil won't crack. Selection of plants

- The plants chosen should be slow-growing because fast-growing plants need frequent pruning, which is bit difficult in case of a bottle garden.

- Herbs like sage, oregano, basil and ferns work

quite well for a bottle garden as they usually adapt to the size of their environment be it a small bottle or a big container.

- Keep the bottle near a window. But direct sunlight must be avoided, or else plants will wilt inside.

How to sow a sapling Place the selected saplings inside the bottle with the help of fork and forcep. Pour a few droplets of water and close the lid of the bottle.

The plants start growing inside the closed bottle. You should not water again unless the saplings start wilting. So, what are you waiting for? Happy gardening!

Burj Khalifa glows in Tricolour as world leaders mark India's 80th Independence Day

Dubai's Burj Khalifa was illuminated in the Indian Tricolour to mark India's 80th Independence Day. The display and messages from world leaders highlighted India's expanding global ties.

Delhi. (Agency)

Dubai's iconic Burj Khalifa lit up in the colours of the Indian national flag on Friday night, joining celebrations of India's 80th Independence Day and symbolising the close ties between India and the United Arab Emirates. Images and videos shared by the Consulate General of India in Dubai showed the world's tallest building illuminated in saffron, white and green, drawing applause from onlookers. In a post on X, the Consulate described the display as "a spectacular tribute to India's journey, pride and spirit" and

said it reflected the enduring friendship between India and the UAE. The dazzling tribute came as governments and leaders across the world extended greetings to India on the landmark occasion, highlighting the country's growing global influence and reaffirming commitments to deepen bilateral cooperation.

A GLOBAL LANDMARK CELEBRATES INDIA

Standing at 828 metres, the Burj Khalifa is the tallest structure in the world and one of Dubai's most recognisable landmarks. The skyscraper frequently lights up to mark major international

events, national celebrations and global causes. Its illumination in the colours of the Indian tricolour has become a recurring feature during India's Independence Day celebrations, reflecting the deep people-to-people connections between the two countries. The UAE is home to one of the largest Indian expatriate communities in the world, and India-UAE ties have expanded significantly in recent years across trade, investment, technology, energy and cultural exchanges.

WORLD LEADERS EXTEND GREETINGS

Among the first major international



messages was one from French President Emmanuel Macron, who congratulated the Indian people on their 80th Independence Day.

Russian President Vladimir Putin sent greetings to both President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, describing Russia-India relations

as a "particularly privileged strategic partnership". He said cooperation between the two countries continued to expand across multiple sectors and praised their close coordination in forums such as the United Nations, BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. From the United States, Secretary of State Marco Rubio conveyed Washington's congratulations, saying the relationship between the two democracies was stronger than ever. He noted that growing collaboration was contributing to security and prosperity in the wider Indian Ocean region.

Congress Tiranga Yatra highlights harmony, eco conservation

Delhi. (Agency)

Delhi Congress on Saturday organised a "Sadbhavana Tiranga Yatra" in the Babarpur area, highlighting environmental conservation, social harmony and national unity. Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee chief Devender Yadav participated in the march, organised by the Babarpur District Congress Committee. The yatra began at the Nand Nagri district office and concluded at Seemapuri. Yadav said the Tricolour represented not only India's pride and honour but also its unity in diversity, democracy,



brotherhood and constitutional values. He urged people to come together to strengthen national unity and social harmony and work towards building the India envisioned by freedom fighters. "The Congress has always struggled to safeguard the nation's unity, integrity, democracy, and Constitution, and will continue to work with unwavering commitment to uphold the rights of the people and strengthen the country's democratic values," Yadav said. He also hoisted the national flag at the DPCC office and paid tribute to freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for Independence.

Women's empowerment, jobs priority: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini

New Delhi. (Agency)

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini said on Saturday women are the greatest strength of society and their social, economic and educational empowerment remains a top priority of the government. Addressing the state-level Independence Day function at Hansi, he also highlighted transparent recruitment and development initiatives undertaken by the government. Saini said nearly 10 lakh women have received Rs 2,042 crore under the Deen Dayal Lado Lakshmi Yojana, which provides financial assistance of Rs 2,100 per month. He said women-led startups account for 50 per cent of the state's startups, with a new policy targeting an increase to 60 per cent. He said nearly 15 lakh families were being provided LPG cylinders at Rs 500 under the Har Ghar Har Grihini Yojana, while women have been given 50 per cent representation in Panchayati Raj Institutions. Free education is being provided to girls up to the postgraduate level, the minister added. Saini said e-governance had helped curb corruption and the role of middlemen, with transparent recruitment "without parchi kharchi" becoming a defining feature of the state. He claimed more than two lakh youth had secured government jobs through transparent recruitment over nearly 12 years, including around 43,000 in the last one-and-a-half years. He said the government had set a target of attracting Rs 5 lakh crore in investment and creating 10 lakh jobs over the next five years.

Private varsities bill could affect social justice: Teachers' body

The organisation questioned limited, nomination-based teacher representation in statutory bodies such as management boards and academic councils.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Academics for Action and Development Delhi Teachers' Association (AADTA) on Saturday raised a series of concerns over the proposed Delhi Private Universities Bill, 2026, arguing that several provisions could affect social justice, affordability, public infrastructure and regulatory oversight in higher education. The organisation questioned the rationale behind relaxing land requirements for private universities and expressed concern over the proposed reservation and fee-waiver provisions for Delhi-domiciled students. Under the bill,

25% of seats are proposed to be reserved for city students, while the AADTA said only a limited



proportion would receive a full fee waiver. It argued that reservation without an overall fee ceiling may not necessarily ensure affordable

higher education.

The organisation also raised concerns about provisions allowing existing educational institutions or colleges to be converted or upgraded into private universities. It sought greater clarity on the status of existing assets, students and employees in such cases. The AADTA specifically referred to 12 Delhi University colleges that are fully funded by the government, claiming that issues relating to permanent recruitment, sanctioned posts and salaries remain unresolved. It said the situation has raised apprehensions about the future status of existing public institutions.

Cost, deadline revised, road overhauls slowed by West Asia war set to pick up pace

Delhi. (Agency)

Even as the US-Iran conflict in West Asia slowed down the strengthening and repair of roads spanning 162 km in the Capital due to a surge in bitumen prices, the Delhi government's Public Works Department (PWD) is now aiming to finish the work before the year ends. The Finance department's Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) has approved a revised cost for the project, which was originally targeted for completion by March 31 but the deadline was later extended to July 31. At Rs 587.95 crore, the revised cost is around Rs 194 crore higher, almost 50% more than the original estimates of about Rs 394 crore. With the bitumen supply chain hit in the aftermath of the conflict, the EFC has approved revised

preliminary estimates of Rs 215.23 crore from Rs 147.07 crore for strengthening roads spanning 58.292 km in the East Maintenance Zone and Rs 372.72 crore from Rs 247.31 crore for roads spread



across 104.42 km in the North Maintenance Zone. This refers to a surge of 46% than the original cost in the East and 51% in North zones.

Sharp surge in bitumen cost

In the minutes of a recently-held meeting, the EFC gave the details: "...The price of

bitumen had increased up to Rs 80,140 per metric tonne at the time of bid submission, whereas the original estimate was prepared based on Delhi Schedule of Rates (DSR) 2023 where the rate of bitumen was considered as Rs 40,831 per MT. This increase in price of bitumen stated to be due to disruption in the supply chain of bitumen due to Middle East disturbance." Officials said that the PWD subsequently revised the estimates based on prevailing market rates and tenders were floated. "Financial bids were also opened after justification of the tender, with the lowest bid for the East zone standing at Rs 164.55 crore and that for the North zone at Rs 290.44 crore...." said an official, adding, "Since the increase in the modified estimates was more than 10%, fresh administrative approval and expenditure sanction were required before the works.

Land-use proposal of parade ground near Rashtrapati Bhavan among 34 Ridge projects under review

New Delhi. (Agency)

A proposal to use nearly 12.6 hectares of land at the President's Bodyguard (PBG) parade ground near Rashtrapati Bhavan, including 7.58 hectares of protected Ridge land, is among 34 projects being examined by the Standing Committee of the Delhi Ridge Management Board (SCDRMB), The Indian Express has learnt.

