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Maharashtra govt may invest in tech-driven Marathi films for Gen Z viewers

Maharashtra minister Ashish Shelar said the state government could invest in modern Marathi films if a viable model emerges. The push aims to help the industry use technology, improve reach and attract younger viewers.



Mumbai. (Agency)

The Maharashtra government will invest in making modern, technology-driven Marathi films aimed at Gen-Z viewers if a workable model is created, state Cultural Affairs Minister Ashish Shelar said on Tuesday. He said Marathi cinema needed to build a stronger emotional bond with younger audiences while using new technology and high production values without losing the essence of the language.

Speaking at a seminar organised by the Maharashtra Film, Theatre and Cultural Development Corporation and the Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Chitrapat Mahamandal, Shelar said Marathi cinema already had quality, innovation and acting talent, but needed to improve its commercial connect. He said issues such as screens, distribution

and audience-building must be studied along with production. "The quality and innovation in Marathi films are abundant. However, it is necessary to study screens, distribution and the audience along with production. If a viable model is developed, the Maharashtra government will play the role of an investor," he said. Shelar said Marathi cinema had no dearth of quality, innovation or acting talent, but needed to work on the "connecting link" required for commercial success.

He said the number of screens available for Marathi films, the distribution system and the creation of a new audience needed careful consideration. Referring to the emotional connection South Indian films enjoy with viewers, he said Marathi cinema also needed to build a new generation of audiences with a strong connection to the language and its films.

Is India a reason behind Egypt staying out of the Mecca Pact?

New Delhi. (Agency)

In 1956, as British and French troops stormed toward the Suez Canal and Israeli armour rolled across the Sinai, India responded by condemning the Anglo-French-Israeli military action and supporting Egypt's right to control the canal. Five years later, in 1961, as Indian troops marched to liberate Goa (then a Portuguese colony), Egypt returned the favour by blocking Portuguese reinforcements from passing through the Suez Canal.

As the two above examples illustrate, New Delhi and Cairo have had strong ties for decades. Both countries, after shaking off the shackles of British rule, were instrumental in setting up the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which opposed aligning with either the US or the USSR in the course of the Cold War. Today, their partnership remains robust, particularly in trade and defence. This enduring relationship with India could be one reason behind Egypt's hesitation to join the Mecca Pact. The Mecca Pact refers to the tripartite collective defence agreement signed between Turkey, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia earlier this month on August 7. Right from the get-go, the leaders

of what some have termed the Islamic Nato have made no secret of their desire to bring more nations into the fold.

Egypt, which has Africa's most powerful military, has been identified as the next likely entrant, alongside Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan, Azerbaijan and Syria. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan,

tanks and aircraft acquired via US military aid. It also controls the Suez Canal, a vital maritime artery connecting Europe to Asia. There have been some voices in Cairo favouring Egypt's inclusion. Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty said last week that Cairo was "seriously considering" joining the agreement, pending

Egypt has emerged as a potential addition to the Saudi Arabia-Turkey-Pakistan Mecca defence pact, but its entry is far from certain. Riyadh has reservations about Cairo, while Egypt itself might be wary about joining a bloc that could complicate its civilisational and strategic ties with India and other partners.



described Cairo as a "natural partner" and said only "technical issues" remained before it could join. On paper, several factors make Egypt an ideal candidate to join the Mecca Pact. It boasts the strongest military force on the African continent, fielding over 4.4 lakh military personnel as well as hundreds of modern

constitutional and legal reviews of the defence obligations it would entail. Yet, thanks to a combination of opposition to Egypt's entry to the pact from Saudi Arabia, as well as Cairo's unwillingness to sabotage its ties with countries like India, means that the Islamic Nato remains bereft of Egypt as a member, at least for the time being.

Delhi cops deny excessive force during CJP protest; cite 30,000 crowd, violence



New Delhi. (Agency)

The Delhi Police has denied allegations of excessive force against student protesters during the July 20 Jantar Mantar agitation led by the Cockroach Janta Party against the NEET paper leak, citing the presence of more than 30,000 protesters at the demonstration. In an affidavit filed before the Supreme Court, the police said the scale of the crowd and the violence that followed the breaching of barricades necessitated the use of graded force.

The affidavit was filed as a common reply in four connected petitions seeking a Supreme Court-monitored probe into allegations of police excesses during the protest. The Delhi Police said that the protesters had gathered across a stretch of around 3 kilometres, while about 5,000 police personnel were deployed to manage the situation.

According to the police, the demonstration was initially peaceful, but the situation changed after protesters breached barricades and the crowd became difficult to control. The force used by personnel was "graded" and, according to the police, proportionate to the circumstances on the ground.

The police said more than 240 personnel were injured during the clashes, while around 200 protesters also suffered injuries. The affidavit further claimed that anti-social elements and history-sheeters had infiltrated the protest, contributing to the escalation of the situation.

Preparations for another 'Lattha incident' in Ahmedabad? Open sale of poisonous chemical-laced liquor in Madhupura due to extortion

MAHANAGAR METRO

Ahmedabad: The Madhupura area of Ahmedabad city has now become a hub of crime and illegal activities. Serious allegations have come to light that the same police officers and employees who are responsible for protecting the public have become protectors of these anti-social elements. P.I. Z. N. of Madhupura Police Station With the connivance of Ghasura and his alleged 'administrator' Suresh Chaudhary, as well as the sub-administrator Veljibhai, who works in the crime branch, the business of domestic and foreign liquor, gambling and MD drugs is running openly in the entire area.

Network of illegal liquor dens in Madhupura:

According to local sources, the dens are running rampant in the following places in the area:

Dudheshwar Dhobighat: Shenaz's country liquor den

Madhupura: Maniya's country liquor Vegetable Market: Jayesh's country liquor

Near Maruti showroom (garden): Galiya's country liquor

Idgah: Hansa's country liquor

Bhavin's den: Sale of country and foreign (English) liquor

Nagji Kalolwala: Accused of supplying chemical-laced country liquor in



wholesale quantities in the entire Madhupura area

Extortion and commission setting:

According to bootleggers, administrator Suresh Chaudhary collects a fixed commission for each can of country liquor. Despite serving in other departments, Suresh Chaudhary and Veljibhai of Crime Branch are handling the black administration of Madhupura Police Station worth crores of rupees. These administrators are running the bases without any regard for the orders of Ahmedabad Police Commissioner, PCB and DCP. The terrifying possibility of another 'latha incident':

The toxic liquor containing chemicals supplied by Nagji Kalolwala can result in a major latha incident at any

time. If a disaster occurs tomorrow or innocent people lose their lives, then who is responsible for it? Due to this nexus between the police and bootleggers, the safety of local residents and especially women has been threatened. Incidents of harassment due to drunkards and anti-social elements have become common in the area. PI Ghasura's unclear voice on the phone:

To get clarity on this entire matter and to contact P.I. Z. N. The editor of 'Pakko Gujarat' tried to contact Ghasura by telephone to know his side, but he did not consider it appropriate to pick up the phone. It is impossible to run such a large-scale liquor and gambling business without the permission or protection of the police.

Direct questions and demands before the administration of 'Pakko Gujarat':

1. PI Z. N. Ghasura should be suspended by the Ahmedabad Police Commissioner with immediate effect.

2. An impartial investigation should be conducted into the CDRs of the alleged administrators Suresh Chaudhary and Veljibhai and their properties.

3. The State Monitoring Cell (SMC) and PCB should immediately raid all the bases in Madhupura and take strict action.

How many innocent lives will be lost before the administration takes up? ACTION TODAY, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE! #PakkoGujarat #SaveLives

I apologise on his behalf: CM Vijay after minister names Karunanidhi without title

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay apologised in the Assembly after a minister referred to former CM M Karunanidhi without honorifics. Vijay's intervention calmed the DMK, who protested against the minister.

Chennai. (Agency)

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay apologised in the Assembly on Monday after a minister referred to former Chief Minister M Karunanidhi directly by name, without using the customary honorifics. The remark triggered immediate protests from the opposition DMK over what it called a breach of decorum. Vijay stepped in quickly to calm the House and said the

manner in which the late leader had been addressed was wrong. "I apologise on his behalf," the 52-year-old actor-politician said, after Forest Minister RV Ranjith Kumar mentioned Karunanidhi without using terms such as "Kalaigal" or "former Chief Minister".

The issue arose during a debate on the demands for grants for the Health and Revenue departments. In his speech, Ranjith Kumar criticised earlier cash-for-votes practices, referred to the controversial "Thirumangalam formula", and claimed that in previous elections, up to Rs 1,500 per vote had been distributed in his Kancheepuram constituency. Contrasting those elections with the present administration, the minister said the current government had come to power without distributing money for votes. However, while listing what he described as poll tactics of the past, he referred to the DMK patriarch simply as

"Karunanidhi". This went against a long-standing convention in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, where respected leaders are addressed with formal protocol titles. The omission drew loud protests from DMK members, led by



former minister KKSSR Ramachandran. As tensions rose, Vijay stopped the minister mid-speech and acknowledged that referring to Karunanidhi in that manner was inappropriate. His apology ended the immediate disruption and brought the debate back on track.

Chandrasekaran's exit splits Tata Sons board over succession next steps

New Delhi. (Agency)

N Chandrasekaran's decision to step down as Tata Sons chairman has opened a fresh fault line within the company's board, with directors now divided over what should happen next, whether he should be persuaded to reconsider or whether the group should move ahead with the process of finding his successor, reported The Economic Times.

What initially appeared to be a straightforward leadership transition has become more complicated. Some Tata Sons directors are debating whether Chandrasekaran should be asked to reconsider his decision, while others believe the board should respect his decision and immediately focus on succession planning.

At the same time, Tata Trusts has started the process of setting up a selection committee to find his successor. But even that process faces a hurdle because the Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT) is currently restricted from convening meetings. Adding another layer to the transition, Noel Tata,

chairman of Tata Trusts, is also expected to take the lead in discussions with the Reserve Bank of India over Tata Sons' regulatory status and its effort to remain unlisted. Here is how the Tata Sons leadership saga has unfolded since Chandrasekaran's decision. Chandrasekaran



informed the Tata Sons board on August 12 that he would not offer himself for reappointment when his current term ends on February 20, 2027. The decision came after months of uncertainty over his proposed third five-year term.

News box

SSB man suffers leg fractures after cab on wrong side rams bike

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) member posted with the 25th Battalion in Ghitorni suffered fractures in both bones of his left leg after a taxi travelling on the wrong side of the road hit his motorcycle near Aya Nagar border on Aug 4 and fled. The victim, Jitendra Kumar, registered a case against the driver at DLF Phase-I police station under sections 125(B) and 281 of the BNS on Sunday, nearly 12 days after the accident. Kumar said consultations with the department and family led to a delay in reporting the case. According to the complaint, Kumar was travelling from Aligarh towards Gurgaon on his motorcycle on Aug 4 for personal work. Around 1.25am, a taxi came from the wrong side and collided head-on with his motorcycle near Aya Nagar border.

The impact damaged both vehicles and left Kumar injured on the road. The taxi driver fled the spot. Kumar informed his brother and senior SSB officer about the accident on the phone. A police head constable soon reached the spot, seized the damaged vehicles and took them to the police station using a private crane.

Kumar was taken to ISIC Multispeciality Hospital in Vasant Kunj for treatment by police with the help of his colleagues. Later, police obtained Kumar's medico-legal case.

Woman robbed of gold chain, one held

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A woman was robbed of her gold chain while returning home on Aug 12. The accused, who fled on a scooter, was later arrested. Police said he has 17 cases of cheating and theft registered against him in Delhi and Gurgaon. The woman told police that she was returning after dropping her child off at school in Sector 37C when a man riding a scooter approached her and allegedly brandished a knife at her. He then snatched her gold chain and fled from the spot.

She approached Sector 10 police station on Aug 13, following which a case was registered under relevant sections. The Crime Branch Sector 10 team subsequently arrested the accused, identified as Digambar alias Kadar (45), a resident of Dharuhera in Rewari, from Khandas Mandi on the same day. Police said the knife allegedly used in the robbery, the scooter, the snatched gold chain and a gold locket were recovered from his possession. The accused was produced before a court and sent to three-day police custody. "Digambar admitted to his involvement in two other snatching incidents in Gurgaon. We are investigating his role in the cases and examining his criminal record, which includes 17 cases related to cheating and theft registered in Delhi and Gurgaon," a police officer said.

19 posts set up as Noida gets ready for floods

Noida.(Agency)

With the Yamuna in spate, the Noida and Ghaziabad administrations have set up 19 flood posts with round-the-clock monitoring systems and rapid-response teams on alert in case of floods.

At 4pm on Aug 14, the upstream gauge at Okhla had crossed the 200.6-metre danger level to settle at 201.35 metres, with the downstream levels at 196.1 metres. The barrage was releasing 21,775 cusecs of water. Officials said the situation was being continuously monitored and there was no immediate indication of flooding. The irrigation department reported that damage to the Yamuna and Hindon embankments had recently been repaired. The district administration has established 19 flood posts, of which two have been set up by the irrigation department at Yakutpur and Kamnagar, and the rest at other vulnerable locations, district magistrate Medha Roopam said. "Seven rural flood committees have also been constituted to coordinate emergency response at the local level," she said. At a preparedness meeting on Thursday, officials from the irrigation and health departments as well as police were directed to ensure that manpower, rescue equipment and relief material are at their disposal in vulnerable areas well before an emergency situation arises. Stocks of split stones, soil-filled cement bags, bamboo poles and other emergency material have been kept at vulnerable locations for use if required. Flood control rooms at Okhla Barrage and the irrigation construction division office in Ghaziabad are operating round the clock. Officials have been assigned shifts to monitor river gauges and communicate any sudden rise in water levels to the administration," an official said. Officials said that Hindon was also being monitored closely. At Hindon Barrage in Ghaziabad, the upstream level was recorded at 200.90 metres, short of the danger level of 205.08 metres. No rainfall was recorded at the gauge stations at 6am on Friday. Ghaziabad irrigation officials said preparations had also been stepped up on their side. "We have also taken extensive measures to mitigate the impact of any possible flooding. Flood posts have been prepared and personnel and essential resources are being kept ready so that if water levels rise suddenly, the response can begin immediately. Our focus is on constant surveillance, quick communication and ensuring that no vulnerable settlement is left unattended," said official Raj Kumar. Advance preparedness is critical, particularly given the possibility of heavy monsoon rainfall and fluctuations in discharge upstream, he added.

Residents Stage Protest at Godhra Municipality Over Civic issues

Mahanagar Metro Desk
MAHANAGAR METRO

Godhra: Public dissatisfaction over basic civic amenities has once again come to the fore in Godhra, as a large number of residents from several housing societies along Bamroli Road approached the Godhra Municipality office to raise their grievances. Residents of Maruti Residency, Dev Residency and other nearby societies submitted a strong representation to the municipal authorities, demanding immediate action on long-pending issues related to roads, cleanliness and other basic civic facilities. According to the residents, several internal roads and public areas in their neighbourhoods have remained in poor condition for a long time. They alleged that despite repeated rep-



resentations regarding road repairs, sanitation and other essential services, the problems have not been resolved satisfactorily. The residents also expressed strong resentment against the elected ward representatives. They alleged that when they approached their elected representatives to raise local civic issues, they were often unable to meet them. "We elected our representatives to raise and resolve

the problems of the people, but when we approach them with our grievances, they are not available," residents alleged. The residents met municipal officials and the municipal president and demanded that their complaints should not remain limited to assurances. They urged the authorities to conduct an on-ground inspection and initiate concrete action to provide a permanent solution to the problems. The resi-

dents questioned the accountability of elected representatives, stating that if people cannot reach their elected members when they face basic civic problems, they are left with no option but to approach the municipal administration directly. The latest protest has raised fresh questions over the functioning of the Godhra Municipality and the accountability of elected representatives towards residents. Residents are now waiting to see whether the municipal administration will take immediate action on their demands or whether their complaints will continue to remain pending in official files. The key question now is: Will the civic issues of Bamroli Road residents finally be resolved, or will their repeated representations remain only on paper?

The Limitations of Law and the Agony of Man: When Will the Harassment of an Innocent In-Law Family in Matrimonial Disputes End?