Minutes of the July 29 meeting of the SCDRMB, made available this month and accessed by The Indian Express, show that the committee has selected 10 of the 34 proposals for physical inspection.

While four of these will be inspected by the Standing Committee itself, six will be inspected by the Chief Conservator of Forests along with committee members, with the inspections to be completed before August 20. The projects span construction, infrastructure, land use and other works.

The PBG proposal seeks use of the land at the Central Ridge, opposite Gate 28 of Rashtrapati Bhavan, for training requirements. Officials said the proposal includes 7.58 hectares of additional protected Ridge land. The Ridge is Delhi's forested and rocky green area that runs through several parts of the Capital.

Projects seeking Ridge land

The 34 proposals cover construction, infrastructure, land use and other works. They include the Delhi-Karnataka Namo Bharat Corridor, a project at Jawaharlal Nehru University, development or redevelopment of Buddha Jayanti Park, conservation work at Sanjay Van, infrastructure projects at Army Hospital (R&R), Delhi Cantonment, and an office building for the ITBP.

JNU has sought permission for use of 2.262 hectares of land for construction of a lecture hall complex, incubation centre and special centre for e-learning.

The list has also features proposals for a new road in Sangam Vihar, drainage work on M B Road, digging in the Central Ridge to lay an electric cable to Bhuli Bhatiyari ka Mahal, and a service road from Hanuman Mandir, Basant Gaon, to Niryat Bhawan on the Outer Ring Road.

Couldn't protest against party wrongdoings: TMC's Asish Banerjee in suicide note

New Delhi. (Agency)

Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader and former West Bengal minister Asish Banerjee allegedly died by suicide inside a party office near his residence in the state's Birbhum district, leaving behind a purported note in which he appeared to claim innocence against allegations of corruption. His body was found hanging on Sunday morning. In his purported note, Banerjee, who was also an ex-Deputy Speaker of the West Bengal Assembly, apparently referred to supposed allegations of wrongdoings related to the Tarapith Rampurhat Development Authority (TRDA), where he had served as the chairperson. The veteran TMC leader claimed that he had no role in the civic planning and development agency's tender-related decisions, cheque issuance, plan approvals or no-objection certificates.

"In TRDA (Tarapith Rampurhat Development Authority), no files were given to me for 3.5 years. I was not in the Tender Committee, nor did I have cheque-signing power. I did not issue plan approvals or No Objection Certificates (NOCs). So, no grants were given. No one ever held any discussions with me on these matters; I had no scope at all in these affairs," he allegedly wrote in the letter. He also wrote that although he could not always accept "wrongdoings" within his party, he had been unable to protest against them. Banerjee also claimed that he never indulged in corruption throughout his political career. He alleged that attempts had been made to "malign" and humiliate him, and said he felt that entering politics was a mistake. The ex-lawmaker was 74 and survived by his wife and son. Banerjee,

who had been associated with politics since his student days and had also worked as a teacher, advised members of his family not to enter politics and recalled the affection he had received from his students.



"Throughout my life, I have never taken a single penny in exchange for doing any work," he allegedly wrote. Banerjee was a five-time MLA from Rampurhat, having represented the

constituency for 25 consecutive years from 2001 to 2026. He, however, lost the seat to Bharatiya Janata Party's Dhruba Saha in the 2026 West Bengal Assembly polls.

His body was found a day after the former TMC MLA participated in an Independence Day celebration in Rampurhat and hoisted the Tricolour there. Banerjee's death comes months after his party lost power in West Bengal following its 15-year rule, with the BJP forming the government after the 2026 Assembly polls. The change in political fortunes has also seen several former TMC leaders and legislators face corruption-related investigations and arrests. Police are investigating whether Banerjee died by suicide and, if so, what prompted him to take the extreme step. The body has been sent for postmortem.

Amber to start manufacturing Oppo, OnePlus, Realme phones from Q4FY27

New Delhi. (Agency)

Electronics manufacturing services firm Amber Enterprises India expects to start manufacturing Chinese smartphones under Oppo, OnePlus and Realme brands from the March 2027 quarter and double the output in the second year, a top company official said.

Amber Enterprises India Executive Chairman and CEO and whole-time director Jasbir Singh, during the company's earnings call, said that the firm expects to start with production of 8 million units of Oppo group smartphone brands and scale it twofold to around 16 million units in the second year of operations.

"Our group is set to foray into mobile phones through a manufacturing collaboration agreement with Oppo Mobiles India. The scope covers three brands, Oppo, OnePlus and Realme. We are on course to commence the trial

production by quarter 4 of FY27 and commercial production to begin quarter 1 of FY28," he said. Amber has onboarded a chief operating officer for the mobile vertical.



"On the scale front, we expect to begin with around 8 million units in the first year, followed by a calibrated phase-wise ramp-up, and expect to double to almost 15-16 million in the second year of operations," Singh said. Vivo and Oppo were started by China's BBK Electronics, but these companies claim to have independent

operations.

Oppo smartphones are also produced at Vivo's manufacturing unit in Noida for sale in India. Vivo is in the process of hiving off its plant to a joint venture company that it

is creating with Dixon Technologies. Oppo moving to Amber is an indicator that the Chinese mobile brands, which emerged from a common group, are moving towards asset-light models by reducing their manufacturing exposure in India.

Vivo has faced action from the Enforcement Directorate, while Oppo has faced action from the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence on tax issues.

Vivo has been leading the Indian smartphone market in terms of sales volume. The company had 17.8 per cent market share, followed by Samsung with 17.6 per cent and Oppo at third spot with 13.6 per cent share in the second quarter (Q2) of 2026, according to Counterpoint Research.

Shera Energy eyes 25-30% revenue growth in FY27, bets on capacity expansion

New Delhi. (Agency)

Jaipur-based Shera Energy is targeting 25-30 per cent revenue growth in the current financial year, supported by capacity expansion and foray into new value-added products to cater to the power and renewable energy sectors, according to a top company official. The NSE-listed company, which is also into recycling, began operations in 2003 with aluminium winding wires and had annual revenues of around ₹20 crore during its early years, its Chairman and Managing Director Naseem Sheikh said in an interaction with.

In FY26 Shera Energy reported annual turnover of ₹1,640 crore.

The company manufactures winding wires and other electrical products using copper, aluminium and brass, catering primarily to transformers, motors and other electrical equipment. "This year, we intend to grow another 25-30 per cent on our revenues and bottom line," Sheikh said.

To achieve its goal, Shera Energy is expanding its product portfolio into higher value-added segments, including solar ribbon and Continuously Transposed Conductors (CTC), as it seeks to benefit from India's growing investments in renewable energy and power infrastructure.

The company has already undertaken capital expenditure for solar ribbon manufacturing near Jaipur and has commenced product trials. Solar ribbons are conducting materials used to interconnect photovoltaic cells within solar modules. "Solar panel manufacturers were forced to import solar ribbon wires and flat wires from China. Very soon, you will see India becoming self-sufficient in producing solar ribbons," Sheikh said.

EPL sees beauty, cosmetics segment as growth driver, lifts revenue guidance

New Delhi. (Agency)

Packaging major EPL Ltd expects its beauty and cosmetics business to emerge as the key growth engine going forward, even as its oral care segment continues to deliver steady growth, said its Global CEO Hemant Bakshi.

EPL sees the growth momentum continuing in July after reporting 25 per cent topline growth in the June quarter, and has raised its revenue guidance for the near term to 16-18 per cent and has retained its margin guidance at 20 per cent. On the proposed merger of EPL with Indovida, which according to reports will create a consumer packaging major with a combined valuation of around USD 2 billion, Bakshi said the transaction aligns closely with EPL's long-term strategy. "We want to become a global leader in consumer packaging, focused on emerging markets. Rather than just being a supplier, we



have to become an innovation partner for our customers," Bakshi told in an interview.

EPL (earlier known as Essel Propack Ltd), now promoted by the Blackstone Group through Epsilon Bidco Pte Ltd, is looking at the country's beauty and cosmetic sector, one of the fastest-growing globally, as its second growth engine.

We "think of our business in two engines. One is our engine of cash and steady growth, which is oral. And the second engine of growth, which will be through premiumisation and market share gains, will be beauty and cosmetics," said Bakshi. While oral care -- toothpaste and related categories - remains a resilient, largely inflation-proof business given its habitual, everyday consumption, Bakshi said the segment has matured both in India and globally, and is likely to grow in the "middle to high single digits".

Beauty and cosmetics, on the other hand, could grow as much as 20 per cent, he said.

Jindal Stainless investing ₹900 cr to increase cold rolling capacity: MD

New Delhi. (Agency)

Jindal Stainless is investing Rs 900 crore to increase its cold rolling capacity to cater to the rising demand of the product from sectors such as automotive, appliances, and food processing, the company's Managing Director Abhyuday Jindal said. The investment will increase the company's cold rolling capacity from 2.05 MTPA to 2.67 MTPA by FY28, he said in the company's annual report for FY26.

Besides upstream, the company is also making significant investments to build up its downstream capabilities, the industry executive said. "Our Rs 900 crore investment across Hisar and Kharagpur, along with new hot rolled annealing, pickling, and cold rolling facilities at Jajpur, will...support a higher-value mix for automotive, appliances, food processing, and industrial

applications," Jindal said. Cold rolling is a precision metalworking process that shapes and compresses steel without heat. This method enhances structural strength, tightens dimensional tolerances, and delivers a smooth, high-quality surface finish, making cold-rolled sheet metal essential for high-



precision, high-durability applications. About the Maharashtra project, he said the proposed facility will improve logistics efficiency, support import substitution, and serve high-growth strategic sectors.

Jindal Stainless is in the process of identifying a site for its proposed Rs 40,000-crore stainless steel manufacturing facility in Maharashtra, where it will produce specialised grades of steel for critical applications in emerging sectors such as hydrogen, nuclear energy, defence, mobility, infrastructure, and process industries.

ONGC gets US licence to resume Venezuela operations, eyes operatorship

New Delhi. (Agency)

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) has secured a licence from the US Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), allowing it to resume full operations in Venezuela after years of limiting activity because of sanctions-related risks, a senior company official said.

The US approval removes a key hurdle for ONGC's Venezuelan investments and could pave the way for the state-run explorer to expand production, sign new agreements and take over operatorship of some projects from Venezuela's state oil company PDVSA, Anupam Agarwal, director-finance at ONGC, said at an investor call post first quarter earnings announcement. "Now we have full

freedom to work on the Venezuela project because earlier we were restricting our operations there because of the sanction-related risks. Those risks are behind us," Agarwal said.

ONGC Videsh Ltd, the company's overseas investment arm, holds a 40 per cent interest in the San Cristobal oil project, while the remaining is with Venezuela's Petroleos de Venezuela S.A. (PDVSA). It holds another 11 per cent stake in the Carabobo project, which is under development. An OFAC license would enable the company to manage the finances of its Venezuelan projects and help it recover a pending dividend of more than USD 500 million.

ONGC is already in talks with Venezuelan authorities and its joint-venture partners

over its interests in two projects -- San Cristobal and Carabobo -- and expects positive developments soon, including new agreements and a possible transfer of operatorship from PDVSA, he said.

The licence is significant for ONGC because US sanctions on Venezuela's oil sector have for years complicated financial transactions, investment and operations involving Venezuelan crude and energy assets. The company had therefore curtailed activity despite its longstanding presence in the country. The company can now invest in the projects to raise oil production. San Cristobal produced around 0.265 million tonnes of oil equivalent in FY26. This is a 10th of the production potential, and the OFAC license means it can invest in raising output.



India among ORIX's top two global growth markets: Group CEO Takahashi

New Delhi. (Agency)

Japanese mobility solutions and financial services provider ORIX Corporation has identified India as one of its two focus growth markets globally, bullish on the prospects of vehicle leasing and rentals in the country 'taking off' going forward, according to its President and Group CEO Hidetake Takahashi.

The company believes that it can increase the size of its fleet in India to around 1 lakh to 1.5 lakh vehicles in the short to medium term from the current 50,000. India's growing economy, rising inflows of FDI, more multinational companies entering the Indian market and increasing number of domestic entrepreneurs all augur well for the growth of ORIX Corporation's businesses,

specially vehicle leasing and rentals, Takahashi told PTI in an interview.

"Outside of Japan, Australia and India are the markets that will be a focus for ORIX," he said when asked about the company's key growth markets for the future. Japan is currently the biggest market for ORIX with about 5 lakh vehicles, while that of Australia is around 80,000 and India at about 50,000, Takahashi noted.

While the penetration of automobile leasing in India is about 3 per cent of the overall vehicle sales, he said, with the changing technology of mobility, the way of ownership of mobility will also change going forward.

"We can follow not only leasing but also rent a car or car share or any other way to use a car rather than own the car," he said.



Mcap of 5 most valued firms erodes by ₹1 trn, TCS takes biggest hit

New Delhi. (Agency)

The combined market valuation of five of the top-10 most valued firms eroded by Rs 1 trillion last week, with IT bellwether TCS taking the biggest hit, amid a bearish trend in domestic equities. Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex declined 489.92 points, or 0.62 per cent, and the NSE Nifty dipped 204.65 points, or 0.83 per cent.

"Markets ended the week lower as elevated crude oil prices, renewed geopolitical uncertainty and mixed global cues weighed on investor sentiment," Ajit Mishra SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. While Reliance

Industries, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) faced erosion from their valuation, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) and Hindustan Unilever were the winners from the top-10 pack. These five firms together added Rs 55,149.45 crore in market valuation. The market valuation of TCS eroded by Rs 34,263.28 crore to Rs 8,53,506.85 crore. Reliance Industries' valuation declined by Rs 31,869.13 crore to Rs 17,70,056.06 crore, and that of State Bank of India dropped by Rs 25,891.88 crore to Rs 9,85,829.96 crore. The

market capitalisation (mcap) of HDFC Bank edged lower by Rs 7,165.37 crore to Rs 11,20,802.10 crore, and that of ICICI Bank diminished by Rs 2,792.65 crore to Rs 10,17,577.98 crore. However, the valuation of LIC jumped Rs 26,438.49 crore to Rs 5,23,330.31 crore.

The mcap of Bharti Airtel surged Rs 20,592.13 crore to Rs 12,43,016.11 crore, and that of Bajaj Finance climbed Rs 3,548.79 crore to Rs 6,77,197.34 crore. Larsen & Toubro added Rs 2,490.66 crore, taking its valuation to Rs 5,58,973.11 crore. The mcap of Hindustan Unilever went up by Rs 2,079.38 crore to Rs 4,90,888.35 crore.

Pipeline repairs at Singur may disrupt water supply in parts of Telangana

HYDERABAD.(Agency)

Drinking water supply to several areas of Hyderabad is likely to be disrupted due to major maintenance and interconnection works being undertaken at the Singur project and Phase-IV Pump House at Peddapur Campus. The works will be carried out for 24 hours, from 10 am on August 17, 2026, to 10 am on August 18, 2026.

The works include junction works on the 1,600-mm-diameter pumping main at the Singur project, interconnection of MS and PSC pipes with the 2,000-mm-diameter gravity main, and replacement of various valves at the Phase-IV Pump House at Peddapur Campus.

The areas likely to be affected include BHEL, MIG-I and MIG-II, Rail Vihar, Chandanagar, Indian School of Business, KPHB Colony and surrounding areas, Shaikpet, Kokapet, Manikonda, Narsingi, Gayatrinagar, Borabanda, ESI, SR Nagar, Erragadda, Yellareddyguda, Ameerpet, Vengal Rao Nagar, Sanathnagar, NIMS, Banjara Hills, Tattikhana, Somajiguda, BS Maqta, MS Maqta Kondapur, Adityanagar, Premnagar, Hafeezpet, Mayurinagar, Gokul Plots, Malaysian Township, Hydernagar, Reddy's Labs, IDA, Bollaram and other adjoining areas.