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Author: Rupesh Solanki

In human civilization, the institution of marriage is a celebration of the sacred union of two souls and two families. In Indian culture, the foundation of married life rests upon mutual dedication, tolerance, and respect. However, in this modern and materialistic era, minor domestic altercations and ordinary household disputes sometimes transform into a prejudiced legal warfare. Laws enacted for the empowerment and protection of women are commendable, but the point of concern is that these laws are occasionally being utilized as weapons to mentally shatter an innocent husband, his frail elderly parents, and other members of the household. Whenever a matrimonial dispute arises, serious provisions of the law are resorted to by the wife. Under Section 85 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (formerly known as IPC Section 498-A) for the offense of physical and mental cruelty, various provisions

of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005), and Section 144 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (formerly CRPC Section 125) for maintenance are filed simultaneously. The greatest tragedy in this process unfolds when the names of elderly parents, who have lived a life of absolute integrity, and married sisters, who have already settled in their own matrimonial homes, are falsely implicated in the complaint out of a sense of vengeance, thereby fragmenting the entire family socially and mentally. Particularly, if the husband happens to be a government employee in a reputable department, the legal pressure and the fear of losing his employment multiply extensively. While determining the amount of maintenance, courts take into account the husband's income and standard of living, which typically can be up to approximately one-fourth of his net salary. However, due to the prolonged legal battles spanning across various courts,



exorbitant advocate fees, and frequent court appearances, the economic balance deteriorates to such an extent that the man becomes financially ruined. When faced with such cases despite keeping his spouse in utmost comfort, even a true and innocent man reaches the pinnacle of mental stress and ultimately chooses to embrace death. The hearts of the people always perceive this profound void and agony in this manner: "Endured an onslaught so severe that the entire household shattered. Where justice was sought, an innocent family was completely battered." The Honor-

able Supreme Court has also frequently categorized such misuse of law as 'Legal Terrorism' in its landmark judgments. The courts have explicitly clarified that the names of all the members of the in-law family and elderly parents cannot be added to a complaint merely to cause harassment without sufficient evidence. Law is meant for the protection of victims, not to turn an innocent home into a graveyard. If society and the legal machinery do not adopt a sensitive approach toward innocent men and their families, the youth will lose faith in the institution of marriage entirely. This subject imparts a profound message for living life: rather than dragging the ups and downs of married life into a court of law and ruining families, if disputes are resolved through mutual understanding and family counseling, many lives can be saved. Legal balance and the protection of the innocent are the true cornerstones of a happy and just society.

Industry flags higher costs under new property tax formula

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Industry and trade bodies have opposed the new property tax regime for industrial and commercial properties in the city, arguing that the revised formula could substantially increase their tax liability and raise the cost of doing business. The industry body has urged the state govt to immediately stop recovery of the enhanced tax and review the new system before making it permanent. Progressive Federation of Trade and Industry (PFTI) chairman Deepak Maini has written to chief minister Nayab Singh Saini, seeking restoration of the earlier, simpler property tax system and consultations with industry before any final decision. The federation has also warned that a sharp rise in property tax could increase operating costs for businesses, potentially affecting investment, expansion and employment. The objection centres on the new method of calculating property tax, under which assessment is linked to collector rates of different areas rather than property size alone, as was the case earlier. According

to PFTI, this means properties of a similar nature can attract substantially different tax liabilities simply because they are located in areas with different collector rates. Maini said the new system also uses a complex statistical mechanism for determining tax liability, making it difficult for property owners to independently verify how their bills have been calculated. "A tax regime should have a clear and easily understandable basis so that taxpayers can calculate their liability and pay it without ambiguity," he said. P K Gupta, an industrialist, said the federation had objected to using location-specific collector rates as a key component in determining the tax burden, arguing it could create disparities between otherwise comparable properties in neighbouring areas. The federation has described this as inequitable and sought a uniform,



transparent methodology instead.

The industry body has also opposed what it describes as a multi-fold increase in property tax under the new system. Maini said the hike would effectively add another cost to businesses already dealing with expenses related to power, labour, compliance and infrastructure. Industry's preferred option is restoration of the previous, simpler system. If the govt needs to raise municipal revenue, the federation has suggested doing so within the earlier formula, with any

increase kept limited and predictable rather than introducing a system prone to steep variations in tax liability. Maini has also sought a high-level meeting between the govt and industry and trade associations before the new policy is finalised. The issue carries particular weight for the city, one of Haryana's biggest industrial and commercial centres. Industry representatives fear that higher property-related costs could eventually be passed on through increased operating expenses, weakening the city's competitiveness as an investment destination. The industry body clarified it was not opposed to the govt's objective of increasing revenue, but argued that any revision should be predictable, transparent and proportionate, and appealed to the chief minister to intervene and provide relief to industrial and commercial property owners.

Rising Ganga water levels have forced relocation of world-famous Ganga Aarti and cremation grounds

Varanasi. (Agency)

Due to the continuous rise in the Ganga water level, the venue of the world-famous Ganga Aarti, organised by the Ganga Seva Nidhi at Dashashwamedh Ghat in the holy city of Kashi, has been shifted for the fifth time.

The Ganga Seva Nidhi office rooftop now hosts the Aarti due to the rising water levels.

At the same time, cremation grounds at Manikarnika and Harishchandra Ghats have also been relocated due to rising water levels.

Ganga Seva Nidhi President Sushant Mishra said on Tuesday that, as with every year, the Ganga's water level has risen rapidly this year as well.

He said that the flooding of the ghat steps had severely limited the space available for devotees, despite the steadily increasing number of devotees. For safety reasons, it was decided to hold the Ganga Aarti on the rooftop of the Ganga Seva Nidhi office starting Monday evening. He added that this is the fifth time the venue of the Ganga Aarti has been shifted due to rising water levels.

Along with the Ganga, the water level of the Varuna River is also rising rapidly. In the Varuna riverbed, water is moving towards homes. Floodwater has reached some houses in the Salarpur area. According to the Central Water Commission, the Ganga's water level was recorded above 65 meters on Tuesday. In view of the rising water level, the Water Police have completely stopped boat operations. Several temples located on and near the ghats have also been submerged. The ghats have also lost contact.

J&K: 4 CRPF personnel, truck driver injured in accident in Kulgam

Srinagar. (Agency)

Four Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel and a civilian truck driver, were injured in a road accident in Kulgam district on Tuesday, officials said.

The accident took place after a truck collided with a CRPF vehicle at Levodura along the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway. They said a speeding truck hit a CRPF vehicle, causing it to overturn. Both vehicles sustained damage in the incident.

Four CRPF personnel including a CRPF sub inspector and the truck driver were injured in the accident. The injured were immediately shifted to Sub-District Hospital (SDH), Qazigund, for treatment. However, doctors later referred them to Government Medical College (GMC), Anantnag, for further medical care. Police Station Qazigund has registered a case and further investigation into the incident has been initiated.

Negative politics isn't a strategy — it never has been: Dr. Rajeshwar Singh

Lucknow. (Agency)

Paying tribute to the RSS's 100 years of uninterrupted grassroots service, Dr Rajeshwar Singh called its scale and consistency unmatched by any organisation in India, regardless of one's view of its politics.

Marking the centenary, Dr. Singh cited the numbers: nearly 89,000 daily shakhas across 55,000-plus locations, with over 4,000 new locations and 5,000-plus new shakhas added in the past two-three years alone.

Beyond the shakhas, he pointed to 12,000-plus Vidya Bharati schools educating 3 million students, over one lakh Ekal Vidyalayas in hamlets with no government school, 5,000-plus Rashtriya Sewa Bharati health centres, seven decades of work in tribal-belts by Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, and 7.5 million members of ABVP, which he described as "likely the largest student body on earth."

"Negative politics isn't a strategy — it never has been," Dr. Singh said in a statement here on Tuesday. "You can oppose the ideology, and that debate is legitimate. But a century of grassroots work is a matter of record, not opinion. Kerala, where the RSS's political wing wins almost nothing, has India's second-highest shakha count. That's not a vote machine — that's structure, still compounding. Over 60% of daily shakha attendees are students, a share that held even through COVID," he said.

Dr. Singh contrasted this with the opposition's record. He recalled that the volunteer-corps idea was first proposed by the Congress — the Hindustani Seva Dal, proposed at Kakinada in 1923 and recognised by Mahatma Gandhi in 1931, predating the RSS's founding by two years. He said the Congress has since abandoned this legacy, with the Seva Dal now "switching on for elections and off after."

He noted Kanshi Ram built BAMCEF and DS-4 as genuine cadre organisations in the 70s and 80s, but the BSP's vote share collapsed once it became a purely electoral vehicle after 2007.

Of the SP, he asked, "Name one social institution it runs outside the government, self-funded, serving people who may never vote for it."

Enforcement Directorate flags IAS officer's attempt to influence 'Markfed' tenders

In a letter to Punjab DGP, the agency seeks the registration of an FIR based into alleged 'wheeling-dealing' in several Punjab government departments.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

An IAS officer is allegedly "involved in influencing" the tendering process in the Punjab State Co-op Supply & Marketing Federation Ltd (MARKFED), the Enforcement Directorate has flagged in a letter to Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav. The letter, which seeks the registration of an FIR based on ED's investigations into alleged 'wheeling-dealing' in several Punjab government departments, specifically refers to an IAS officer in a transcript of a chat dated January 21, 2026. The letter, dated August 11, 2026, also mentions name of another woman IAS officer, and an IPS officer currently posted as a senior superintendent of police with regard to alleged favours for a posting and granting of arms licence, respectively. The ED's letter to Yadav has different sections elaborating the alleged interference in government functioning by a private individual identified

as Nitin Gohal. The investigating agencies had earlier identified Gohal as the founder and CEO of Mohali-based Fortec Web Solutions Pvt Ltd and Techlive Solutions. Citing chat records, the ED has alleged that Gohal influenced transfers and postings of government officials, leaked confidential documents, and secured government approvals in lieu of monetary and other benefits.

Under the head of policy to be influenced, the ED letter mentions "Tendering in Markfed" and names a person saying he "is trying for some other IAS lady officer and they will jointly try to sabotage ongoing process of tendering of Markfed and many other such future schemes".

The ED letter adds that during investigation, various WhatsApp chats, call records, documents and communications recovered from the devices of an alleged middleman during raids conducted from May 7 to 10, 2026 in Mohali, have revealed Gohal's

active involvement in transfer and posting matters pertaining to various government departments. The ED states that the records indicate that he was acting as an intermediary between interested officials



and an official in the Punjab Chief Minister's Office. "The chats reveal discussions regarding proposed transfers, preferred postings, movement of officers, departmental adjustments and sharing of confidential transfer-related information before the same entered the public domain,"

Gujarat Police seize laptops, phones from journalist Ravi Nair's Delhi home

Nair is facing charges of defamation and forgery in Ahmedabad; on August 11, HC had refused his plea for the quashing of FIR

Vadodara. (Agency)

A team of the Gujarat Police Crime Branch on Monday (August 17) conducted a search at the Delhi home of independent journalist Ravi Nair and seized three laptops, two phones and an iPad. The seized electronic devices included those belonging to Nair's son and a colleague of the journalist's, sources said.

Nair is facing charges of defamation and forgery in Ahmedabad following a complaint over a news report and posts on X about the Adani Group. On August 11, the Gujarat High Court had refused to quash an FIR registered by the Ahmedabad Detection of Crime Branch (DCB) against Nair on May 29 this year over an article published in 'The Washington Post', which had alleged that the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) had been directed to make large investments in Adani Group companies. The High Court had held that the allegations in the FIR were materially different from an earlier private defamation complaint, and prima facie indicated

cognizable offences that required investigation. Action 'as per the law', say police. The Gujarat Police team was accompanied by personnel from the Delhi Police during the search. Nair was not at home at the time. Police were told that he had gone to Kerala, it is learned. A senior Delhi



Police officer said the Delhi Police had assisted the Gujarat Police as per protocol.

A senior official of the Gujarat Police told this newspaper that a unit of the force had seized the electronic devices from Nair's Delhi residence as part of their investigation

into the FIR following the HC's order last week, based on a warrant issued by a Magistrate Court in Ahmedabad.

The Gujarat Police officer said that Nair was not present in his house at the time of the seizure, and that the action had been taken "as per the law". Nair's colleague told The Indian Express that she was at Nair's residence with his son when the police team arrived at 2.40 pm on Monday.

"The officials showed us a search warrant and collected some gadgets. There were three laptops, two old phones that were kept in a cupboard, and one iPad. The laptops belonged to me and Ravi's son, who works at a software company," she told. She said the search was recorded by a member of the police team. The officials also asked them to sign some documents before leaving around 6.40 pm. She said two FIRs are registered against Nair in Gujarat and that he had been cooperating with investigators. "However, neither his son nor I are accused in any of these cases.

How Gujarat police used a live 'digital arrest' to trap cyber fraudster in Assam

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

The Cyber Centre of Excellence (CCoE) of Gujarat Police has used a live 'digital arrest' to not only apprehend a gang member based in Assam handling the layering of proceeds of crime through various bank accounts, but also managed to save lakhs of rupees of 10 persons across four states of India.

On August 9, a senior citizen from Ahmedabad, who had retired from government service, approached the CCoE on the recommendation of an IAS officer and expressed doubts that he was under 'digital arrest'. Upon checking the messages sent to the senior citizen, who had allegedly been under digital arrest for at least 7 days, officials found fake/forged summons letters purportedly of the Supreme Court. Speaking to The Indian Express, S P Vivek Bheda of the CCoE said that the Ahmedabad man had been threatened by

cyber criminals impersonating Nashik Police claiming that he was involved in child pornography. "The senior citizen almost fell into their trap. The miscreants were calling



him and keeping him on call for 3-4 hours every day and the complainant had already transferred all the money in his wife's bank account into his own in order to transfer Rs

20 lakh to the impersonators," Bheda said. "Fortunately, he approached us on time," the SP said. The CCoE, however, used the digital arrest as an opportunity. "We made the complainant pretend that he was still under digital arrest and kept playing along with the impersonators. We made him transfer Rs 200 for verification. For this, they gave him a bank account number," the SP said. Using the account number, cyber sleuths swung into action.

"We found that the bank account was being operated from Barpeta, Assam. We soon dispatched a team to Assam. The team confirmed the suspect as Rafikul Alam, 25, a resident of Sanchuka, Barpeta, Assam. On August 16 (Sunday), he was detained, and brought to Gujarat on a transit warrant," the SP said.

Heavy rain forecast for Haryana, Punjab and Delhi; Himachal faces very heavy showers

Panchkula. (Agency)

Northwest India will continue to experience active monsoon weather, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicting heavy rain in Haryana, Punjab, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir at different times in the coming days.

According to the All India Weather Summary and Forecast Bulletin from the National Weather Forecasting Centre at 8.35 am on August 18, rain is expected over many areas in Punjab on August 18 and over Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi on August 18 and again on August 21-22. Jammu-Kashmir-Ladakh is expected to get rain over many areas from August 18-22, while Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are forecast to have rain throughout August 18-23.

As per the forecast, isolated heavy rainfall expected over Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi on August 18 and again on August 21. Punjab is likely to receive isolated heavy rainfall on August 18 and 19. Jammu-

Kashmir-Ladakh is forecast to receive isolated heavy rainfall during August 18-20, Himachal Pradesh during August 19-21 and Uttarakhand throughout August 18-23.

The day-wise warning for August 18 places Himachal Pradesh under the heavy-to-very heavy rainfall category at isolated places. Heavy to very heavy rainfall is also forecast at isolated places over Bihar, Chhattisgarh, East Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Uttar Pradesh.

For Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi, the IMD has predicted heavy rain in some places on August 18. The same heavy rain warning applies to Punjab, Jammu-Kashmir-Ladakh, Uttarakhand, East Uttar Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya, Kerala and Mahe, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal, West Bengal and Sikkim, and the northeastern states of Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. The bulletin issues its strongest rainfall warning for Jharkhand, where heavy to very heavy rain, with some extremely heavy rain, is expected on August 18. The rainfall pattern

changes on August 19. The IMD has predicted heavy rain in some places over Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu-Kashmir-Ladakh, as well as Assam and Meghalaya, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, East Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Sub-



Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal, and parts of the Northeast. East Madhya Pradesh is expected to get heavy to very heavy rain in some places on August 19. The daily warning does not list Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi

read the letter. Gohal had earlier denied any wrongdoing. "Is it a crime to chat with someone. Is it a crime to put in a word for anyone's transfer... Is it a crime to help people? If one accepts money to get the transfers done, then it is a crime. Otherwise, we keep helping each other," Gohal had told. A woman IAS officer also finds mention in the ED communique to the DGP with regard to change of posting. The transcript of a chat dated January 1, 2026 asks the intermediary to consider posting her in place of another IAS officer in the Women and Child Development Department.