Vidhana Soudha turns festive as thousands join first-ever 'Freedom Habba'

Bengaluru.(Agency)

The heart of Karnataka's administration turned festive as thousands thronged the Vidhana Soudha premises for the first-ever 'Freedom Habba', marking the 80th Independence Day. From children taking part in games, storytelling sessions and creative workshops at the Makkala Mela to families browsing food, handicraft, textile, organic and lifestyle stalls, the celebration transformed the usually formal premises into a lively public space.

Nearly 40 contingents representing Karnataka's regions, India's linguistic and cultural diversity, and various sections of society added colour to the festivities. Pourakarmikas, Asha workers, farmers, scientists and defence personnel walked alongside cultural groups, bringing together people from across the city and state. The Freedom Path took visitors through Karnataka's role in the freedom struggle, with district-themed displays highlighting places such as Belagavi, Shivapura and Chitradurga.

Ghee, Oils Worth Rs 35 Lakh Seized After Food Authority Raids In Gujarat

Surat.(Agency)

Gujarat's Food and Drug Control Administration has seized more than Rs 35 lakh worth of suspected adulterated ghee and oils during raids in Surat and Deesa, following directions from Health Minister Praful Pansheriya to take strict action against food adulteration, officials said on Saturday.

In Surat, officials raided a factory operated by Keval Food Product at Hindva Dream Industrial Estate in Stad Pardi of Kamrej taluka.

The unit was found to be operating without a valid licence and allegedly manufacturing and packing suspected adulterated ghee in the name of genuine products.

Officials seized 5,157 litres of ghee, valued at Rs 26.12 lakh, packed under the brand name 'Shri Annol Ratan Cow Ghee'. They also seized 1,485 kg of palmolein oil worth Rs 3.63 lakh and 285 kg of soybean oil kept for use in adulteration. Samples of all the seized products were collected for testing.

The department said the factory was being operated with its exterior locked, while production and packing activities were allegedly being carried out inside the premises. Separately, the Palanpur Circle team of the Food and Drug Control Administration.

Drivers Failing Marathi Test to Get One Month to Learn; Training Programme Not Extended

Mumbai.(Agency)

With working knowledge of Marathi being made mandatory for auto taxi drivers from Aug 18, those caught by RTO flying squads will be served a show-cause notice, granting them one month to learn the language and explain why action should not be initiated against them.

As per the amended Maharashtra Motor Vehicle Rules, the action against non-compliant drivers will follow a three-step process.

Under the first stage, RTO flying squads will conduct random checks to assess drivers' proficiency in functional Marathi. Drivers found lacking adequate knowledge will be issued a show-cause notice and will get a month to learn the basic language. An RTO official said on Saturday that the govt programme where RTO offices trained the drivers "was not being extended at present" and such drivers may have to learn the language

through private course.

Second, if a driver fails to comply with the showcause notice and does not acquire the required language skills within the



stipulated period, the department will suspend the driving licence for three months.

For a repeated violation, authorities will issue a second notice, following which the driver's licence may be revoked under the provisions of the amended law, officials said.

Meanwhile, the state transport department has prepared over a lakh

certificates on Friday and Saturday and will distribute them to auto-rickshaw and taxi drivers who have completed the basic Marathi language course conducted across Maharashtra's 58 Regional Transport Offices (RTOs) over the past 3 months. Sources in RTOs said that these certificates will be kept by drivers who will show it to checking squads and may act as "immunity" from action against them for the ongoing. Marathi language issue.

The certificates will be distributed at special functions organised simultaneously at all 58 RTOs on Monday. Drivers from across the state are expected to gather at their respective RTOs to participate in a live-streaming of a major felicitation ceremony being held at Ram Ganesh Gadkari Rangayatan in Thane. At the event, a section of drivers who completed the Marathi course will be honoured by CM Devendra Fadnavis and deputy CMs Eknath Shinde and Sunetra Pawar.

Sailor, wife, two children found dead in Mumbai, cops suspect suicide

Mumbai.(Agency)

A sailor, his wife, and their two children, including a two-month-old infant and a three-year-old child, were found dead in South Mumbai's Navy Nagar, the Cuffe Parade police, who are now investigating the matter, told The Indian Express on Sunday. The deaths came into light on the night of August 15 when the police received information about a family which had been found dead in Navy Nagar.

"We are investigating the case. Preliminary information suggests that the

sailor died by hanging. It is premature for us to determine the reason behind the family taking extreme steps," the police



said. The deaths of his wife and the two children are suspected to have been caused by poisoning, based on

preliminary findings of the investigation.

"It is suspected that the sailor died by hanging and the wife and children died by poisoning. The bodies have been sent for postmortem and further examination. A detailed report is awaited to ascertain the exact cause of death," a senior police official from South Mumbai said.

Investigators are also examining the circumstances leading up to the incident and whether these deaths are connected.

Police officials said the findings at the scene are preliminary and that the exact cause of death will be established after post-mortem examination and forensic analysis.

Two TNCSC officials suspended in 6K tonne PDS rice scam in Kancheepuram

CHENNAI (Agency)

The Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC) has suspended a regional manager and a quality controller in Kancheepuram for allegedly colluding with private rice mills (hulling agents), which supplied 6,000 MT of old PDS rice instead of freshly milled rice to the corporation for distribution through the Public Distribution System (PDS). The freshly milled rice from the paddy supplied by the TNCSC for hulling may have been diverted to private market, sources said.

The scam took place between May and July during the 2025-26 kharif marketing season (KMS) and is suspected to have occurred in

several districts.

Four private rice mills functioning as TNCSC hulling agents supplied the said volume of rice valued at Rs 10.82



crore, while allegedly retaining the freshly milled rice on their premises. The TNCSC regional manager and quality controller, who were responsible for verifying the quality

of rice received from the hulling agents, allegedly colluded with the mills and allowed the old PDS rice to be received and stored in TNCSC warehouses.

The malpractice came to light during a recent vigilance inquiry, following which the TNCSC suspended the two officials. It also terminated the contracts of the four hulling agencies and blacklisted them.

'Major leakage of rice occurs during transportation from warehouse'

TNCSC managing director Shilpa Prabhakar Satish confirmed the suspension and said departmental action was being initiated against the errant officials. "Action will be taken against the hulling agents as well.

20-year-old engineering student from Arunachal found dead at rented home in Kerala

Kochi. (Agency)

An Arunachal Pradesh native studying at an engineering college in Kothamangalam near here was found dead in the room of a rented house, police said on Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Michi Marpu (20), a native of Naharlagun in Arunachal Pradesh's Papum Pare district and a third-year B Tech student at MA College of Engineering, Kothamangalam.

According to police, Marpu was found lying on the floor with a rope tied around his neck at the rented house in Kozhipilly near Kothamangalam, where he lived with his college mates, on Saturday evening.

He was rushed to Kothamangalam Taluk Hospital, where doctors declared him dead, police said. Police suspect Marpu had attempted to hang himself from the roof of the room, but the rope broke, following which he was found lying on the floor.

Freedom Habba turns bitter as Metro closures leave Bengaluru visitors stranded

The situation was particularly difficult for families with young children, who were forced to navigate crowded roads and footpaths after being denied access to multiple Metro stations.

BENGALURU.(Agency)

What should have been a sweet memory for visitors turned into a bitter one, thanks to the poor handling of the crowds at Bengaluru's maiden Freedom Habba on Saturday.

Thousands of visitors, particularly those accompanied with children and elderly family members, faced an ordeal as they were made to walk from one metro station to another, only to be chased away by the security personnel. At around 7 pm when footpaths, roads and areas around Vidhana Soudha were overflowing with visitors and the general public. With restrictions

imposed on Metro stations, many visitors were left clueless as to how to get back home.