On January 21, 2026, yet another message was sent seeking this woman IAS officer's posting in the department in place of another IAS officer who had gone for training after promotion. The message also recommended that the remaining additional charges of the IAS officer, who has gone on training, may also be given to the favoured woman IAS officer.

IRCTC crackdown exposes unapproved food sales on trains; 8,349 water bottles seized

Panchkula. (Agency)

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has seized 8,349 bottles of unapproved packaged drinking water during inspections conducted on 168 trains in the Lucknow and Chandigarh regions. The largest seizure reported in the North Zone was in the Lucknow region, where IRCTC officials, along with the Railway Commercial Department, inspected 117 trains between July 28 and August 8. The teams seized 5,241 bottles of unapproved brands of packaged drinking water.

The crackdown also yielded substantial seizures in the Chandigarh region, where inspections were carried out at stations including Ambala, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Katra and Jammu. A total of 51 trains were checked, and 3,108 bottles of unapproved packaged drinking water were seized.

The checks were not confined to drinking water. During two surprise inspections at Ambala on August 10, a Quick Response Teams (QRTs) headed by IRCTC's Chief Regional Manager, Chandigarh, seized 13 cartons of unapproved products, including ice cream and flavoured milk.

At Saharanpur Railway Station, another inspection led to the seizure of unapproved ice creams, beverages and packaged drinking water. Similar violations have surfaced elsewhere. At Sabarmati BG Railway Station on August 9, an inspection of train-side vending operations on trains 19223 and 19031 detected the loading of unauthorised packaged drinking water and buttermilk. The products were seized for further action.

At Howrah, unauthorised food and beverage items were seized and disposed of during a surprise inspection on August 8.

IRCTC teams also conducted inspections from August 8 to 14 in Guwahati, Kamakhya, Agartala, Katihar, New Jalpaiguri, and Dibrugarh, checking trains and fixed catering units for unapproved packaged drinking water, catering rule violations, overcharging, staff paperwork, cleanliness, pest control, equipment, and passenger service quality.

The IRCTC spokesman said catering service providers have been told to ensure their staff do not load, store, or sell any unapproved food or drink.

India committed crime of Partition upon itself

At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awaken to life and freedom," thus spoke the designated Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, on August 14, 1947. But on that day, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the supposed victor of that freedom movement, was in Calcutta. And the national capital and its surroundings were convulsed in communal mayhem, Indian against Indian. So, Rajmohan Gandhi, grandson of the Mahatma, writes in a biography of C Rajagopalachari, his maternal grandfather, Rajaji, A Life: "The Mahatma was feeling the pain of fratricide, not the thrill of freedom." When the so-called liberated India's first new year dawned in 1948, a Thai visitor complimented Gandhi on India's independence. But in dolorous response, Gandhi said to him, "Today, Indian fears brother Indian. Is this independence?"

Centuries ago, a Chinese Buddhist monk traversing this land wrote of it in the early seventh century CE, "People of distant places, with diverse customs, generally designate the land they most admire as India." India has, indeed, been politically united only for a brief fraction of its timeless history. But is it political unity alone that constitutes what we today identify as a nation? For all its political convolutions India has, in fact, remained as Xuanzang, the Chinese monk I mention, saw it. While describing his holy land as the Five Indias, he perceived "India as a single cultural, sacral and geographical unit". I contend that my India has in fact so remained throughout its history since at least the time of the Solasa mahajanapadas, the 16 great states of the 6th century BC, a millennium before the venerable monk's pilgrimage and what he saw India to be. And I would differ from William Dalrymple, from whose book The Golden Road I have quoted Xuanzang; in that this nation survived in continuum because of the infusion of Islam into the brew. This was until it was finally brutally sundered at the stroke of that midnight hour. Winston Churchill, the last bastion of the lost citadel of what had been an empire on which the sun never set, moaned that India was simply a geographical expression. It should be clear that these were the utterances of a charlatan. India's nationhood had been demonstrated by India's 1857 war of independence wherein both India's principal communities, whether in the Company's army or in India's Hindu heartland of Awadh, my home, united in support of a decrepit Muslim emperor. Then again it asserted its hold in the 1920s in the first exclusively Indian anti-colonial mass mobilisation, unmatched until then anywhere in its vast empire, against the British with the Khilafat Movement. Of the Ali brothers who led the movement, the younger, Mohammed Ali had, in 1916 while in jail, been elected President of the Muslim League and then in 1923 President of the Congress. The November 1919 meeting of the Central Khilafat Committee was presided over by none other than the Mahatma. On this Committee was Maulana Azad, and the movement helped draw Muslims en masse into the Congress for the first time -- rallying against colonial rule across Asia. Tragically the education imbibed from the Raj -- the more Anglicised the education, the deeper the failure to understand ourselves -- construed otherwise. This is what has been described as the "colonization of the mind" by Pakistani historian Ayesha Jalal, although I doubt if she'd concede that the very theory of two nations constituting India was in itself a consequence of that colonial mindset. Jawaharlal Nehru's Discovery of India will bear me out. In this a young Englishman, which was what Nehru had become from his Harrovian upbringing, revels in the glories of India, which, he argues manfully, carries a bright future if its components can be molded into a nation.

The freedom to say No

Let's support all the women we know in breaking all the barricades and glass ceilings

IN the past few weeks, women have returned to the front and centre of the national conversation, about what they should say, how much and when they should shut up. Above all, when a woman says No, both softly and more loudly, why is it that men don't stop to listen? There's enough said about patriarchy, over the ages, but it was a slogan, or a story, that captured the complexity of the word during the recent Cockroach Janta Party protest at Jantar Mantar, naturally on Instagram: "Don't be afraid of inviting your mothers to the protest, says a young woman, or be afraid that she will cry when she is hit by tear gas, because patriarchy has already dried up all her tears."

In one succinct sentence, packed with humour, this woman protester forced us all to look at ourselves once again. Why do we treat women the way we do inside our homes, as well as outside, as if they had no voice and no ability to exercise that voice? We have seen the video of a policeman ramming his lathi into the back of a young woman who participated in the July 20 CJP protest to Parliament, as well as a male IPS officer slapping a woman protester. We have, by now, heard the interviews of young women, including in The Tribune, of how they've been subject to a barrage of abuse in the wake of their participation in the protest, most of it sexual. We've heard how the identities of several women were made public without their permission -- the word, "doxing," has entered our lexicon, a word that hails from the hacker culture of the West in the early 1990s, and literally means "dropping" or sharing a document, abbreviated to doc/dox -- and how these women were hounded, harassed and threatened because insecure men, total strangers, believed they needed to be put in their place. Newspapers We cannot but fail to remember at a time like this the awful gangrape of Nirbhaya in 2012 -- her name was Jyoti, and we can name her now because she's dead -- when women came out on the streets of Delhi and braved the lathicharge and water cannons of the Delhi Police in protest. About ten days ago, we read the grateful words of thanks of the mother of the survivor in the 2013 Tarun Tejpal case -- when the Goa Bench of the Bombay High Court, starring a woman judge, reversed the Goa trial court's 2021 judgment, also delivered by a woman judge, who

acquitted him of raping the survivor in question in a lift -- and wondered what a mother must go through when her daughter's pleas go unheard, when her daughter says, No, and the man in front of her refuses to hear. You don't need a feminist to tell you why the language of abuse predominantly revolves around the abuse of women, especially sisters and mothers, or why sexual abuse, harassment, molestation and rape are weapons of



violence. All this is as old as the hills. What never fails to surprise you is that the control persists, in the 21st century. As India fastforwards towards Viksit Bharat and becoming a regional player, the need to control women's bodies and minds by people in positions of power seems to get even stronger. The men are shouting louder. Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the former BJP MP and former Wrestling Federation chief, has just been acquitted by a lower court of the charge of sexual harassment by several women wrestlers -- he spoke to journalists after his acquittal and laughed in the face of a brave young female NDTV journalist who persisted with asking him tough questions. And so women are resorting, increasingly, to the one weapon they know cannot fail them. That's why you see posters of Ambedkar in every protest, in Jantar Mantar and in Ranchi. Not Gandhi, or Nehru or even Subhas Chandra Bose -- they are there, yes, but not as many as Ambedkar. Only Ambedkar, a Dalit, who overcame his given circumstances to lead the writing of

the Constitution, understood why it was essential to give all women and men, irrespective of caste and creed, the right to equality and justice. He understood the violence that can be perpetrated in the name of caste -- remember that caste follows you through life and persists even after your death, in your children and beyond, and that the only time a woman can change caste is when she marries a man of another caste. Ambedkar understood that freedom meant not just freedom from the British Raj and the promise of a new country, but also the enforceable Right to Life under Article 21; that the Constitution was duty-bound to uphold the freedom of choice of every citizen and the spectrum of it. That this included the freedom to say No. It's what angers people most, whether a controlling parent or partner or stranger, that the person on the other side is exercising this freedom to say No. That No means No. I am my choices, said Jean-Paul Sartre, back in 1943 in Being and Nothingness, arguing that the idea of both freedom and responsibility inheres in people. Ambedkar invests Sartre's words with the weight of the law. Go forth, women, he must have said, as he put together the Constituent Assembly, go forth and change the world. The Constitution is here to protect you. That's what the rolcall of women and men in Jantar Mantar and Ranchi believed as they sought to challenge the status quo, the establishment, the hierarchies of power. Shradha Singh. Yashaswinee Singh. Neha Bora. (It's exciting to think of Neha's several identities, including one in which she swears by the Constitution and another which belongs to a party whose ideology is so Left that it swears by a revolution.) The minor girl who cannot be named, on whom rape and death threats and other sexual abuse was hurled with such vengeance that she and her mother, now very afraid, had to move house, after PM Modi talked about her abuse of him and his mother in a video. What, then, are a woman's options in today's hugely unequal and very violent world, you might ask. Much better, I would suggest, is to support all the women you know in breaking all the barricades and glass ceilings in the refashioning of a more just society. Be witness to this change, not just today on Independence Day, but every day of the year. So that even when one of these women calls out an intimate perpetrator and says, "No means No," she knows you have her back.

Export boost welcome, faster growth needed

The question is if India can maximise the potential. India must pursue an even more aggressive strategy and engage in local currency trade settlements

India's merchandise exports grew 19.6 percent in July, the fastest pace in nearly four years and the sharpest expansion since June 2022. Merchandise imports touched a 9-month high driven by 20 percent growth in coal, fertilisers, electronic goods and others. As a result, the goods trade deficit widened to a 6-month high of \$32 billion, exceeding the average monthly deficit of \$29 billion seen during April-June. If the weakening currency supported the value of exports, volatile commodity prices firmed up the import bill. The July reading caps four consecutive months of double-digit export growth -- the longest stretch since 2021. Perhaps feeling encouraged, the government is targeting \$1 trillion in exports this fiscal, with services accounting for \$470 billion. The total for 2025-26 was \$863 billion.

Though the target appears within reach given the 15 percent monthly growth during April-July, sustaining the pace will be a challenge. That's because, as EY estimates, a part of the growth was due to the higher prices of petroleum products that India exported; excluding them,



the growth stood at 12.4 percent -- far lower than the needed run-rate. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal is betting on the expanded market access and lowered tariff barriers that bilateral trade deals bring in to boost business. The combined size of the countries and trading

blocs with which India has preferential trade arrangements has shot up to \$60 trillion from about \$10 trillion in 2014. This is heartening as healthy exports would increase economic activity, encourage investments and create jobs. The question is if India can maximise the potential. Despite efforts, total exports, that peaked at 26.1 percent of GDP in 2013-14, have remained below potential at 19.3-22.4 percent since then. Given the fragmented global environment and supply chain disruptions, India must pursue an even more aggressive strategy and engage in local currency trade settlements. Market diversification efforts are somewhat visible. If the US, the UAE, China, the Netherlands and the UK were the top export destinations till recently, the latest data shows new entrants like Kenya, Malaysia, Tanzania, South Africa and Sri Lanka near the top. The export basket, too, is broadening. All said, much would rest on global trade demand, tariff action, supply-chain restructuring and India's ability to ensure product quality rather than relying on price competitiveness.

Congress Must Ride the Rough Road or Get Off the High Horse

➡ Rahul Gandhi has been saying the same thing over and over again about being with those who challenge power, listening to youth, protecting democratic structures of our country, and holding governments accountable. Jharkhand allows him a chance to prove he is serious

Admitted. Rahul Gandhi seems to be a soft target. He has no hold over police, ED, and other agencies like Team Modi-Shah does. But it has to be said, here and now: when thousands of students agitating against irregularities in government employment exams are met with police lathis and water cannons in Ranchi, who really runs Jharkhand? Not Narendra Modi, not Amit Shah. It is the Congress which supports Hemant Soren's coalition government and thereby enjoys Cabinet portfolios. It was not that long ago when police and proxy-police unleashed brutality on students at Jantar Mantar. Then Rahul Gandhi asked for resignations: if Amit Shah ordered pellet guns to be fired, he was culpable; otherwise his ignorance defined incompetence. It is an implacable standard and also a perfectly fair one, if Gandhi intends to apply the same standard across the board. The same strategy of Go Man Go should be applied by Congress in Jharkhand. Who takes political responsibility for the state police behaving brutally? If it was sanctioned by the Chief Minister, how is he not responsible? Is not knowing about it the administration's failure? If the law and order reaction was out of proportion, shouldn't political partners in that government hold it accountable? And if that government will not back down and protect corruption, then why should Congress continue to give its support? These are not trick questions. They are questions Gandhi himself has tried to train the public to ask of power. The risk for the Congress is that it has to answer these questions on its own, and soon, while it is BJP that is doing the asking now. Gandhi falls back on Instagram to extend solidarity with Jharkhand students angered by venality in the state education system and calling for a CBI probe. Where is the 'either act or else' ultimatum? This is not even standard political crap since Rahul has spent most of the



last decade trying to articulate that he considers a great moral distinction exists between Congress and BJP. There are three unambiguous themes he has chosen to define his political identity: joblessness; examination fraud, and diminishing credibility of institutions. Loss of credibility is an occupational hazard in politics. During UPA-II rule, when Lucknow students asked Rahul why the Congress-led government isn't controlling inflation, he responded, "Manmohan Singh heads a coalition and there are compulsions of a coalition". Fair enough. Coalition

governments do not have a choice since there are disparate interests and constituencies, different partners with red lines. However, Rahul will now have to explain whether coalition compulsions count only when the Congress is in power, but not when it is in the Opposition. If police brutality isn't acceptable, then it's not acceptable anywhere. And students who have a democratic right to protest will exercise that not just against the Modi government, but also Soren or Mamata Banerjee, or whoever else is in power. Rahul has been saying the same

thing over and over again about being with those who challenge power, listening to youth, protecting democratic structures of our country, and holding governments accountable. Jharkhand allows him a chance to prove he is serious. Since the Congress party commands enough political leverage over Hemant Soren, why isn't that being used? That question lands. It lands that way, because this is precisely the bar Gandhi has set himself. His politics has long been predicated on the idea that democracy is clearly not only about elections, it is also about institutions and accountability dissent which must be practiced as a right to question authority. Hence, the student agitation in Jharkhand is not a pesky local problem that can be off-shored to some state Congress unit. It is the political exam that must pass his philosophy. Both BJP and Congress must understand that treating the emerging youth movements as a new battleground is dangerous; the young men and women protesting recruitment examinations at centres where thousands compete for jobs in basic service sectors such as the police, armed forces and railways, are angry not just about jobs and exams, but about fairness and the credibility of institutions that decide if they even get a shot at building their future. If both parties try to ride their anger just by continuing to root for the government facing the protests, they will be seen as opportunists. In Jharkhand now, the Congress looks less a partner than a party running both sides of the street. Rahul Gandhi could still walk into the Ranchi Secretariat and tell his senior ally, in plain terms: walk the talk or we walk out. Anything less than that is not principle deferred for tactical reasons but a principle abandoned, while condemning the lathi in public but continuing to keep holding the hand that wields it.