Initially, only the Dr Ambedkar metro station was announced to be closed to the public. The closure was subsequently extended to all the stations between MG Road and Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Metro station, that remained closed until 10.05 pm, leaving thousands scrambling to find alternative modes of transport.

For many, this meant walking considerable distances in search of an operational Metro station, bus or auto-rickshaw. The situation was

particularly difficult for families with young children, who were forced to navigate crowded roads and footpaths



after being denied access to multiple Metro stations.

"I was aware that the Dr Ambedkar metro station was closed to the public, and so I headed to Cubbon Park Metro

station but ended up being sent away saying that the station is closed. Following which I walked along with my daughter all the way to Sir M Visveswaraya metro station and to again be asked to go away," a visitor said.

While adding that she was not able to get an auto or a bus and was left stranded in addition to walking for long distances. Many instances of people not being allowed to enter the venue were reported though they had registered in advance. What was meant to be a celebration for the city instead ended on a frustrating note for many who had come with their families.

NEWS BOX

Magnus Carlsen defends Esports World Cup title after unbeaten run



New Delhi. (Agency)

World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen successfully defended his Esports World Cup chess title after completing an unbeaten campaign with a dominant victory over Denis Lazavik in Saturday's final. The Norwegian beat the Belarusian grandmaster 2-0, winning both sets 3-1 to cap a near-perfect tournament. Carlsen, representing Team Liquid, earned USD 250,000 and 1,000 Club Championship points with the victory. Speaking after the final, the five-time world champion explained how he approached Lazavik differently after studying his games and discussing his style with the coaching staff. "I followed Denis' games and talked to the coaches. I do feel, especially with Hikaru's approach, it was not right. Funny thing is, I said that he is not great at defending endgames, so I thought I should keep it together better than Hikaru," Carlsen said. "I have played Denis many times online, where I played riskily and got punished for it, so I didn't give him obvious positional advantages." Carlsen admitted that his unbeaten run was not without moments of danger, particularly during his matches against Alireza Firouzja and Nihal Sarin. However, he was delighted to finish the tournament without suffering a defeat. "There were several moments, a couple against Alireza, against Nihal as well. There were certainly some moments, but I am thrilled to go undefeated," he said. "I was not trying to do anything out of the ordinary. I tried to take my chances, with a little bit of randomness, and I am happy."

Lionel Messi sees penalty saved as Nashville routs Inter Miami in MLS



WASHINGTON. (Agency)

Lionel Messi missed yet another penalty and was booked as Inter Miami suffered a 4-1 loss at Nashville on Saturday in a top-of-the-table MLS clash. England's Sam Surridge and Germany's Hany Mukhtar scored second-half goals for the hosts in a showdown between the Major League Soccer overall leaders. Argentina and Miami captain Messi was denied from the penalty spot in the first half and issued a yellow card in the 59th minute but also assisted Inter's lone goal. Messi struck both posts in second-half stoppage time. Nashville leads MLS with 43 points and a record of 13-2 with four drawn while Inter Miami are second on 38 points. Nashville had already knocked Miami out of this year's CONCACAF Champions Cup in the round of 16. Defending MLS champion Miami, which had been a league-best 8-1-1 on the road, saw a seven-match undefeated MLS run snapped as Nashville remained unbeaten at home in the MLS campaign. Honduran defender Andy Najar scored with a header in the 17th minute to give Nashville a 1-0 lead. Miami had a chance to equalize with a Messi penalty kick in the 23rd minute but Nashville goalkeeper Brian Schwake saved his weak effort. Messi's record from the penalty spot is poor by his sky-high standards, including missing twice at the World Cup. The visitors netted the equalizer three minutes into first-half stoppage time when Venezuelan Telasco Segovia blasted in a right-footed shot off an assist

Islam Makhachev beats Ian Machado Garry, sets UFC win streak record

Islam Makhachev outpointed Ian Machado Garry to retain the welterweight title at UFC 330. The win pushed his UFC streak to 17 and took him past Anderson Silva's long-standing mark.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Islam Makhachev added another landmark to his UFC career on Saturday night, defending his welterweight title against Ian Machado Garry at UFC 330 in Philadelphia. The Russian secured a unanimous decision victory and extended his winning streak to 17 fights, moving past Anderson Silva's record of 16 consecutive UFC wins. Makhachev, now 29-1 in MMA, won 49-46, 49-46, 48-47

on the judges' scorecards. Garry, who was looking to become only the second undisputed UFC champion from Ireland, struggled to generate enough offence despite repeatedly defending himself well during the grappling exchanges. "I have nothing but respect for Islam ... he won. I have no complaints, no excuses," Garry said inside the Octagon after the decision. "It's always hard," Makhachev said when asked about going through the championship rounds against Garry.

MAKHACHEV MAKES UFC HISTORY

Makhachev controlled the fight largely on his terms, using his chain wrestling and suffocating top control to repeatedly take Garry out of his comfort zone. He mixed that pressure with sharp striking, including a damaging head kick in the second round. Garry's defensive scrambles helped him survive several



proved decisive. The victory takes Makhachev's UFC winning streak to 17, surpassing Silva's previous record that had stood since 2013.

DERN DEFENDS, BARBOZA RETIRES

In the co-main event, Mackenzie Dern

successfully defended her women's strawweight title for the first time, beating Gillian Robertson by unanimous decision. Dern dominated the grappling exchanges and constantly threatened submissions across five rounds.

Jalin Turner needed only 39 seconds to stop Kaue Fernandes with a first-round knockout, while Dustin Stoltzfus submitted Mansur Abdul-Malik with a rear-naked choke in the second round. The night also marked the end of Edson Barboza's UFC career. The 40-year-old announced his retirement inside the Octagon after suffering a second-round stoppage loss to Esteban Ribovics. Barboza leaves the UFC after a 16-year run that produced 18 promotional wins, 14 finishes and 10 Fight of the Night bonuses, closing the chapter on one of the most recognisable careers of his generation.

Pakistan forget penalty-corner gear at Hockey World Cup, former captain fumes

New Delhi. (Agency)

Pakistan's return to the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup began with a 4-1 defeat to England and an awkward off-field moment that quickly became the talking point. In the middle of the first half, Pakistan were left scrambling for penalty-corner protective gear that had reportedly been forgotten in the changing room. The incident came around the 17th minute, shortly after England had gone 1-0 ahead. Former Pakistan captain Salman Akbar called out the blunder on X, questioning the team's discipline and organisation on the biggest stage. "Wow. Another unwanted record from Pakistan hockey. In the opening match of the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 against England, Pakistan reportedly forgot the penalty corner protective gear in the changing room. As a result, the captain received

the green card," Salman wrote. "Forgetting essential protective equipment for penalty corners that simply cannot happen on the biggest



stage of international hockey. Preparation is not just about tactics, fitness and skills. It is also about discipline and organization," he added. The scramble happened when England won a penalty corner and Pakistan realised the protective equipment was not readily available on the pitch. A

player had to dash off to fetch it, with Salman sharing a picture of a Pakistan player carrying a large black bag onto the field. The delay ended with captain Abu Bakar Mahmood receiving a green card and spending two minutes on the sidelines.

HOW ENGLAND THRASHED PAKISTAN

The equipment mix-up was only one part of a difficult evening for Pakistan. England dictated the contest at the Wagener Hockey Stadium in Amstelveen, taking the lead through Stuart Rushmere in the 12th minute before Sam Ward doubled their advantage in the second quarter. Samuel Hooper made it 3-0 in the 31st minute and James Albery added another in the 47th. Pakistan eventually found a goal through Rehman Abdul Afraz in the 50th minute, but England comfortably closed out a 4-1 victory.

Enzo Fernandez booted by Chelsea supporters after transfer drama

New Delhi. (Agency)

Enzo Fernandez received a mixed reception from Chelsea supporters as he returned to Stamford Bridge during the club's final pre-season game. The Argentine midfielder was booed by some fans but also backed by others as Chelsea beat Real Sociedad 3-1 on Saturday. Fernandez came on for captain Reece James in the 62nd minute, just a day after Chelsea's self-imposed deadline for resolving his future passed without a transfer. Manchester City had shown interest in the 25-year-old, but no bid was made to match Chelsea's reported 120 million pounds valuation. The reaction was clear from the moment Fernandez's



of support from other sections of the stadium. There was also a strong show of backing from his teammates. As James left the field, he handed the captain's

armband to Fernandez, his usual deputy, before embracing him. Fernandez's touches were then greeted by a mixture of cheers and jeers.

ENZO TRANSFERSAGA

Fernandez had made it clear earlier in the summer that he wanted to leave Chelsea, with Real Madrid initially interested before ending their pursuit. His representatives subsequently held talks with Manchester City, but the Premier League champions did not make an offer before Chelsea's Friday deadline. That has left Chelsea expecting to keep one of their most important midfielders, although the issue could remain unresolved until the transfer window closes on September 1.

Novak Djokovic struggles in heat, vomiting before shock Cincinnati Open

Asan. (Agency)

Novak Djokovic's Cincinnati Open campaign ended in a shock second-round defeat after the 24-time Grand Slam champion was visibly affected by the heat and humidity. Djokovic won the opening set against Thiago Tirante but struggled physically before losing 2-6, 6-4, 6-4.

The 39-year-old was playing his first match since his Wimbledon semi-final defeat by Jannik Sinner in July. Djokovic's physical problems became increasingly apparent as the match went on, with the Serbian appearing to vomit and later requiring treatment from a doctor and physiotherapist. I was not trying to do anything out of the ordinary. I tried to take my chances, with a little bit of randomness,



and I am happy," Djokovic said. "There were several moments, a couple against Alireza, against Nihal as well. There were certainly some moments, but I am thrilled to go undefeated," he added.

DJOKOVIC STRUGGLES IN THE CINCINNATI HEAT

Djokovic looked in control early on, taking the first set 6-2. But the conditions began to take a toll in the second set. The Serbian endured an exhausting 18-minute third game, saving four break points over nine deuces. Soon after, he appeared to vomit on court and needed medical attention.

Denied a Test for 23 years, Bangladesh sink Australia to win historic match in Darwin

New Delhi. (Agency)

In many ways, this is redemption for Bangladesh. On their return to Australian soil after a long break of 23 years, Najmul Shanto's side beat Pat Cummins' mighty team by nine wickets to win their first-ever Test match Down Under.

Chasing 57 runs on Sunday, August 16, Bangladesh made short work of the hosts and wrapped up the chase in dominant fashion, reaching the target in 14.2 overs on Day 4 of the first Test in Darwin. The Bangladesh fans who had travelled to Darwin had come hoping to see their team win. When the final runs were scored, the ground echoed with chants of "Tigers, Tigers" as the travelling supporters celebrated a historic victory. The match turned out to be an



absolute hammering for the Australians, who were dominated in every single session by a spirited Bangladesh side that set up the win with some sensational bowling in both innings of the game. The win marks an important shift in the relationship between the two countries, especially for Bangladesh, who took just three matches to win a Test in Australia, the fastest by any Asian side in the history

of the game.

BANGLADESH'S REDEMPTION

Before 2026, Bangladesh were consistently denied a Test series in Australia after the series was deemed commercially unviable by Cricket Australia. In 2018, Australia told the board that broadcasters were uninterested in showing the series in the middle of the football season. The stigma, perhaps, stemmed from the fact that Australia viewed Bangladesh as a lesser competition. This was around the time that Australia's rivalry with India and South Africa was at its peak. They had the Ashes against England anyway, and the trans-Tasman rivalry with New Zealand. So Australia did not really need a team that, in their view, was not going to put up much of a competition.

Even this series was preponed. Bangladesh were supposed to play Australia in March 2027, but the Test series was brought forward so that Australia could clear the calendar for the 150th Anniversary match against England. With that history setting the backdrop to the series, Bangladesh arrived Down Under knowing very well that they were not exactly welcome on the island. They were not going to play at the regular venues where India, England or South Africa play. In fact, one of the two venues hosting the series had its last Test match in 2004, while the other has never hosted a men's Test match in the history of the game. Now, for Bangladesh, they had two choices: either let their shoulders sink under the treatment or hit back after years of being treated as minnows.

Sreeleela

Returns To Sets Of Kartik Aaryan-Anurag Basu's Romantic Musical, Shoot Resumes In Mumbai: Report

Kartik Aaryan and Sreeleela's romantic musical with filmmaker Anurag Basu is moving ahead once again. After reports of delays surrounding the project, Sreeleela has now reportedly returned to the sets in Mumbai and resumed filming her portions. The yet-untitled movie is particularly significant for Sreeleela as it will mark her Bollywood debut. Kartik, meanwhile, is said to have already completed most of his work on the film.

Sreeleela Resumes Shoot In Mumbai

According to Pinkvilla, Sreeleela has joined the film's ongoing schedule and is currently shooting in Mumbai. A source associated with the project said that filming is proceeding according to plan.

"Sreeleela has resumed shooting for Anurag Basu's next in Mumbai. She is

currently shooting her portions, and the schedule is progressing as planned. The film is being mounted as a large-scale, intense romantic musical and is expected to be one of the major upcoming releases," the insider said.

The development comes after the project reportedly encountered several delays because of scheduling issues. Kartik is believed to have filmed extensively for the movie already. A recent report claimed that the actor was "more or less" finished with his portions, leaving Sreeleela to complete her remaining work.

Is The Film Titled Tu Meri Zindagi Hai?

Ever since the project was announced, there has been considerable curiosity about its connection with the Aashiqui franchise. It was initially rumoured to be Aashiqui 3, but subsequent reports suggested that the film is an original romantic drama with no connection to the popular franchise. The movie is reportedly titled Tu Meri Zindagi Hai, although an official title announcement is awaited. Music is expected to remain integral to Basu's love story. Pritam has been brought on board as the composer, with the songs reportedly woven closely into the narrative rather than functioning merely as standalone additions.

Before the reported production delays, the makers were said to be targeting a 2026 theatrical release.

What's Next For Kartik Aaryan And Sreeleela?

Kartik was last seen opposite Ananya Panday in Tu Meri

Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri, directed by Sameer Vidwans. His upcoming slate also includes Naagzilla and Bhool Bhulaiyaa 4. Sreeleela, meanwhile, was recently seen alongside Pawan Kalyan in Ustaad Bhagat Singh. Apart from her Hindi film debut with Kartik, she also has Om Chapter 1: Udhiram - The Blood Wood in the pipeline.



Madhavan Reveals Advice To Son Vedaant About Fame: 'Sometimes, You Do Get Used To The Attention'



Madhavan has never shied away from acknowledging that his son, Vedaant Madhavan, enjoys advantages that most aspiring athletes do not. But the actor is equally conscious of ensuring that fame does not distort the 20-year-old swimmer's understanding of his own achievements.

Speaking about raising Vedaant, who has represented India at international swimming competitions, Madhavan said one of his biggest concerns as a parent is knowing where support ends and privilege begins.

Madhavan Warns Vedaant About 'Reflected Glory'

During a conversation with The Hindu, Madhavan was asked about the lesson he repeatedly gives his son. The actor pointed out that Vedaant's accomplishments inevitably receive greater visibility because of his famous surname.

"I am a celebrity, he is a celebrity child. He has also done his bit of achievements that make him popular, and it gets enhanced through the fact that he's my son," Madhavan said.

According to him, that recognition also gives Vedaant opportunities that may not come as easily to another young athlete. Madhavan therefore keeps reminding him that some of the attention surrounding him is "reflected glory" and may disappear just as quickly.

"Sometimes, you do get used to the attention. He gets treated like a celebrity at times. I said, 'That's going to be very short lived'. Sometimes, you do stupid things while trying to recover it back, make it come back," he added.

'There Are A Lot Better Swimmers Than Him'

Madhavan also offered a candid assessment of Vedaant's position as a competitive swimmer. While proud that his son continues to represent India, he stressed that there are athletes performing at a higher level who deserve greater recognition.