Tame those table Tantrums

Figuring out what is the best way to provide adequate carbohydrates, proteins and essential vitamins to your child is bad enough, and then come the tantrums. But don't worry - here are some smart strategies that will make sure your meal times are peaceful.

1. Never 'ask' a child to eat anything. Yes! Weird as it may sound, most tantrums can be avoided if kids are never asked to eat anything. Our role as parents is just to prevent them from eating the wrong food at the wrong time, so that they eat the right food at the right time. When prevented from eating junk, a child has no alternative but to eat well when hungry. On the other hand, if you are trying to force-feed children something they don't want, they will flare up and resist. Don't force them to eat, and there won't be any fights on the table.

2. The next obstacle will arise when you'll have to say 'no' to junk food. Do this firmly and don't give in. Let your kids know that you really mean what you say. It's okay if they

cry, sulk or scream. Suffering the consequences for bad behaviour is upsetting for the child, but it doesn't mean it's bad for them. Allowing them to eat whatever they wish, whenever they want, doesn't make you a parent, doesn't make you a good parent.

3. Ensure that other members of the house are in sync with your ideologies and methods. Make sure no one gives in to your child's demands (either openly or when you're not around). This usually happens on the pretext that 'let the child eat something; it's better than not eating anything'.

Remember, children will only learn to eat correctly when they are left with no option.

4. Make sure meal times have a happy, relaxed atmosphere. Avoid doing homework and other activities simultaneously. If the child throws a tantrum, keep calm, clear the food from the table and store it in the fridge, so that it can be served again later. Make no attempts to provide alternatives.

5. Make food enjoyable! Serve fruits in attractive ways that make eating a fun activity for the child. Look up online for interesting and innovating

ways to serve different food items to kids: like sandwiches, coin pizzas, roti wraps etc.

6. Come up with a weekly, pre fixed menu for your kids, taking into consideration their likes and dislikes. This way they will be aware of what is going to be served that day and thus, will have no reason to raise objections.

7. Introduce a little of each food group at a time. If you know your child resists soups or salads in particular, serve just a small portion of it every day. Do this for a minimum of two weeks, gradually increasing the portion size if the child agrees. His/her taste buds will gradually start accepting those forbidden foods and he/she will soon learn to enjoy them.

8. Explain the benefits of having a good, balanced meal to your children. Tell them which foods have proteins and why they are important for the body. Tell them about calcium-rich foods and how consuming them leads to healthier bones. Mainly, educate them on the dining table through fun facts and examples.

9. Lastly and most importantly, set an example by always eating right. Children love to emulate their parents. They always learn better from what they 'see' rather than from what they are 'told'. Eat well-balanced and healthy meals with your children so that they follow your footsteps well.



'I believe in living with the right balance'

I believe in living with the right balance: Vineet Bajpai, CEO, TBWA\India

?Managing work-life balance

I was a workaholic till very recently and it took me some time to get this right. I realised that the only sustainable model for success and longevity is one that offers balance. So, now my greatest balance comes from spending time with my family, no matter what. I also read a lot, write whenever I get time and play console games.

Key to fitness

I have always been an active swimmer. I play tennis regularly. However, the real difference came in when I started practising yoga in the form of pranayama. It completed my fit ness chart and is an inseparable part of my fitness regimen now.



Energy high and happiness

There is nothing more fulfilling and energising than to see the building of an institution that one started from scratch. Thereafter, the journey

becomes the fuel! On the other hand, happiness is a far deeper emotion, and what gives me ample joy and happiness is the presence of my family around me.

Risk-taker or a micro-planner?

I will have to say I am a combination of both. I started my professional life as an entrepreneur, so that makes me a risk-taker. And I'm also a micro-planner because I'm involved in building a company from 'good' to 'brilliant' - which needs meticulous planning and determined execution of the details.

Spiritual diet

I'm a voracious reader and have a strong inclination towards spiritual and philosophical books. Apart from practising meditation, it is books from authors like Dr S Radhakrishnan and Khalil Gibran that

have made a huge impact on me. My father is a constant source of wisdom for me as he influences me with recitations from the Gita, Guru Granth Sahib and even Ghalib!

Handling failure/success

I'm grateful to the Universe for my success but I never celebrate it. I start to plan the next big step. Failure makes me more committed, stronger and determined to win. Hope it stays that way!

Crisis management

I have a great asset for this - a fantastic team. It has taken me almost two decades to build this solid team, but now it never lets me feel alone or deal with crisis all by myself.

An icon who has achieved work-life balance

Robin Sharma, the celebrity author of The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari. I follow his teachings and it is amazing to see how he creates time for family, holidays and refuelling, despite nurturing a global career.



I caused my mother a lot of trouble as a child because I was a fussy eater. I realised this the day the tables turned, and my little daughter did the same to me. Food tantrums are every mother's worst nightmare.

5 characteristics of a great workplace

At every stage in your career, the decision of where to work is in many ways life-shaping beyond just the immediate tangible financial impact. Unfortunately, not many realise this until well into their career. Where you work is a choice of how and on what you want to spend your time and what you want to receive in return for that invaluable investment. While ultimately where to work is each individual's choice based on their priority and needs, in my opinion, there are five key criteria to look for in a company.

1. Inspired you to be the real you:

Do you ever wonder why 99% of your workforce puts up facades of themselves at work that are very different from who they are in their personal lives? Why is there this dichotomy? Your energies should be focused on the market, your employer's competition, managing your time well, the opportunities and risks at work not within yourself. When you work for an organisation that connects with your authentic self, you not only do your best, but also inspire others around you.

2. Focusses on a mission close to your heart:

The best jobs allow you to do work you believe in and enjoy. Successful start-ups in particular are often characterised by the collaboration of inspired individuals who could not imagine doing any other work. This type of environment allows people who are creatively oriented and talented to work with organisations that match their passion and push the boundaries of technology and innovation.

3. Honours merit over tenure; ideas over hierarchy:

Apple's legendary co-founder firmly believed companies that want to retain great employees have to let them make decisions. Enlightened leadership teams ask employees to contribute ideas because they recognise managers and executives don't have all the answers. Leaders should also encourage debate and action on ideas. In 2006, IBM invited 150,000 employees, family members, business partners and clients to an online brainstorming session called 'Innovation Jam'. Participants from 104 countries responded, and their ideas led to \$100 million in investments by IBM on suggested projects.

4. Offers

prospects to continue your educational journey:

Look for an environment where you can challenge the status quo, even unlearn past assumptions and misplaced beliefs, and ultimately learn a set of new skills and principles that enable you to continuously stretch and raise the bar for yourself.

5. Provides a pace to enjoy the journey:

With mobile phones, a constantly connected world, a growing number of virtual offices and global teams that make collaborating across time zones critical to success, the boundaries between work and home life are now blurred. A good organisation will allow employees to take from this the benefits and leave behind the disadvantages. You want to be able to transition seamlessly between work and home life without it seeming like you have a strained wall of defined separation from your "home you" and your "work you".

While every individual needs to strive hard to hit the upper echelon of their potential, the path to get there should always be enjoyable and fun or it will always feel like hard work and make it even more difficult to achieve. A workplace that offers you the environment where the journey is just as exciting as the destination is a must in my book.



5 ways to be less self-conscious

Here are a few ways you can easily break out and be yourself without worrying too much about yourself
There are a lot of people who are constantly worried about themselves and thus end up being very conscious about themselves. Here are a few ways you can easily break away from this habit —
Do not think too much about yourself
When you start thinking too much about what you are wearing or what you are doing, you are bound to become self-conscious. This is when you become full of

yourself and start over analysing things about yourself.
Don't give way to negative thoughts When you start thinking what others are thinking about you and what they say and perceive of you, you are bound to become self-conscious. Your thoughts become negative and you start thinking negative about yourself as well.
Observe your strengths Your true happiness will lie in your strengths only. Try and figure out what your strengths are instead of thinking whether you have any or not. Make a list of all the things you think are strengths of yours and try and incorporate them in your daily life.



How to get your kid to know your pet

You've just had a baby and don't know how to introduce him/her to your pet dog? Or you've just brought home a pet and want your three-year-old to get along with it? Follow this guide to ensure that the two can co-exist happily at home.



Train your pooch: While you might have potty-trained your dog, teach it not to sleep on the child's bed or lick his/her face. If such training isn't possible for you, hire a professional pet trainer who can teach your dog how to get along with young children. This should be done before the arrival of the baby. Also, double check with your vet how often your baby may need to give any extra vaccinations to your pet.

Introduce your baby to your pet warmly: Animals can sense emotions and danger. If they know that the baby is not a danger to them nor can hurt them, they will love the baby gradually. Introduce your baby's scent to your pet by letting it sniff its blanket. Make the first introductions from a distance — your baby may be scared initially. Your pet may take some time to get used to him/her, as well.

Establish boundaries: Condition your pet to understand that there is an invisible barrier — in your room where the child sleeps — that it should not cross without your permission. Eventually, you can allow

your pet to explore and sniff certain things in the room with your supervision.

Never leave your child alone with the pet: Dogs can become agitated with baby sounds and movements and thus, may harm them. Cats are usually attracted to the warmth of a baby's cot. So keep them away. You can also put a baby gate around your kid's cot to keep the pet off-limits. Remember, never leave your child alone with the pet, even if you are only two minutes away, in another room.

Don't ignore the pet: Ensure you spend a considerable one-on-one time with your pet to make it feel loved. Also, never punish or scold the dog in the presence of the baby. This will affect it negatively and it might want to hurt the baby because of it.

Teach your child to respect the pet: Discourage your child every time he/she tries to pull hair or hit the pet. At the same time, make sure your toddler doesn't grab the dog's toys and put them in his/her mouth. Wash dog toys often. Teach your child to wash his/her hands after playing with the pet.

Married women cheat for the thrill

People have often wondered what drives married women to cheat on their husbands. According to a US dating website for "casual encounters", a woman is more prone to cheat at certain stress points in her life, notably right before turning 40.



Women also say that they cheat because they either don't feel loved or there is an emotional void in their marriages. Rest say that they cheat for the thrill of it.
Statistics have shown that 21 per cent of married men have had an affair, compared to 15% of married woman. However, number for women has increased in the last two

Why your kid won't sit still



A five-year-old finds it difficult to sit still for long in class. Next door, a six-year old has difficulty staying focused. Parents of both children, 'doctorised' by Google, have made their diagnoses: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Their teachers seem to agree. But, according to child counsellors, the two children are being, well, children. Child psychiatrist and psychotherapist Dr Zirak Marker says, ADHD and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) are "among the most overdiagnosed syndromes of the last decade". "We all 'saw' a huge rise in the symptoms. I'd see five cases of alleged ADHD cases a week," he says of the condition that has to do with significant challenges of attention and acting impulsively that are not appropriate with a person's age. Often, parents and teachers would want to give a 'label' to a condition where the child was unable to sit. But, not every over-active or restless child has ADHD.

Experts across the world would agree with Marker. Symptoms of hyperactivity are usually apparent in most young preschoolers and are nearly always present before the age of seven. Dr Richard House, child psychologist and editor of Too Much, Too Soon?, puts the blame on modern educational methods. "Modern educational thinking is making fundamental errors in children's early development, which then (not surprisingly) generates behavioural disturbances - these get misdiagnosed as 'medical problems' for which the child is assumed to require medical treatment."

NOT MOVING ENOUGH
In a recent blog, Angela Hanscom, a paediatric occupational therapist from New Hampshire, said there's only one reason why more kids have attention issues these days: They're not getting enough movement. "Recess times have shortened due to increasing educational demands, and children rarely play outdoors due to parental fears, liability issues and the hectic schedules of modern-day society. Children are not moving nearly enough, and it is really starting to become a problem," writes Hanscom, who runs TimberNook, a nature-based development programme designed to foster creativity and independent play outdoors.

House argues that hyper-competitive modern life is creating environments that are precisely the opposite of those that children need - early cognitive learning, drastic reduction in free imaginative play, less time spent in nature. Obsessive hours of doodling behind a computer screen and fiddling on iPads and cell phones is making matters worse. In his book, The Role of Play in Human Development, Anthony Pellegrini, emeritus professor of educational psychology at the University of Minnesota, questions if we are depriving our children of normal, non-competitive forms of social play. And if yes, is the incidence of ADHD, aggression and delinquency symptomatic of a society that has forgotten how to play?

COMPRESSING THE BREAK
Across the world, too many schools are clamping down on breaks while choosing to focus on reading, writing and arithmetic. This is based on the belief that eliminating play time will lead to a rise in academic achievement. But nothing could be farther from the truth. University of Illinois psychology professor and Beckman Institute director Arthur Kramer led a 2010 study that found an association between physical fitness and the brain in nine and 10-year-old children. "Regular physical activity can influence both, brain structure and function in children," Kramer says.

How does exercise benefit a child's brain? Dr John Ratey, the co-author of Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain, writes that the brain produces a protein called BDNF, or brain-derived neurotrophic factor, when the body is moving. "This protein helps build nerve-cell connections and the stronger these connections (as a result of continued physical activity), the easier it is for children to understand and retain information." So, active kids tend to experience better cognitive performance and focus, have more rapid reaction time, and are likely to perform better at school. They learn to be more social, gain friendships, and sleep well, a crucial element in mental development.

A FEW SCHOOLS UNDERSTAND

Rajani Pattabhiraman, principal of EuroSchool in Thane, says: "We have found that kids are doubly attentive when they come to class refreshed. Therefore, the day's time-table is designed in such a way that classes are interspersed with skating, taekwondo, dance or craft. Why just kids; even you and I can't do the same thing day in and out."

A study conducted in North Carolina evaluated the effects of a classroom-based programme that gave students 10-minute breaks for organised physical activity between classes. Researchers found breaks improved on-task behaviour and made students "more focused and ready to learn." A tiny Nordic nation has known this secret for decades. On a regular school day, students and teachers in Finland take a 15-minute break after every 45 minutes of class. Students head outdoors to play and chit-chat with friends; teachers go to the lounge and unwind.

Tim Walker, an American teacher in Helsinki, questioned the Finnish practice of giving 15-minute breaks each hour. But he became a convert after he saw the difference it made to his students. On his blog, Taught by Finland, he writes: "I no longer saw footdragging, zombie-like kids in my classroom... my Finnish students would - without fail - enter the classroom with a bounce in their steps [and] were more focused during lessons."

Pellegrini, who also authored Recess: Its Role in Education and Development, is another firm believer in the "break" approach. In a series of experiments to explore the relationship between recess timing and attentiveness, he found students were less attentive when the break was delayed.

HOW MUCH TO MOVE?
During the course of her research, Hanscom found that a majority of children surveyed had poor core strength and balance. "When compared to kids from the early 1980s, only one out of 12 children had normal strength and balance," she says.

The restricted movement pattern means that many children are walking around with an underdeveloped vestibular (balance) system. "In order to develop a strong balance system, children need to move their bodies

in all directions, for hours at a time. They need to do this more than just once a week in order to reap the benefits," she writes. This means that once-a-week football practice doesn't count. For minds prepared to learn, children must have bodies that are geared up to acquire knowledge. If the sensory system isn't working well, sitting and paying attention is a tough task. A child's body displays a natural reaction - fidgeting - so as to get the movement the body needs to "turn the brain on." Instead, teachers ask them to sit still and pay attention, putting their brain into sleep mode. In India, most schools, owing to long hours, often have two recesses - a short one of 15 minutes and a long one of 30-45 minutes. However, between catching up with friends and finishing the snack, there's hardly any time to play.

Can schools consider extending recesses? Teachers and principals are unwilling to get into this debate, with completion of course work a primary worry. At Garodia International in Mumbai, its co-ordinator Meeta Sampat, says, they have a 15-minute and 30-minute break together with 10-minute breaks after every class. But five minutes is only enough to plug down water and put away books.

THE CASE FOR FREE PLAY
Pellegrini's research found that the recess lost value when break times were "teacher directed". In Finland, children get to decide how they spend their break time. "Free play gives students the opportunity to develop social competence. During these times, they not only rest and recharge - they also learn to cooperate, communicate, and compromise, skills they need to succeed academically as well as in life," Walker says.

House's suggestion may horrify Indian helicopter parents, but she insists that until age six, a child's physical development should take precedence over cognitive learning. "Physical development needs to occur first, because of cognitive, quasi-formal learning is engaged with prematurely, this can actually interfere with the child's overall holistic development," she warns.



Delhi AAP MLA ‘picked up’ for protesting over sanitation worker’s killing

The worker’s family claimed police are pressuring them to cremate the body.
AAP Delhi convenor Saurabh Bharadwaj alleged it was a repeat of the Hathras case

Delhi. (Agency)
The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has alleged that its Kondli MLA Kuldeep Kumar, who has been demanding justice for the family of a sanitation worker who was killed, was picked up by the police and taken to an undisclosed location in the early hours of Tuesday. Anil Kumar, a 27-year-old Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) contractual worker, was stabbed to death in East Delhi’s Kalyanpuri in the early hours of Sunday morning. Anil’s family also claimed police came to their house and pressured them to cremate the body. AAP Delhi convenor Saurabh Bharadwaj wrote on X that it appeared to be a “repeat of the Hathras incident”. He wrote: “Today, at around 4 am, around 20 policemen in plainclothes came and kidnapped AAP MLA Kuldeep Kumar. He had been raising his voice for sanitation workers and demanding compensation for the family. They demanded that Chief

Minister Rekha Gupta meet the family, but instead of meeting the protesters, they took MLA Kuldeep Kumar to an undisclosed location.” “Police are pressuring the family... to cremate the body now. The police took his body from the mortuary of LBS Hospital to his house... Looks like a repetition of the Hathras forced cremation,” he alleged. Senior police officers did not respond to calls or messages seeking comment. On Monday, Anil’s family began a sit-in protest outside the mortuary at Lal Bahadur Shastri (LBS) Hospital, refusing to accept the body after the post-mortem as they demanded the arrest of the accused. The family demanded Rs 1 crore compensation and a government job for one of Anil’s family members. AAP workers led by Kuldeep and

BhimArmy supporters later joined them. How the crime unfolded According to the police, Anil was standing near a garbage van on Sunday when the



attacker approached him and assaulted him with a knife. The incident was captured on

CCTV. Police arrested the suspect, identified as Nihal alias Pulla, 52, from Kalyanpuri on Monday afternoon. During questioning, Nihal allegedly told investigators that he had intended to target Anil and the garbage van driver, Gulshan, as he suspected Gulshan and his wife were having an affair. “Nihal claimed he tracked the vehicle early on Sunday. In a fit of rage, he attacked Anil, who often accompanied Gulshan. Officers are trying to recover the knife allegedly used in the crime,” a police officer said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Rajeev Kumar said an FIR was registered after the incident and multiple teams were deployed to trace the suspect. “The accused repeatedly evaded arrest but was taken into custody on Monday,” he said.

Two including minor killed as fire breaks out at West Delhi building

Delhi. (Agency)
Two persons, including a minor, were killed after a fire broke out at a building in West Delhi’s Raghbir Nagar in the early hours of Monday, police said. Police said that the victims were identified as Md Sufed (17) and Md Sahmad (38), who hailed from Bhagalpur in Bihar. Sufed lived with his father, Md Naseeb, and maternal uncle Sahmad — all e-rickshaw drivers. The victims were charging the portable batteries of their vehicles on the premises of the building when the incident happened, officers said. Sahmad’s brother Md Rehman said he came to know about the incident around 6 on Monday. “It appears that the batteries were being charged here. We do not have any other details yet. People told us that a large number of batteries were being charged here and that there was a blast, after which they died. This is negligence,” he said. Police are yet to find out if a charging station was being operated at the building. “Our father also sleeps in this building. However, he had slept at another house in the area yesterday. It is a miracle... he too, like my brother and my nephew, could have been a victim,” Rehman said. Police said that officers reached the spot after receiving a PCR call regarding the incident. They found that the victims had sustained injuries. They were rushed to Guru Gobind Singh Hospital, where doctors declared them dead. A team from the Delhi Fire Services also reached the spot, after which the blaze was brought under control. The premises were subsequently inspected. Police said that the exact cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, adding that further inquiry is underway.

‘Nothing has changed’: Inside an Old Delhi stall serving one dish since 1953

Delhi. (Agency)
The traffic from Jahangirpuri to Old Delhi had been bad, but Yasmeen did not mind. She had made the 13-km trip on a scooter on a rainy Tuesday with her husband and their nearly one-year-old daughter for a special dish. The family’s destination was a little shop in a narrow bylane near the famous Karim Hotel — Bundu Haleem. Yasmeen, wearing a pink salwar suit and a black-and-gold hijab, said she’s been coming here for five years. “I was here the day before yesterday too; this morning, I felt like eating it again... so we came here.” Across from her was stall owner Naimuddin, 51, known to his regulars as Naeem. Back in 1953, his grandfather started the small food business and there was only one dish on the menu – haleem. But the lack of variety was no handicap – customers loved the robust, deeply satisfying flavours of his slow-cooked mutton-and-lentils stew. More than 70 years on, Naimuddin continues to sell the only dish that his grandfather ever cooked. “Our work is dada ilahi (ancestral),” Naimuddin told. “Dada ji sold a portion for chaar aana (25 paise).” Naimuddin sells his haleem for Rs 50 a plate. But he turns away no one – those who can’t afford a full plate, like daily-wage labourers, can have a small portion for less, even Rs 10. And it is not merely something that he sells for profit, Naimuddin said – it is a blessing from his grandfather and father. His shop bears his name, Naim Bhai Haleem Wale, but also that of his father – “Bundu Haleem”. He makes 25-30 kg of haleem six days a week, Naimuddin said. “I don’t open on Jumma (Fridays) and during Ramzan.” A recipe that’s stayed the same Dressed in a pale mustard-and-white striped shirt, full sleeves cuffed at the forearm, grey pants, his beard streaked grey, Naimuddin stands behind a wide copper pot of haleem simmering on a coal chulha. A second pot sits to his left, ready to feed the first once it runs low. Plates are stacked at an arm’s length, and on a small table are kept the essential toppings: coriander, ginger, green chilli, chaat masala, lemon. His day begins well before 4 am, the haleem is ready by 11 am, and is over by 4.30 pm. “Some days, the pot runs empty by 3 pm,” he said.

Duplicate entries, relocation: Why 1/3rd of electors may get deleted in SIR rolls

As the Special Intensive Revision enumeration phase ends in Delhi, BLOs cite duplicate voter IDs, relocation and voter apathy among the key reasons behind the expected deletion of 47.62 lakh names from the draft rolls.

Delhi. (Agency)
Duplicate entries in other states, relocation, and lack of awareness are among the factors that the booth level officers (BLOs) have attributed to the expected deletion of 32.82% of names of electors in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) draft rolls in Delhi. On Monday, the SIR enumeration phase — in which booth level officers (BLOs) conduct door-to-door visits to distribute enumeration forms, electors fill out their details and BLOs upload the details on the EC portal — ended in the Capital. When the exercise started in June, the city had 1.45 crore names on its electoral rolls. Enumeration forms of around 67.18% of the electorate, or



includes people who are absent, have shifted, have died, have duplicate entries, or fall under ‘Other’ reasons. “Most of my deletions will be of labourers who had Voter ID here as

well as in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Some have even completed the SIR of those states because they want at least one address proof of their villages,” said a BLO in East Delhi, who did not want to be named. The BLO was assigned an urban village. He said he had to mark them absent after a discussion with their neighbours. “Others had found cheaper rental accommodations in nearby villages, or found work at another construction site, so they shifted,” he added. Out of around 1,500 electors assigned to him, he said he had only been able to collect forms and digitise enumeration forms of around 800. He also estimates that out of the 700 forms he had submitted, around 200 will be sent notices due to a mismatch in names or due to missing documents.

Months before Saket building collapse, owner warned about illegal construction

Delhi. (Agency)
Three months before his wife Parvati, 55, died in a building collapse in South Delhi’s Saket in May, Jai Raj Ojha claimed that he had warned the building owner that it may crumble due to the illegal construction of two additional floors. Parvati, who owned a make-shift canteen near the building, popular among students in the area as “Aunty Wala Kitchen”, was among the six people who died in the May 30 incident. Police sources have told The Indian Express that Jai Raj’s testimony is among the 15 recorded in a 300-page chargesheet, including those of nine people who were injured during the collapse. The court is yet to take cognizance of the chargesheet filed last week. The four-storey building was

located in Said-ul-Ajaib village near the Saket Metro Station. The chargesheet alleges that owner Karamvir Sejwal (71) had constructed the building in 2014, and flouted



building norms even then, including not having a building plan, said a police officer. Sejwal was traced to his farmhouse in Southwest Delhi’s Vasant Kunj two days after the incident and

arrested, police said. The chargesheet, according to sources, also alleges that a structural stability assessment had not been done before Sejwal hired contractors Manish Khatri and Avinash to build two additional floors atop the building. Both Khatri and Avinash have also been named in the chargesheet. The duo were allegedly given a contract of Rs 1.8 crore in January to build two halls, but allegedly did not involve architects before laying out new pillars to connect the floors to the already weak building. “The accused knew that they were flouting norms and were using substandard material in an already weak structure. They were warned by one of the deceased and her husband about it as well, and still went ahead with the construction,” said a police officer.

A third of names could be deleted in Delhi’s draft SIR roll of electors



Delhi. (Agency)
Every third name could be struck off in the draft electoral roll for Delhi that will be published next week, official data suggest. At 8 pm on Monday, the last day of the ‘enumeration’ phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Delhi, enumeration forms of only 97.47 lakh electors had been collected and uploaded to the official portal, data from the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) showed. This number is only about 67% of the 1.45 crore names on the electoral rolls when the SIR exercise began in Delhi. The remaining 47.62 lakh electors will be marked as “uncollectible” — a category that includes electors who were absent, who may have moved or died, duplicate entries, or “Other” reasons. During the enumeration phase, Booth-level Officers (BLOs) went from door to door, distributing enumeration forms, helping electors fill them in, and then uploading the details on the official portal of the Election Commission of India (ECI). The capital’s 33% deletion rate at the draft electoral roll stage will be the highest in the country. Of the published draft rolls so far, Telangana, on Wednesday, recorded the highest deletions at 21.59%. Arunachal Pradesh (19.09%) is next, followed by Uttar Pradesh (18.7%). However, Delhi’s deletions percentage will be similar to that in several other urban centres across the country — a trend that officials have attributed to the large floating populations in India’s bigger cities. So, in Gurugram, where the enumeration exercise ended last week, 29% of electors were excluded. The percentage of uncollectible forms was 40.99% in Hyderabad district, and 27.76% in Pune district.

With pedestrian-only zones, Delhi Master Plan sharpens focus on ‘Right to Walk’

Delhi. (Agency)
On average, a Delhiite walks just 1.6 km a day. As far as cycling goes, this daily average comes down to 3.6 km, according to the Delhi Master Plan 2047. In its 20-year-vision for the Capital, the plan emphasises on promoting “Right to Walk”, which emerged as a critical talking point following a recent Supreme Court ruling in this regard. The plan renews the focus of authorities on a citywide network of safe, shaded and universally accessible pathways, along with pedestrian-only zones and improved links with public transport. **Granular comparison** According to the plan, non-motorised trips — such as walking, cycling and cycle-rickshaws — constitute 42% of the total trips. Expectedly, these trips are taken for a distance of less than 5 km. Of the total non-motorised trips, pedestrians take up

35% of the share while 7% are cycle rickshaw trips. Public transport trips such as Delhi Metro and buses — constitute 24% of the total trips on average. However, the plan has also highlighted that the growth of regional centres and the relative ease of accessibility has led to an increase in the average road and public transport trip length from 6 km in 2007 to 10.9 km in 2018. At 16.7 km, the plan has highlighted Metro’s role in long-distance commutes, while two-wheelers, cars and buses are best utilised for medium distances of 8-14 km, as per the data. 14 plans for “Right to walk” To encourage people to walk, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has prepared 14 proposals — these at the implementation stage with the road-owning agencies concerned, according to officials. “These will be integrated with plans for traffic management, Multi-

Modal Integration (MMI) and others... Walk Plans for other priority areas are to be prepared in consultation with stakeholders,” said an official, adding that the authority has initially identified 24 priority areas for the preparation of Walk



Plans. For road infrastructure overhaul, the plan proposes barrier-free non-motorised transport infrastructure such as footpaths and cycle tracks. Pedestrian zones and cycle crossings are to be provided wherever possible, while pelican

crossings — pedestrian-operated, light-controlled road crossings — near schools and markets are proposed to improve safety. “Traffic-calming measures like Multi-Utility Zones (MUZs) to accommodate street furniture, that is seating, garbage bins, signage, public conveniences such as restrooms, childcare rooms and drinking water, street vendors and kiosks at regular intervals, service lines such as gas pipelines, optical fibre, among others, provision for parking and Public Cycle Sharing (PBS) systems, while ensuring that clear walking space is available for pedestrians,” said the official. In areas with high pedestrian footfall, including commercial areas, heritage precincts and areas identified for 24x7 economic activity, agencies can identify pedestrian-only zones, the plan has underlined.

Stock markets decline in early trade as crude oil jumps to USD 91 per barrel

MUMBAL (Agency)

Market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined in early trade on Tuesday as elevated crude oil prices and rising tensions in West Asia weighed heavily on investors' sentiment. The 30-share BSE Sensex was down 278.32 points to 77,450.64 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty edged lower by 57.65 points to 24,230.45. From the Sensex pack, Bharti Airtel, Asian Paints, InterGlobe Aviation, Infosys, HCL Tech, and Tech Mahindra were among the major laggards. Reliance Industries, Sun Pharma, Maruti, and Axis Bank were among the winners. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 0.63 per cent higher at USD 91.46 per barrel. "Two developments during the last several hours are likely to impact the market today, at least in the early hours of trading. One, Brent crude has again spiked above USD 91 on escalation of tensions between Iran and the US. Two, the US 10-year bond yield has increased to 4.73 per cent and this is negative for FII inflows which had turned positive in July and August so far," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Ltd, said. The tailwind for the market is the resilient Indian economy and clear indications of a turnaround in earnings growth, he added. In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225, Shanghai's SSE Composite index, and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index traded lower.

Vijay Sharma's Dutch entity to sell 4.98% Paytm stake for Rs 5,000 crore

New Delhi. (Agency)

Resilient Asset Management BV, the Netherlands-based entity through which One97 Communications founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma holds an indirect stake in Paytm, plans to sell up to 4.98% of the payments company through a block market trade, with the economic value of the sale to be retained by Antfin (Netherlands) Holding BV under an existing debenture agreement. In a regulatory filing on Monday, Paytm said Resilient informed the company of the proposed transaction under its existing Optionally Convertible Debenture (OCD) agreement with Antfin, an arm of Ant Group. Paytm said it was not a party to the transaction and there would be no change in Sharma's direct shareholding. At Monday's closing price of Rs 1,589 a share, the proposed 4.98% stake is valued at about Rs 5,073 crore, based on the company's latest share count. The actual block trade price could differ from the closing price. Resilient had acquired an approximately 10.20% stake in Paytm from Antfin against OCDs issued to the latter in August 2023. The economic interest in the shares, however, continued to belong to Antfin under the agreement. Following the transaction, Sharma's direct and indirect holding rose to 19.42%, while Antfin's holding was to fall to 13.5%.

The proposed sale could therefore mark the monetisation of a significant portion of Antfin's residual economic interest in Paytm, even though Antfin has already exited its direct shareholding in the company. Antfin sold about 4% of Paytm in May 2025 for around Rs 2,104 crore and its remaining direct stake of about 5.84% in August 2025 for approximately Rs 3,980 crore, according to exchange disclosures.