Sunita Ahuja SLAMS Govinda's Rumoured GF; Yash Says He Took Care Of Pregnant Kiara Advani During Toxic Shoot



Govinda and Sunita Ahuja's marriage has once again come under scrutiny following her recent comments about the actor's alleged affairs. Amid the ongoing speculation surrounding their relationship, Govinda was spotted again today, August 14, at the Mumbai airport with rumoured girlfriend and newcomer actress Komal Rani Swarnkar. Sunita has now reacted to the videos of the two being seen together.

Yash has said that he took immense care of his then-pregnant co-star, Kiara Advani, while shooting Toxic: A Fairytale for Grown-Ups. At the film's audio launch in Mumbai on Thursday night, Yash said that he was more worried about Kiara than the actress and even protected her like a bouncer or a bodyguard.

Munawar Faruqui and Abhishek Malhan, better known as Fukra Insaan, appear to be trading barbs after the former's early exit from The Traitors Season 2. What began with Munawar alleging "paid negative PR" against him has now turned into a series of social media posts, with both sides taking digs at each other.

Batwara 1947 Movie Review: 2026 has been a pivotal year for films returning to one of the darkest chapters in South Asian history: Partition. After Imtiaz Ali's moving ode Main Vaapas Aaunga, Rajkumar Santoshi now arrives with his cinematic interpretation of Asgar Wajahat's celebrated play Jinne Lahore Ni Vekhya Woh Jameya Hi Nahi.

Headlined by Sunny Deol, Preity Zinta, Ali Fazal, Karan Deol, Abhimanyu Singh and others, this Aamir Khan production may not be perfect and does carry uneven edges in its adaptation, but at its core, the film feels authentic, earnest and painfully human. It offers a poignant, classically mounted take on a play that has been performed by thespians across stages for years.

As the iconic film 'Ram Teri Ganga Maili' turned 41, veteran actress Mandakini marked the moment by sharing a few anecdotes directed by Raj Kapoor. Mandakini shared a poster of 'Ram Teri Ganga Maili', a romantic drama film, which released in 1985, on Instagram.

What Is

Mallika Sherawat's

Real Name? Know REAL Reason Why She Had To Change It To Become An Actor

Mallika Sherawat has mesmerised fans with her acting skills for years now. However, before she became the Bollywood star she is now, she was Reema Lamba, trying to build a successful career. She had to change her name from Reema to Mallika after she was told that her real

they came up with the name Mallika, and I said that I liked the sound of it. That's how Mallika happened, and Sherawat happened because my family kind of disowned me when I said I'm going to make movies and I want to go to Bombay," she added.

Mallika continued, "They were very traditional people, so I said, 'Okay, I'll disown your name only. What will you disown me?' So I took my mom's name." For the unversed, since her father's side of the family was against her acting career, Mallika Sherawat decided to adopt her mother's maiden name.

Mallika was credited as Reema Lamba in her first film appearance, which came in Jeena Sirf Merre Liye (2002). Later, she adopted the screen name Mallika Sherawat and took on her first

major role in Khwahish (2003), directed by Govind Menon. It was Murder (2004) that transformed Mallika Sherawat into a household name. Directed by Anurag Basu, the erotic thriller became one of the biggest hits of the year.

Mallika Sherawat soon became an unforgettable name in Bollywood history with projects like Pyaar Ke Side Effects (2006) and Welcome (2007). She is currently seen on Amazon Prime Video's The Traitors 2.



name didn't sound glamorous enough, and that there were already many Reemas in Bollywood.

In a chat with Mashable India, Mallika Sherawat said, "At the time when I entered the industry, I changed my name because there were so many Reemas in the industry. My director at that time said, 'Reema screen pe accha nahi lagega. Naam change karte hain. Koi glamorous rakhte hain. Reema is not glamorous enough.'"

"So I said, 'Okay, rakh lo jo tumko rakhna ho.' So



NEWS BOX

'Everyone lives in fear': Yemenis worry about return to all-out war

world.(Agency)

Yemen's years-long civil conflict killed tens of thousands of people, uprooted millions and drove the country to the brink of famine before a 2022 truce restored relative calm. Now, renewed hostilities between the Houthi rebels and the government have many fearing the return of all-out war.Hodeida native Anwar, a father of two, recalls fleeing the advance of the Iran-backed Houthis, seeking refuge in the city of Mokha.

Last week, explosions startled him and his children as the rebels hit Mokha port, reviving fears of another cycle of displacement and violence."I do not want our lives to be haunted by constant panic caused by Houthi terror. Mokha used to be a safe city and a haven for many Yemenis," he told AFP."The hardest part is not fearing for my own safety, but fearing for my children and family," he said.Yemen, which has been embroiled in more than a decade of civil conflict, last month became the latest country to be dragged into the Middle East war as the Houthis upended the 2022 truce with the Saudi-backed government, ramping up attacks on areas it holds.The government said it had retaliated after deadly attacks that hit military camps in the central Marib province and the Mokha port on the Red Sea, as well as residential areas in Marib home to displaced people.Anwar's three-year-old daughter was born after the truce and has "no idea what war is", he said.

26 more bodies are recovered in Zimbabwe's ferry disaster, bringing death toll to 72



HARARE.(Agency)

Eighteen children were among more than 70 people killed when an overloaded ferry capsized on Lake Kariba in Zimbabwe this week, police said Saturday after rescuers recovered more bodies.The ferry capsized in strong waves on Tuesday. Police said that 26 more bodies had been recovered since then, bringing the death toll to 72.The aging ferry was traveling from the town of Kariba to rural and fishing communities in the country's northwest, where roads are damaged and public transportation is scarce. Authorities have not said how many people were aboard or how many remain missing.Estimates have put the number of passengers as high as 153, while authorities say the ferry's capacity is 90. Zimbabwe's disaster management agency has said 77 people were rescued.

Authorities initilly said the number of children aboard was unknown because those below ticketing age were not included in passenger estimates. A police list released later showed that 16 of the child victims were aged 10 or younger, with the youngest just 1.Kariba is the world's largest human-made lake by volume, created by damming the mighty Zambezi River in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Colombia leader asks Trump to suspend tariffs over earthquake

US tariffs on Colombian products rose from 10 percent to 12.5 percent in late July, with a few exceptions including coffee and oil.

BOGOTA.(Agency)

Colombia's new President Abelardo de la Espriella on Saturday called on his US counterpart Donald Trump to suspend tariffs currently targeting the South American nation, which is reeling after a deadly earthquake.US tariffs on Colombian products rose from 10

percent to 12.5 percent in late July, with a few exceptions including coffee and oil."I asked him to consider to temporarily suspend the high tariffs that are affecting Colombian products, in order to give some relief to our business owners, who are facing very difficult times due to the effects of the earthquake," De la Espriella said on X.

The increased tariffs went into effect on July 24, replacing an expiring global duty rolled out by Trump earlier this year.De la Espriella said he has spoken for about 10 minutes with Trump, who expressed his condolences over the deaths from Monday's 7.4-magnitude quake."The conversation was very friendly and cordial," the Colombian

leader said."I told him that we have a huge challenge ahead: rebuilding



Colombia amid the extremely difficult and apocalyptic economic situation that I inherited"The tremor devastated the western Colombian cities of Cali and Pereira, leaving nearly 300 people dead and destroying almost 13,000

homes.Trump endorsed the right-wing De la Espriella, a millionaire lawyer-turned-politician, during his run for the presidency.Since taking office, De la Espriella, who succeeded the leftist Gustavo Petro, has joined the so-called "Shield of the Americas," an anti-cartel alliance headed by Trump and made up of pro-US governments across Latin America, including Argentina, Ecuador and El Salvador. Member states exchange information and coordinate judicial and security forces to address transnational criminal activity.De la Espriella plans to forge a military alliance with the United States and Israel to help bolster his war on guerrillas.

Hamas chief heads to Cairo for talks ahead of Kushner visit

world.(Agency)

Hamas political chief Khalil al-Hayya was set to travel to Cairo on Saturday evening for talks with Egyptian officials, a Hamas source told AFP, ahead of a visit by US President Donald Trump's envoy Jared Kushner to the region.