Centre clears 31 more ECMS projects; approved investment crosses Rs 69,500 crore

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) on Monday approved 31 new projects under the Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS), taking the total number of cleared proposals to 106 and pushing the cumulative approved investment beyond Rs 69,500 crore. The latest approvals mark India's first domestic manufacturing of several critical electronic components, including filters, coils and speakers, besides key raw materials such as acetylene black and electrolyte additives. Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw said 38 plants approved under the scheme have already started manufacturing, while another 16 are in advanced stages of construction or machinery installation. The approved projects are expected to generate around 75,000 direct jobs and strengthen India's electronics supply chain by reducing import dependence across multiple component categories. Vaishnaw said India's manufacturing capacity for electronic enclosures now meets nearly 100% of domestic demand, making the country "fully Aatmanirbhar" in the segment. He added that production capacities have already surpassed domestic demand in several component categories, including anode material (around 110%), Optical Transceiver-SFP (350%) and relays (200%). MeitY Secretary S. Krishnan said the scheme has already exceeded both its investment and production targets. "The investment target was Rs 59,350 crore, while the approved investment has already reached Rs 69,548 crore," he said.

MAHANAGAR METRO

From threats to resilience: Sebi's new 2-pronged cyber defence strategy

The regulator launched the Incident Reporting Portal and the Cyber Suraksha Portal on Monday. The move comes as cyberattacks become more complex and increasingly affect not just individual institutions but the wider financial ecosystem.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has stepped up its cyber defence efforts with two new portals aimed at helping financial market participants report and respond to cyber threats more effectively. The regulator launched the Incident Reporting Portal and the Cyber Suraksha Portal on Monday. The move comes as cyberattacks become more complex and

increasingly affect not just individual institutions but the wider financial ecosystem. Speaking at Sebi's Cyber Defence Symposium, Sebi chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said the focus now needs to shift from simply checking whether an organisation is secure to ensuring that the entire financial ecosystem can withstand and recover from cyber incidents.

INCIDENT REPORTING PORTAL TO MAKE REPORTING FASTER

The new Incident Reporting Portal will provide market intermediaries with a more structured way to report cybersecurity incidents to Sebi. The reporting system is aligned with the format recommended by the Financial Stability Board. This is expected to make cyber incident reporting more consistent and timely across the securities market. The need for faster reporting has become more important as a cyberattack on one

institution can potentially affect others through vendors, technology platforms, third-party service providers and interconnected systems.

CYBER SURAKSHA PORTAL TO



SHARE CYBER THREAT INFORMATION

The second platform, called the Cyber Suraksha Portal, will serve as a central platform for sharing cybersecurity information across the securities market. It will bring together information such as

vulnerability alerts, cybersecurity knowledge, policy measures and insights from previous incidents. The aim is to help market participants learn from emerging threats and take preventive action rather than responding only after an attack has happened.

SEBI WANTS CONTINUOUS CHECKS FOR VULNERABILITIES

Pandey said cybersecurity cannot be treated as a periodic compliance exercise. Software, cloud systems, application programming interfaces (APIs) and third-party services are constantly changing. This means vulnerabilities can emerge even after an organisation has completed its regular security checks. He said organisations need to continuously identify vulnerabilities, assess the risks they pose, prioritise them, fix them and then check whether the fixes have worked.

135-year-old banking law gets a digital makeover: 3 key changes you need to know

New Delhi. (Agency)

India's banking system has moved from paper ledgers to digital records, but the law governing bank records was still based on a framework created in 1891. The new Bankers' Books Evidence Bill, 2026, seeks to change that.

The Rajya Sabha passed the Bill on August 10, after the Lok Sabha cleared it on August 5. The proposed law replaces the 135-year-old Bankers' Books Evidence Act and brings digital and cloud-based banking records within its scope. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the financial sector has changed significantly over the years, with the rise of NBFCs, fintech firms, payment aggregators and other

financial service providers.

DIGITAL BANK RECORDS CAN BE USED AS EVIDENCE

The biggest change is the recognition of electronic and digital



records as bankers' books.

The 1891 law was introduced at a time when banks mainly relied on physical kumars, ledgers and other

paper records. It allowed certain records to be maintained through older forms of technology such as microfilm and magnetic tapes.

The new Bill takes a much broader approach. It recognises records stored in electronic or digital form, including those kept at a bank's own premises or at an offsite, virtual or cloud location. This means digital records of bank accounts and transactions can be relied upon as evidence in court proceedings, subject to the conditions laid down under the law.

The change is important because most banking activity today happens digitally. Account statements, transaction histories and other banking information are increasingly stored and accessed electronically.

Rupee falls 7 paise to 95.68 against US dollar in early trade

MUMBAL (Agency)

The rupee depreciated 7 paise to 95.68 against the US dollar in early trade on Tuesday, weighed down by elevated crude oil prices and persistent demand for greenback. Forex traders said Brent crude near USD 91 per barrel increased oil-related dollar demand and the Reserve Bank's earlier-than-expected closure of the concessional FCN (B) forex-swap facility raised concerns over future dollar inflows. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 95.68, down 7 paise from its previous close. On Monday, the rupee depreciated 19 paise to close at 95.61 against the US dollar. The rupee opened lower as oil prices rose with the US and Iran remaining at odds over the Strait of Hormuz and there was no progress on a peace deal, Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 99.63, down 0.01 per cent. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading higher by 0.52 per cent at USD 91.34 per barrel in futures trade. "Rupee looks vulnerable to the rising oil prices which have

remained close to USD 90 and have now risen above USD 91 per barrel. RBI was protecting near 95.61 on Monday and may be protecting 95.75 today but will



allow the depreciation to continue in view of the rising oil prices and consistent demand from oil companies," Bhansali said. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex was trading down 278.32 points to 77,450.64 in early trade; while the Nifty fell 57.65 points to 24,230.45. Foreign institutional investors offloaded equities worth Rs 2,535.10 crore on a net basis on Monday, according to exchange data.

NSE seeks \$55 billion valuation as September IPO edges closer

New Delhi. (Agency)

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) is seeking a valuation of as much as \$55 billion for its planned initial public offering (IPO), which could make it one of India's biggest market listings, reported Bloomberg. The exchange has been marketing its shares at Rs 2,000-2,100 apiece during meetings with potential investors, the report said. At the upper end of this price range, NSE's valuation could reach around Rs 5.26 lakh crore. NSE, which operates the world's largest derivatives exchange by trading volume, has completed most of its global roadmap, with meetings in the Middle East still to be completed, according to the report. The IPO is now expected to be launched in the second half of September after regulatory approval was delayed by around three weeks following changes to the list of selling shareholders.

NSE IPO COULD BE VALUED AT \$55 BILLION At the top end of the marketed price range, NSE would command a valuation of around \$55 billion, or approximately Rs 5.26 lakh crore. This would place the Indian exchange at sixth among global exchange operators by market value, Bloomberg reported. The proposed valuation underlines the scale of the NSE IPO, which has been closely watched by investors after years of delays and regulatory hurdles. NSE has not yet announced a final IPO price or launch date.

NSE IPO WILL BE ENTIRELY AN OFFER FOR SALE

The NSE IPO will consist entirely of an offer for sale (OFS), meaning the exchange itself will not receive funds from the issue. Existing shareholders are planning to sell as many as 14.89 crore shares, equivalent to around 6% of the company.

NSE has appointed 20 banks to manage the proposed share sale, according to the report. The final size of the offering and the list of shareholders participating in the sale could determine the final valuation and structure of the IPO.

WHY HAS THE NSE IPO BEEN DELAYED?

The IPO is now expected to hit the market in the second half of September after regulatory approval was delayed by around three weeks. The delay followed changes to the list of selling shareholders, according to Bloomberg. However, NSE has also made progress in resolving a long-running regulatory matter that had been a major overhang ahead of its proposed listing. NSE had earlier said that the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) had granted in-principle approval to settle certain past regulatory lapses, subject to a payment of \$155.83 million.

Asia shares decline as worries about rising oil prices outweigh boost from strong earnings

TOKYO. (Agency)

Asian shares declined in early Tuesday trading, as rising oil prices and worries about inflation worked as a dampener on some markets, countering the optimism that had come from robust corporate earnings reports. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 dipped 1.6% to 68,098.54. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 edged up 0.2% to 9,088.60. South Korea's Kospi reversed course after surging earlier to drop 0.6% to 6,933.60. Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 0.6% to 25,289.88, while the Shanghai Composite shed 0.5% to 3,963.53. Analysts said robust earnings reports in Asia, following those from the U.S., are helping counter worries about what the war in Iran will do to the global flow of crude and its impact on energy prices. Japan, for one, imports almost all its oil. "First, the beneficiary base from AI investment has broadened. Demand

spread across a wide range of industries, including semiconductor production equipment, power equipment, machinery, electronic components, and materials. AI demand effectively helped rediscover globally competitive companies across these sectors," Masashi Akutsu and Tetsuhiro Tokuyama said in a recent report for BofA Securities. They noted the recent strong earnings reports out of Japanese companies for the April-June quarter, adding that, just as with the U.S. Federal Reserve, the Bank of Japan will likely start moving to raise interest rates in the next few months. On Wall Street, stocks edged further away from their record heights on Monday. The S&P 500 fell 0.5% but remains near its all-time high set Thursday. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 272 points, or 0.5%, and the Nasdaq composite slipped 0.3%.

Wall Street's losses solidified in the afternoon when oil prices accelerated upward. Benchmark U.S. crude added 34 cents to \$84.84 a barrel in Asian trading



early Tuesday. The price for a barrel of Brent crude, the international standard, rose 21 cents in Tuesday trading to \$91.08 a barrel. It gained 2.7% to \$90.87 on Monday. Last month alone, the Brent zigzagged between \$72 and \$102 as hopes rose and fell that the United States and Iran could reach a deal that would

allow oil tankers to freely exit the Persian Gulf again.

The rally in oil prices sent Treasury yields in the bond market higher, which in turn raised the pressure on the economy and prices for all kinds of investments.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury climbed to 4.72% from 4.68% late Friday. It has shot up from just 3.97% before the war with Iran, largely because higher oil prices are worsening inflation and upping the probability that the U.S. Federal Reserve will have to hike interest rates. Higher rates could keep a lid on inflation, but they do so by intentionally slowing the economy. The average long-term U.S. mortgage rate has already jumped near its highest level in a year because of the rise in the 10-year Treasury yield, though reports last week said that inflation in July was not as bad as earlier in the summer. All told, the S&P 500 fell 40.70 points to 7,745.06.

Greater Bengaluru Authority, locals revive park in Malleswaram

BENGALURU.(Agency)

For quite a while, East West Park in Malleswaram had been left unused, with its gates locked, prohibiting entry to people. With assistance from the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), local residents had been trying to revive the park to make it usable again, and over the Independence Day weekend, the park finally opened its gates to children and neighbourhood residents.

Over 40 residents along with children cleaned, painted and revived the park, which is a relatively small neighbourhood park near Valmiki Park. The GBA took the initiative to revive the park as part of its "Freedom from Waste" campaign, collaborating with local residents, who were headed by civic activist Preeti Sunderajan.

Sunderajan explained that over time, the area around the park had become a black spot for garbage dumping and waste segregation with persistent concerns from residents about cleanliness, smell and loss of community space. Residents, children and GBA teams cleaned the park, painted its benches and walls, and restored the space. Several local residents and children who initially came by to see the activity also joined in and participated, she added. "When residents and the city work together, we begin to build agency, collective ownership and pride in our neighbourhood," she said. Achintya, a young participant from the neighbourhood, said, "I came to see what was happening and then started painting one of the benches. It was fun to do it with everyone, and I hope we can come here and use the park more often now."

GCC lodged healthy dogs with infected strays, say activists

CHENNAI.(Agency)

Animal rights activists have accused the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) of exposing 15 healthy stray dogs, picked up from the airport premises, to the highly-contagious canine distemper by accommodating them at a population control centre meant for dogs with the viral disease. Around 50 people, including activists and members of NGOs, staged a protest outside the Pallikaranai corporation office on Monday, demanding the immediate release of the healthy dogs.

When the visited the centre, Dr R Prashanth, the in-charge, said all 15 dogs were sterilised, vaccinated and are healthy, and would be kept there for a month until a shelter at Manali is ready.

The activists, however, said they had evidence to prove that at least a couple of dogs with canine distemper were released on Monday morning, potentially exposing the healthy dogs to the infection. RA Kirthana, founder of Hope for Critters, said the disease could spread from a dog even three months after it survives the infection.

"Around 80-90% of dogs infected with canine distemper don't survive," she said. She added the dogs were caught by the GCC on August 7 and 8 from the airport premises and initially kept at a pound in Meenambakkam. Chief veterinary officer Dr J Kamal Hussian said they were shifted to Pallikaranai pound last Friday.

Two minors among six held with hash oil worth Rs 1.5 crore

HYDERABAD.(Agency)

LB Nagar SOT sleuths and Vanasthalipuram police arrested six persons, including two children in conflict with law (CCLs), for allegedly transporting 12 kg of hashish oil worth Rs1.5 crore from Andhra Pradesh to Bengaluru via Hyderabad on Monday.

The arrested were identified as Gammeli Srinu (25), his wife Nibiya (27), an IT employee, Chikkudu Saran (21) and Pangi Jagadish (19). Two others, both aged 17, were apprehended as CCLs.

Police said four of the accused had concealed the hashish oil in 1 kg packets and strapped them to their legs and stomachs using adhesive tape. Each carrier was allegedly carrying 3 kg. According to police, the accused were transporting the contraband from Alluri Sitharama Raju district in Andhra Pradesh to Bengaluru. Acting on credible information, police intercepted them as they were waiting to proceed.

Police said Srinu had previously been arrested in two NDPS cases in Narsipatnam and Adavi Annavaram police stations in AP. After his release, he allegedly resumed trafficking hashish oil with associates in AP and Bengaluru.

According to police, Srinu and Nibiya recruited unemployed tribal youth from neighbouring villages by offering them money to carry the contraband to Bengaluru. For the present consignment, the Bengaluru-based receiver allegedly promised '10 lakh for delivering the 12 kg of hashish oil. Police said the accused collected the contraband from a supplier identified as Krishna in the Chintapalli area and travelled to Bengaluru by private transport via Hyderabad.

Krishna, the alleged supplier, and Sijo, the alleged receiver in Bengaluru, are absconding. Police said efforts were under way to trace them and identify others involved in the supply chain.

In first-ever tree census for a Punjab city, Ludhiana maps and geo-tags 2 lakh trees

Maharashtra-based private firm hired at Rs 29 per tree; 46 of 95 wards covered in first phase; 700 heritage trees identified; 80% of trees found healthy

Ludhiana.(Agency)

Two lakh trees have been mapped, geo-tagged and entered into a digital database across several parameters in Ludhiana, marking the first-ever tree census conducted for a Punjab city. The census assumes significance as the industrial city continues to grapple with severe air pollution, over-concretisation and minimal tree cover. Speaking to The Indian Express, Ojasvi Alankar, Commissioner, Municipal Corporation, Ludhiana, said the tree census was conducted as per the Tree Preservation Policy for Non-Forest Government and Public Lands 2024, notified by the Punjab government's Department of Forests and Wildlife Preservation. "In Punjab, Ludhiana is the first city to have this census done. The 2024 policy directed that a digital tree database be prepared within one year. The company was selected through open tendering based on the lowest financial bid, for Rs 29 per tree," said

Alankar. The census covers only trees within Municipal Corporation (MC) limits, excluding areas under the Ludhiana Improvement Trust (LIT) and Greater Ludhiana Area Development Authority (GLADA). In the first



phase, 2 lakh trees across 46 wards have been covered; another 50,000 will be added in subsequent phases. "We have initially paid Rs 18 lakh to the company for 70,000 trees. The remaining payment will be made only after we

verify the preliminary report, which contains photos, geo-tagged locations and other details of each tree," Alankar said.

The census has been conducted by M/S Ornet Technologies Limited, a Navi Mumbai-based private firm hired by Ludhiana MC at Rs 29 per tree.

The mapping of 2 lakh trees is expected to cost approximately Rs 58 lakh in total. Trees have been classified on the basis of scientific name, local name, health status, photograph, latitude and longitude, presence of bird nests, concrete coverage over roots, nails, lichens, heritage status, and whether the species is indigenous or exotic. On the utility of the digital database, Vineet Kumar, Joint Commissioner, Ludhiana MC, said: "It will help verify illegal felling of trees using photos in the database and identify areas where plantation is needed. If the preliminary report for 2 lakh trees is found satisfactory after verification, we will extend the tender to the remaining wards."

18 years after 26/11 terror attack, Hafiz Saeed, Zaki-Ur-Rehman Lakhvi to face 'in absentia' trial

Mumbai.(Agency)

The process to conduct an 'in absentia' trial against six absconding Pakistani accused, including Lashkar-e-Taiba handlers Hafiz Saeed and Zaki-Ur-Rehman Lakhvi, in connection with the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks trial has been started by the Mumbai Police. The police sent a letter to special public prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam to that effect.

Special Public Prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam said, "A proclamation against the six absconding accused was issued by the trial court. On Friday, once a report is issued on the proclamation, we will initiate the process to proceed with the trial against them in absentia." The proclamation has been issued against Hafiz Saeed, Lakhvi, Sajid Mir, Abu Alqama, Asim alias Abu Qahafa and Major Abdur Rehman Pasha.

What does this mean?

The beginning of an 'in absentia' trial means that if found guilty in the trial, the accused will face punishment if they are ever brought to India. For the 26/11 trial, the proclamation



was issued against terror attack mastermind Abu Jundal, who is facing trial in the Mumbai terror attacks case. Ajmal Kasab, another convict in the case, was subsequently hanged

to death in 2012.

Abu Jundal aka Sayed Zabiuddin Ansari is currently lodged in the high-security Arthur Road Jail in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The Bharatiya Nyaya Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) 2023, which replaced the Criminal Procedure Code, has the provision of 'in absentia' trial under Section 356, allowing trial to take place against absconding offenders to avoid delays.

An officer said that they have enough evidence against the six accused. Since the BNSS has the provision of conducting an 'in absentia' trial, they have decided to initiate the process for the 26/11 terror attacks. "Pakistani gunman Ajmal Kasab had revealed the roles of the accused during interrogation," an official said. A total of 166 persons had died during the terror attacks that went on from November 26 to 29 in Mumbai in 2008.

Mumbai's Monorail reopening to be delayed further as evacuation plan not ready yet

Mumbai.(Agency)

The reopening of Mumbai's monorail will be delayed further as the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) is still working on a comprehensive plan to evacuate passengers if a train gets stranded. The delay comes months after nearly 600 passengers had to be rescued from an overcrowded monorail train that lost power and was stranded between stations in Chembur. The Mumbai Fire Brigade had to carry out a two-hour rescue operation and break open the train's glass doors to evacuate passengers. Although the monorail has since undergone upgrades, including the induction of new rakes, and obtained the required safety certifications, officials said the evacuation mechanism remains

unresolved. The authority is also examining measures to improve safety along the elevated guideways before allowing the service to resume. "A foolproof evacuation plan is still being



studied, and we are yet to arrive at a complete solution," a senior official of the Mumbai Monorail Operations and Maintenance Pvt Ltd, an MMRDA arm responsible for operating the service,

said. The operating agency has sought assistance from IIT Bombay and Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Ltd (MEIL) to examine evacuation options.

One proposal involves constructing walkways along the guideways to allow passengers to leave a stranded train. However, IIT Bombay has raised concerns about the feasibility of additional construction along the existing elevated structure.

The MMRDA also has man lifts for emergencies, similar to the turntable ladders used by the fire brigade. Officials, however, said deploying them could be difficult along congested stretches, particularly in Chembur, Wadala and Mahalaxmi, where the elevated corridor passes over slums and nullahs.

Travel operators seek probe into NICE project

BENGALURU.(Agency)

The Karnataka State Travel Operators' Association has urged the state government to order a high-level inquiry into the implementation of Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor (BMIC)-NICE project, alleging that it has not been implemented in accordance with the terms and conditions of the agreement with the government. In a representation to Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi on Monday, association president K Radhakrishna Holla sought immediate government intervention in the project, citing the larger public interest.

Demanding that the government probe the manner in which the NICE-BMICP project was implemented and its compliance with the original agreement, he said that a scrutiny of utilisation of land, assets, rights and other benefits provided should be done. The association said if the agreement is violated, the NICE road should be taken over by the government.

It said toll collection should be stopped till the proposed inquiry is completed and the contractual and legal position of the project is established.

Two tribal talukas face off in Gujarat over 3,000 acres, Forest Dept caught in middle

An understanding over cultivation between the Narmada and Surat villages has frayed since a 2024 rape-murder

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

As she sits on a relay fast under a tarpaulin tent in the fields in Gujarat's Narmada district, Leela Vasava flips through a file of documents. Behind her, men and women sit silently, watching her. The rain-bearing clouds overhead threaten rain. But so far, it has deterred neither Leela nor her companions.

For the last 10 days, Leela and her companions from 12 tribal villages in Narmada's Sagbara taluka have been holding a sit-in protest to demand the right to keep cultivating 3,000 acres of forest land in Umapada taluka in Surat district, claiming that they have been doing the same for two decades. "Since late 2024, we have been ousted from the fields. The forest department has termed us ineligible," the 52-year-old Leela, a former BJP leader and ex-president of the Sagbara taluka panchayat, tells. However, if the protesters from Sagbara claim they are entitled to the

land under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) of 2006, the tribal village of Umapada has also claimed the right to it. The rape and murder of a minor belonging to the area in June 2024 has also complicated matters. The accused was arrested from Sagbara.

But for the dotted line on the administrative map, there's nothing that separates the talukas of Sagbara and Umapada. Monsoon makes the borders even murkier, with the contiguous meadow between the Narmada and Surat districts run over by corn crop. It is here, in this meadow between the two districts, that the protest tent has been pitched. A cautious Surat Forest Department has put up a fence between Sagbara and Umapada to prevent any violence, while police keep watch. On July 30, villagers of Sagbara attacked the Forest Department for allegedly "colluding" with Umapada. Forest Department officials, however, argue that the contested 1,200 acres fall in Umapada and farmers from Sagbara have

not been able to establish their claim. "The claim that villagers have been cultivating the land since 2002 is not supported by satellite imagery," says Surat Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) Gaurav



Lodha.

Umapada says it is also entitled to the land as its villagers were displaced by the Ukai dam project on the Tapi River in 1972. "We are displaced people and the land is rightfully ours," a resident in Umapada

says. Leela, 52, claims to have resigned from the BJP over the issue. "The villagers of Sagbara and Umapada had an understanding on the land, and this prevailed amicably till 2024," she says,

blaming the rape incident for the current faceoff. The FRA recognises land and resource rights of forest-dwelling tribal communities, but historical cultivation does not automatically create a right. Occupants must meet eligibility requirements, including occupation of forest land before December 13, 2005. Claims are considered by the gram sabha and reviewed by sub-divisional and district committees before a final decision. Sagbara villagers claim entitlement under the FRA, and cite an old gram sabha resolution from Umapada for it. But Umapada residents recently filed a police complaint accusing Sagbara villages of forging the resolution.

NEWS BOX

AUS vs BAN: Australia drop opener after humiliating defeat to Bangladesh in Darwin



New Delhi. (Agency)

Australia have made one change to their squad for the second and final Test against Bangladesh, dropping opener Jake Weatherald after a difficult outing in the series opener. Left-handed batter Matthew Renshaw has been brought in as his replacement for the Mackay Test. Weatherald managed only 23 and a duck in the first Test as Australia were bowled out for 198 in their first innings. Renshaw, meanwhile, returns to the Test setup for the first time in more than three years, having last appeared in the format in Delhi in 2023. Renshaw's most recent Test appearance came as a concussion substitute for David Warner. Since then, the 30-year-old has remained involved in Australia's white-ball squads, featuring in both ODI and T20I cricket. The recall also gives Australia another option at the top of the order after their batting unit struggled against Bangladesh. RENSHAW GETS ANOTHER TEST CHANCE

Australia's squad still includes Marnus Labuschagne despite his continuing struggles for runs. The No. 3 scored 31 in the second innings of the opening Test, but coach Andrew McDonald admitted that the batter knows he needs to produce more. "I think it was 31 he got in the second innings, and up until the point he got out, you'd sit there and say he was looking good," McDonald said. "He was moving well, he's clipping off his pads, he was getting back through the ball down the ground. So it's easy for me to sit here and try to defend that, but ultimately it's 31. It's not a big score. He's lacked runs. He feels that. We feel that. We're working incredibly hard as a coaching group," he added. Australia will otherwise retain the core of their squad, with wicketkeeper-batter Josh Inglis and fast bowler Scott Boland continuing as reserve options.

Ayush Shetty stunned the world No. 1 in Delhi. To two men, it wasn't a surprise



New Delhi. (Agency)

The World Championships draw was unfolding live. Ayush Shetty was watching when the name he had been unable to beat in three attempts appeared next to his. Shi Yuqi. World No. 1. Defending champion. First-round opponent. For a 21-year-old making his World Championships debut on home soil, it was the sort of draw that could have made the occasion feel heavier. Instead, Ayush was looking forward to it. "He never even once... there was a sense of, 'why am I playing Shi Yuqi in the first round?'" He was looking forward to it," coach Sagar Chopda said during a Badminton Association of India YouTube live on Monday. There were other clues to Ayush's state of mind that morning. He was relaxed during his hit, laughing and joking around. In the car to the stadium, he was still smiling and cracking jokes. And when he walked towards the court, a young fan held out his hand for a high-five. Ayush gave him one. Small moments, easy to miss, but revealing. Ayush did not look like a player carrying the occasion as a burden. He seemed to be enjoying it.

That did not mean he was unaware of what awaited him. Shi had beaten Ayush three times before, and the last meeting had been particularly brutal. In the Badminton Asia Championships final in April, Shi thoroughly dismantled him in straight games, winning 21-8, 21-10. Ayush had barely been allowed to play on his own terms. Four months later, he was staring at the same opponent again, only this time with a different answer. "August 17 is a bad day for Shi Yuqi," coach Vimal Kumar had told Ayush during his preparations in Bengaluru.

Manav Suthar is Ravindra Jadeja's upgraded version: Ex-India star after Galle haul

IND vs SL: Aakash Chopra has backed Manav Suthar to become a long-term successor to Ravindra Jadeja. The former India batter believes Suthar's bowling already offers an upgraded version of what Jadeja provided earlier in his career.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Manav Suthar's rapid emergence in Test cricket has drawn a big endorsement from former India batter Aakash Chopra, who believes the young spinner has the qualities to eventually take over Ravindra Jadeja's role. Chopra went a step further, calling Suthar an "upgraded version" of Jadeja as a bowler. Suthar's latest performance strengthened that argument, with the 24-year-old claiming 4/76 in India's first innings against Sri Lanka in Galle.

Speaking on his YouTube channel, Chopra was asked whether Suthar had already cemented his place in India's plans for Asian conditions. "I will say yes because he is a mighty guy. When he releases the ball, it drifts, bounces, and turns. He dismisses you while defending. When you can make the opposing batter lick dust while defending, and that too repeatedly, that tells you this guy has the might," Chopra said. "Along with that, he also bats, which means you can keep him in mind even in overseas conditions. I am seeing him as a successor to Ravindra Jadeja because Jaddu will go at some stage, and you will need somebody like him. If I look at him purely as a bowler, I think he is Jadeja's upgraded version," he added.

IS MANAV SUTHAR THE JADEJA SUCCESSOR?

Suthar's performance in Galle offered plenty of evidence behind Chopra's assessment. He struck with his very first delivery of the innings to remove Dinesh Chandimal and later accounted for Lahiru

Udara, using flight, dip, turn and bounce to keep Sri Lanka's batters under pressure. He finished with four wickets as India bowled Sri Lanka out for 284, securing a 178-run



first-innings lead. His spell came after Mohammed Siraj had removed Nishan Fernando with only his second delivery, while Kuldeep Yadav and Jadeja also chipped in. Chopra believes Suthar's appeal goes beyond simply being another spinner suited to Asian pitches. The Rajasthan youngster has also shown enough with the bat to potentially offer India flexibility in

overseas conditions. "Suthar has played only two Test matches, and he is consistently saying that he is good. He comes from Sri Ganganagar. It's far away from a cricket hotspot. However, to come from there and then to focus on long-form cricket and consistently take wickets, Duleep Trophy, India A, then India, and a Player of the Match performance in his first match itself," Chopra said. Suthar had already made an impression on debut against Afghanistan, taking seven wickets across the two innings and scoring 28 runs. His latest showing against Sri Lanka has now added another layer to his credentials.

SUTHAR'S CASE GROWS STRONGER

The comparison with Jadeja is significant given the veteran all-rounder's standing in Indian cricket. Chopra's argument is not simply about replacing Jadeja immediately, but about Suthar developing into the kind of bowler India can trust across different conditions.

FIFA confirm Kevin Lamour exit weeks after Gianni Infantino criticism: Was he sacked?

FIFA has confirmed chief operating officer Kevin Lamour's departure after his clash with Gianni Infantino over a private investment plan. The exit has deepened scrutiny of Infantino's leadership ahead of the 2027 presidential election.

New Delhi. (Agency)

FIFA has confirmed the departure of Chief Operating Officer Kevin Lamour, just weeks after he publicly challenged Gianni Infantino over a controversial plan to bring private investment into FIFA's tournament business. The timing has raised questions over whether Lamour's criticism

contributed to the end of his tenure. Lamour, who joined FIFA's senior leadership in November 2024, had previously worked closely with Infantino during his rise to the FIFA presidency.



FIFA said their professional relationship ended on August 17, while Sky News reported that staff were told Lamour had been sacked. FIFA can confirm that the working relationship between FIFA and Kevin Lamour as FIFA's Chief Operating Officer has ended on 17 August 2026," a

FIFA spokesperson said. "FIFA thanks Kevin for his two years of service and wishes him the best of luck for the future. No further comment will be made on the matter," FIFA added.

LAMOUR'S PUBLIC BREAK WITH INFANTINO

Lamour became one of the most senior FIFA figures to publicly oppose Infantino's proposed commercial restructuring. The plan involved creating a subsidiary to handle major tournament rights and seeking as much as 4.2 billion US dollars from private investors in exchange for a minority stake. Lamour had argued that FIFA employees had not been properly informed about the proposal and questioned whether it served football's wider interests. He also acknowledged that speaking out could cost him his position. His criticism came around the same time as the resignation of senior Infantino adviser Carlos Cordeiro, who also opposed the investment plan.

Thank you for saving me: KL Rahul hugs Devdutt Padikkal after unbelievable DRS rescue

New Delhi. (Agency)

KL Rahul thought he was out when Prabath Jayasuriya struck him plumb in front of the stumps in the 11th over of India's second innings. A sensational arm ball from the left-arm spinner, bowling from round the stumps, drifted in, beat KL's defence and grazed the front pad of the India The umpire thought it was out and gave KL Rahul the marching orders. India captain Shubman Gill, sitting in the dugout, thought it was out as well and proceeded to wear his gloves, ready to walk into the field as the next batter. Rahul was ready to march off too, but was stopped by his batting partner, the new India No. 3 Devdutt Padikkal. Padikkal stopped KL and told him that his big forward lunge to defend



as well. The ball was pitching outside off, hitting in line, and then the predicted trajectory showed it going over the stumps. Missing, said the DRS, with the ball going just over the middle and leg stump. KL Rahul was saved. The relieved

batter breathed a sigh of relief and went to give a tight hug to Devdutt Padikkal, who was the only one who thought KL Rahul

had been unfairly given out by the on-field umpire. It became one of the most memorable moments of the day, on Tuesday, August 18, as India continued their dominance in the first Test against Sri Lanka. However, KL was not able to make the most of his reprieve, after he managed to find mid-off in the 15th over of the match, once again against Prabath Jayasuriya.

Rahul, who had been aggressively scoring runs till that point (35 off 47), tried to hit Jayasuriya over mid-on but ended up getting a leading edge. The ball went straight to Milan Rathnayake at mid-off, who made no mistake.

Hardik Pandya makes Kranti Gaud's birthday extra special with signed jersey

Bengaluru. (Agency)

India women's cricketer Kranti Gaud shared a special moment with her idol Hardik Pandya after meeting the India all-rounder at the BCCI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru. Pandya gifted the young cricketer a signed jersey and also celebrated her birthday during the meeting. Kranti has previously spoken openly about Pandya's influence on her cricketing journey and considers him one of her biggest inspirations. Sharing pictures from their meeting on Instagram, Kranti wrote, "Thank you so much bhaiya." "Hardik Pandya has been my idol. I want to be a cricketer like him," Kranti had said in a video earlier this year. The young cricketer's admiration for Pandya became particularly visible after India's World Cup triumph, when she recreated his



trademark victory celebration on the pitch.