Hayya, who will be visiting Egypt for the first time since assuming leadership of Hamas in late July, is due to meet with Egypt's intelligence chief Hassan Rashad on Sunday morning, the source said.Kushner will visit Israel and Egypt next week in hopes of bridging gaps on a Gaza plan rejected by Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu, and will be accompanied by Nickolay Mladenov, the high representative for Gaza of Trump's so-called Board of Peace tasked with implementing the deal.The trip comes after Netanyahu publicly dismissed a 15-point plan announced by Mladenov in which Hamas agreed to hand over its weapons to a new Palestinian governing committee in Gaza.A Board of Peace official said Kushner and Mladenov hoped for "constructive conversations" on advancing Trump's overall peace plan, which began with the October 2025 declaration of a ceasefire that has reduced but not ended Israeli strikes in Gaza.The latest part of the Gaza plan, to which Hamas agreed

in late July, would start a phased Israeli withdrawal from much of the Strip, according to an initial version released by the Board of Peace.Mladenov later backtracked and said that Israel would not need to pull out troops until a complete Hamas disarmament.Netanyahu had vowed no pullout and has voiced scepticism that Hamas would disarm, saying it should destroy weapons in a verifiable way.Hamas insisted it was abiding by the deal."We continue to await pressure from the mediators and the US side on Netanyahuand his government to compel him to abide by the roadmap," Hamas political bureau member Bassem Naim told AFP on Friday.

Hope fades for finding survivors of Colombia quake as rescued woman dies

LAS VEGAS.(Agency)

A Colombian woman who was rescued after being trapped for nearly 37 hours under the rubble in the wake of a strong earthquake has died of her injuries, her family told AFP on Saturday.Along with her death comes the painful realization that the chances of finding survivors are dwindling, as rescue teams continue to search for hundreds of missing people after this week's devastating 7.4 magnitude earthquake.Daniela Largo, 32, was pulled from the debris on Tuesday in the city of Pereira to shouts of joy and applause, becoming a symbol of hope for a nation reeling from Monday's disaster.Largo, who died on Friday, leaves behind a 12-year-old son."I just want this all to be over quickly," Largo's mother Sandra Milena Perez told AFP. Monday's earthquake has so far killed at least 294 people and

injured nearly 4,000, authorities say.Rescuers are still searching for at least 320 people who are unaccounted for, according to data from the disaster management



agency. In the most devastated areas, workers are using heavy machinery to remove pieces of roofs and walls.Residents of hard-hit Pereira are still hoping for a miracle, but optimism is fading."If there is someone alive, it would be a miracle, but I don't think there's anyone alive underneath," said Fernando Gaitan, a 55-year-old restaurant delivery worker. Rescuers have brought in heavy machinery to help remove large

sections of roofs and walls and are visibly fatigued after days of grueling work."We're going to sta until the last person is recovered," firefighter corporal Javier Jimenez told AFP. Appeal to TrumpWhen the country's new president Abelardo de la Espriella took office August 7, the news was celebrated by US President Donald Trump, who backed the flamboyant right-winger's candidacy. On Saturday, De la Espriella said he had a "friendly" 10-minute phone call with Trump, and sought a temporary suspension of the tariffs imposed by the United States, to bring relief during its reconstruction phase.Tariffs were raised at the end of July from 10 percent to 12.5 percent, with exceptions for some goods such as coffee and oil.Suspending tariffs would help "our businesspeople who are facing very difficult times because of the effects of the earthquake,"

Qatar denies detaining three Iranian pilots, dubs reports as 'misleading'

DOHA.(Agency)

Qatar on Saturday (local time) categorically denied reports claiming that Iranian pilots were detained, stating that the allegations were misleading and came at a sensitive time amid ongoing diplomatic efforts to de-escalate regional tensions.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Majed Mohammed Al-Ansari, made the remarks in an X post, stating that contact had been established with the pilots after they allegedly breached Qatari airspace and that their targeting trajectory was confirmed."We categorically deny the claims that have been circulated regarding the detention of Iranian pilots, and we are surprised by these misleading statements at this specific timing," the spokesperson said.The spokesperson noted that Qatari authorities attempted to communicate with the pilots and, after receiving no response, followed the rules of engagement before taking "the necessary measures" to defend Qatari territory in accordance with international law.

He added that Qatar had clarified the matter through official channels at the time. Regarding search and rescue operations, Qatar said its teams searched for the pilots' remains and later coordinated with Iran to hand over the remains of one pilot who was found."Qatari search and rescue teams, which possess global efficiency and expertise, fulfilled their duty to the fullest in searching for the pilots' remains," the spokesperson said.Qatar also stated that it had invited an Iranian team to visit and review the details of the search and rescue operations in April, but claimed that the Iranian side has not responded to the invitation so far.Additionally, an invitation was extended for a team to visit and learn about the details of the search and rescue operations last April, to which the Iranian side has not responded to date," Al-Ansari said.This comes after Iranian Fars News Agency reported on Saturday that three military pilots were captured by Qatari forces after two Iranian Su-24 fighter jets were downed during a March operation against the US base in Qatar.

According to Fars News Agency, Mohammad Bagherzadeh, Commander of the Search Committee for the Missing of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, identified the three pilots as Javad Salehi, Abdol-Majid Dashatian, and Emran Behrushian. Bagherzadeh claimed that they have

Russian strikes kill one in Ukraine as 600 drones target Moscow region

SEOUL.(Agency)

Russian strikes killed one person and wounded at least seven others in Ukraine on Sunday, as 600 Ukrainian drones targeted the Moscow region in a sustained overnight assault that left three people wounded.



A woman was killed, and six people were wounded in a combined ballistic missile and drone attack on Kryvyi Rih, the hometown of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, according to the regional governor. Local defence council head Oleksandr Vilkul said the city had come under a "combined ballistic

missile and drone attack" and warned residents that further waves could follow.

Russian forces struck two industrial sites in Kryvyi Rih, triggering rescue and firefighting operations, Vilkul said. The attack came as Russia continues to use long-range missiles and drones against Ukrainian cities and infrastructure. In Kyiv, authorities issued an air raid alert shortly before 2:00 am (2300 GMT), warning of a ballistic missile threat. AFP journalists in the capital heard several explosions shortly afterwards.Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said the capital was "under ballistic missile attack" and urged residents to remain in shelters. One person was wounded, and fires broke out at non-residential sites in the Obolonsky and Holosiivskyi districts, authorities said.Kremenchuk in the central Poltava region also came under attack, local officials said, although they did not immediately provide details of damage or casualties.

North Korea's Kim tells Putin he is 'proud' of strong ties: state media

SEOUL.(Agency)

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un told Russian President Vladimir Putin he was "proud" of their countries' strong ties, state media reported Sunday, after providing military support for Moscow's war against Ukraine.

Since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, North Korea has become a key ally of the Kremlin, sending troops to support Moscow's war effort in return for economic benefits and military technology, analysts say."I am always proud to be able to expect more excellent future of the bilateral relations by leading, together with you, the DPRK-Russia ties that has carried forward the history of common struggle," Kim said in his letter to Putin, according to an English-language dispatch by the official Korean Central

News Agency.DPRK is the acronym for the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.Kim added that he had a "firm belief" that Russia would thrive and



defend its "territorial integrity" under Putin's "wise leadership".

In a letter to Kim delivered on Friday to mark Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule at the end of World War II, Putin said relations between the two countries had reached the

"unprecedentedly high level of comprehensive strategic partnership". "Our states are actively cooperating in all the sectors while making concerted efforts to ensure the regional security and stability," the Russian leader said.The exchange of letters follows Ukraine's accusation this month that Moscow had launched North Korean ballistic missiles in a strike that killed at least nine people and wounded dozens.Kyiv has also recently said that up to 50,000 North Korean troops are due to deploy to Russia, although it has provided no evidence to back the claim or a timeframe for the deployment.In making the claim, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky asked Seoul to supply air defence systems to protect against Russian missiles, a request that has gone unanswered by the South.