KRANTI'S SPECIAL PANDYA MOMENT Kranti went viral after striking Pandya's famous victory pose moments after India lifted the ICC World Cup trophy. She placed the trophy on the ground before copying the all-rounder's celebration, creating one of the memorable images from India's title celebrations. The moment also highlighted the influence Pandya has had on Kranti, who has looked up to his aggressive and fearless style of cricket since her early days. Her latest meeting with Pandya brought that admiration full circle. The signed jersey gives Kranti a personal memento from the player she has repeatedly credited as an inspiration for her own career. The meeting also came at an important stage in Kranti's development as a young India cricketer. From playing cricket in the lanes of her hometown to making her mark at the international level, her journey has continued to gather attention.

Rodri arrives for FC Barcelona medical, says 'We will fight for every title'

Rodri has arrived in Barcelona to complete his medical and seal his blockbuster move from Manchester City. The Spain midfielder called the transfer a dream come true and immediately set his sights on winning every major title.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Rodri, the Manchester City and Spain midfielder, has arrived in Barcelona to complete his medical ahead of his blockbuster move to FC Barcelona. The 30-year-old is closing in on a 76.5 million euros transfer that will bring his seven-year spell at the Etihad to an end. Rodri landed at

Barcelona's El Prat airport after an intense few days that saw the two clubs finally reach an agreement. Speaking to reporters, he said he was delighted to have the move completed. "I'm very happy to be here. It's been an intense few days, but I'm glad everything is sorted out," Rodri said.

"Playing for Barcelona is a dream come true for me. I'm really looking forward to being with my teammates, most of whom I already know from the national team, so now it's time to work hard and give my best," he added.

RODRI'S BARCA DREAM COMES TRUE

Rodri also made Barcelona's ambitions clear, insisting the club will target the biggest prizes immediately. "We're going for the Champions League, we're going for

everything that comes our way," he said. The move ends a hugely successful seven-year stint at Manchester City, where Rodri



became a central figure in midfield. He won four Premier League titles and scored the only goal in City's 2023 Champions League final victory over Inter Milan. He also claimed the Ballon d'Or in 2024, although

injuries have disrupted his recent seasons. An ACL injury ruled him out for much of the 2024-25 campaign, while hamstring and groin problems limited him to 33 appearances in City's most recent season.

WHY CITY AGREED TO SELL

Manchester City had hoped to retain their midfield linchpin, particularly with Rodri entering the final year of his contract. Barcelona's initial bids were rejected, but the Catalan club eventually secured the deal after improving their offer to 76.5 million euros. Rodri's departure leaves City with another significant midfield hole.

The club have already invested heavily in the position and are closing in on Lille youngster Ayyoub Bouaddi, while Chelsea's Enzo Fernandez remains on their radar.



Rhea Chakraborty's

Father Lost Job During Sushant Singh Rajput Case? Actress Reveals

Actor Rhea Chakraborty was in the headlines in 2020, but not for any good reason. She went through severe media trials during the demise of her then-boyfriend Sushant Singh Rajput. Both she and her brother Showik were arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in a drug-related case, and now she has opened up about how the case unfolded in her personal life.

Rhea Chakraborty, who is currently seen in Season 2 of The Traitors, was the recent guest on Farah Khan's cooking vlog on her YouTube channel. During a conversation with Farah, Rhea recalled how her father was denied a job because she followed the 2020 Sushant Singh Rajput case. "Papa got a very big job as a medical superintendent at a very big hospital in town... and then they found out his surname and said, 'Sorry, aap Rhea Chakraborty ho toh (You are Rhea Chakraborty's father, so you cannot work here),' " she told her.

Rhea Chakraborty Says She Has Had Enough Of Being Under



Suspicion

During The Traitors, Karan asked Rhea whether she would prefer to be an Innocent or a Traitor. Rhea had a clear answer. "I want to be an innocent. Iss saal hi actually mujhe clean chit mila hain, iss saal hi logo ko pata chala hai ki mai innocent hoon. Bohot der tak shaq mein rahi hoon toh woh itna pasand nahi hai ab mujhe. Kaafi saal kar liya hai maine," she said.

Rhea Chakraborty Was Arrested After Sushant Singh Rajput's Death

Rhea faced a difficult period after the death of her former boyfriend. Apart from the investigations that followed, the actress also faced a social boycott and spent time in jail. The Narcotics Control Bureau arrested both Rhea and her brother Showik in a drug case related to Sushant.

The CBI's closure report in Sushant's death case subsequently brought relief for Rhea as she was cleared of all charges.

Rhea has previously spoken about the effect the entire ordeal had on her mental health. In earlier interviews, she revealed that she suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder following everything she experienced during that period. Rhea is currently participating in the second season of The Traitors, a reality show built around suspicion, strategy and deception.

Top Ent News Aug 16: SRK, Ajay Devgn Get FDA Notices Over Vimal Ad, Ashwin Mushran Accused Of Hitting Biker



Shah Rukh Khan, Ajay Devgn and Tiger Shroff have been served show-cause notices from the Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) over their Vimal Elaichi advertisement. The regulator has alleged that the campaign could amount to surrogate advertising for Vimal Pan Masala, a product banned in Maharashtra.

Actor Ashwin Mushran has landed in controversy following a road accident in Goa, where he has been accused of hitting a father-son duo while allegedly driving on the wrong side of the road. The incident reportedly took place around 12.30 pm in Kusman, Quepem, Margao.

Ranveer Singh's survival spectacle, Pralay, goes on floors. Ranveer Singh's one of the most anticipated films, for which audiences have been waiting, is finally going on floors after a long wait. Touted to be a zombie thriller, Pralay will mark Ranveer Singh's first major project following the grand success of his action thriller spy drama Dhurandhar: The Revenge.

Antara Banerjee, the model and actress known for Kasautii Zindagii Kay, has been mistakenly linked to reports of an alleged attack on an RPF official aboard the Aravali Express. However, the 31-year-old actress is not involved in the case. The woman arrested has been identified as Thane-based model Antara Soham Banerjee. Due to the similarity in their names, the Kasautii Zindagii Kay actress was incorrectly associated with allegations of undressing and attacking an RPF official with a razor blade following a dispute over a reserved seat.

Yash has addressed the reaction of his wife, actor Radhika Pandit, to the intimate scenes in his upcoming film Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups. The actor admitted that such scenes can make any partner uncomfortable, but said Radhika understands that he is performing as an actor and trusts him.

Salman Khan's Ex Somy Ali Defends Govinda Against Sunita Ahuja's 'Sugar Daddy' Remark: 'Age Of His Co-Star..'



Former Pakistani actress Somy Ali is the first co-actor of Govinda to come out in support of the actor, who has been at the centre of relentless attacks by his wife, Sunita Ahuja.

On Sunday, the actress took to her Instagram and shared a collage of throwback pictures of herself with the actor. She also penned a long note in his support as she recollected their journey together. She wrote, "I am going to chime in here as no one else will and show support whenever it's necessary. I have known Govinda personally and professionally, which is why I can say a few things about him from both ends. Chichi is one of the greatest talents in the Hindi film industry, and he is one of the most humble actors I got to know during my time within that industry."

The controversy started after Sunita turned the promotion of the actor's upcoming film into a public reckoning, calling him actress Komal's "sugar daddy" after he was spotted with the actress she had previously accused him of having an affair with. Sunita said the 62-year-old actor should be ashamed of roaming around with a woman his daughter's age and mocked Komal's clothes.

The actress further mentioned that Govinda isn't anywhere wrong in starring opposite a younger actress. She went on, "I have immense respect for both Chichi and Sunita. However, there is nothing ageist about an actor accepting a role with a younger actress. Talent doesn't have an expiration date. At a time when work may be difficult to find, choosing to keep working is something to respect, not ridicule."

An actor's worth isn't determined by his age or by the age of his co-star. It's determined by his talent, professionalism, and willingness to keep going. Getting another opportunity when doors have been difficult to open should be celebrated."

"Every actor deserves the chance to prove that they still have something meaningful to offer. Age should never become a weapon against someone who is simply trying to earn a living and continue doing what he loves. Perhaps the most admirable thing about an actor is his refusal to give up when the industry or others start telling him he's too old," she added.

Madhubanti Bagchi

On Shararat, Aaj Ki Raat And Her 'Slow-Burn' Career: 'I Don't Really Chase...'

Madhubanti Bagchi's relationship with music began before she had any say in the matter. Her grandfather named her after a raga; her parents made sure Hindustani classical training was non-negotiable; and somewhere along the way, the obedient child practising her scales discovered rock and metal —



much to her family's horror. Years later, that wonderfully unruly mix of influences has become one of her biggest strengths. Bagchi is currently enjoying the kind of playback run singers spend years hoping for. From Aaj Ki Raat and Shararat to Jab Talak from Cocktail 2 and Aashiqon Ki Colony from O Romeo, her voice has travelled across films, genres and moods without settling into an obvious template. That matters to her.

If the industry wants to put her into "one box, three boxes, ten boxes or a hundred boxes",

she laughs, those boxes belong to them — not her. In an exclusive conversation with News18 Showsha, Bagchi is equally candid about the less glamorous mechanics behind that success.

She remembers being bored stiff by classical training as a child, admits her experimental-band years were fuelled by equal parts sincerity and cluelessness, and reveals why her first instinct was "Hell no!" when Aditya Dhar wanted her on camera for Shararat. She also revisits the late-night recording of Aaj Ki Raat, singing a thumri for Sanjay Leela Bhansali years after being considered too young for the form, and the very different musical worlds of Bhansali and Vishal Bhardwaj.

But perhaps the clearest picture of Bagchi emerges when she talks about what she refuses to chase. Virality, astronomical streaming numbers and the industry's instinct to replicate yesterday's hit interest her far less than having enough freedom to keep surprising herself. Her next independent release, she teases, might do exactly that. "I really hope that when people hear it, it both shocks and impresses them," she says.

For someone whose unusually long name once felt like a childhood inconvenience, Madhubanti Bagchi now wears every syllable rather proudly. As she puts it with a laugh: "Make it heavier! Go harder!"



NEWS BOX

"Would Pay A Price": Moscow Warns UK After British-Made Drones Hit Russia

world.(Agency)

Russia warned Britain on Monday it would pay a "price" after reports that UK-made drones supplied to Ukraine had been used in strikes deep inside Russia. The warning came after the Sunday Times newspaper reported that drones produced by two British companies had been used by Kyiv to hit military and industrial targets inside Russian territory. In a statement, Russia's embassy in London accused Britain of becoming "an accomplice and co-perpetrator" of the attacks and of "deliberately opting for an escalation" in the conflict. "The deeper its involvement in the conflict and the greater its support for Kiev's terrorist machinery, the higher the price it will pay," it said. According to the Sunday Times, one of the companies involved is a subsidiary of defence giant BAE Systems. The newspaper did not identify the second company, citing security reasons. Britain's defence ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The UK has been one of Ukraine's strongest backers since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022, committing around 25 billion pounds (\$33 billion) in support, including 16 billion pounds in military aid.

Meta Faces Trial Over Claims Facebook, Instagram Harm Young Users

world.(Agency)

Meta Platforms Inc. is headed to court Tuesday for a high-stakes showdown with a coalition of state attorneys general over claims that the company deliberately designed Facebook and Instagram to encourage compulsive use among young users. In a case that carries enormous risk for one of the world's most valuable tech companies, the top legal officers of 29 states are seeking not only massive financial penalties, but also court orders that could force Meta to change how it operates its platforms. The jury trial in federal court in Oakland, California, comes as social media companies are facing a global backlash over concerns that they profit at the expense of young users, for whom a growing body of research shows that heavy use of the algorithm-driven platforms can be dangerously unhealthy. While authorities in Australia and Europe have enacted or proposed outright bans for youths in the last year, legislative crackdowns in the US have had limited success, turning the courts into a pivotal battleground.

"Marvellous Miracle": Man Survives 15 Days Trapped Inside Underwater Cave In Mexico

world.(Agency)

In an extraordinary story of survival, a 31-year-old fisherman named Erasto Crisanto Valdez was rescued alive after being trapped for 15 days in a dark underwater cave system in southern Mexico, Metro.UK reported. The ordeal began on July 23, 2026, when Valdez went fishing with his father near San Francisco La Paz. As per the media outlet, he got stuck in the cave while attempting to catch a robalo, a common snook. He lost his orientation and could not find the exit deep inside the tunnels. He was surrounded by darkness and survived by drinking fresh water from an underground stream running through the cavern. With no light or watch, he lost all track of time, believing he had only been trapped for three days. He spent his time praying, sleeping, and waiting on a dry ledge.

Congo's fast-moving Ebola outbreak becomes the country's worst with over 2,300 dead

BUNIA.(Agency)

Congo's fast-moving Ebola outbreak has now killed over 2,300 people and become the deadliest outbreak of the disease on record in the Central African nation. The outbreak unfolding in one of Congo's most vulnerable regions is the fastest-growing Ebola outbreak ever, with 4,945 cases including 2,325 deaths, according to government data released overnight into Monday. It's Congo's 17th outbreak, with a toll that has eclipsed that of the country's 2018-2020 outbreak when 2,299 deaths out of 3,481 cases were recorded. The latest data shows 101 new cases and 33 deaths reported in the previous 24 hours. Over 1,000 people have recovered, while 730 remain in hospitals or isolation. The outbreak has infected and killed more people at a greater speed than any other outbreak in history. The World Health Organization has said it is on track to surpass the 2014-16 Ebola outbreak in

West Africa, the deadliest on record with more than 11,000 deaths. Trish Newport, emergency coordinator with Doctors Without Borders, known by its French acronym MSF, said the limited community engagement in the outbreak remains a key challenge. "The community needs to be aware about the outbreak," she told The Associated Press, adding that people "need to be involved in the response, and they need to know what the signs and symptoms are and what to do if they get sick. And this today is not happening in every single place where there are Ebola cases." Starting from the first confirmed case, the outbreak reached the 2,000 death toll almost three times faster than in the 2014-16 outbreak. Some families have lost up to 15 of their relatives in the epicenter, the Ituri province, said Newport. "We rapidly need to scale up to be able to prevent more deaths from happening, more families and communities from being impacted," she added.

Trump says Kim Jong Un has responded to overtures, calls ties with North Korea 'very positive'

US president says his relationship with Kim is making the situation safer as he scales back military drills with South Korea and rebukes Seoul over Iran.

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

US President Donald Trump said Monday that Kim Jong Un had responded to his recent overtures, a day after he scaled back military drills with South Korea and praised his relationship with the North Korean leader. Trump said he was making the situation "much safer" through his ties to Kim, whom he met three times in his first spell in the White House, but has yet to encounter during his second term. While praising the leader of nuclear-armed North Korea, he rebuked key ally

Seoul for failing to help Washington fight Iran -- a war Trump says is aimed at stopping Tehran from getting the atomic bomb. Asked why Kim hadn't replied to his requests for a conversation since returning to office last year, Trump told reporters in the Oval Office: "How do you know he hasn't responded?" When pressed about whether Kim had actually responded, Trump said: "Yeah, he has." Asked what stage the conversations with Kim were at, Trump said "it's very positive," but provided no further detail. Trump then doubled down on his praise for Kim, saying their ties reduced tensions. "You see, I'm actually making it much safer. Kim Jong Un has always treated me with great respect," Trump said. "I understand him. He understands me." Strange Trump initially took aim at South Korea on his Truth Social network on Sunday night, abruptly

announcing that he had ordered the Pentagon to scale back "inappropriate and hostile" military drills with Seoul. He also linked the decision to South Korea's



refusal to help with the US-Israeli war with Iran. "Wait a minute. We have 39,000 soldiers over there, guarding you from Kim Jong Un, your next-door neighbor, and you're not going to help us on a very easy military operation in Iran. That's strange," Trump said in the Oval Office. Trump once again called into

question US support for both South Korea and NATO allies that have refused to contribute to the Iran war. "We can't go around and protect all of these countries, especially when they're not there to help us," he said. South Korean officials said the exercises had begun as planned and that they hoped the personal chemistry between Trump and Kim would bring them back to talks.

North Korea has not responded publicly, although it has previously voiced anger at the regular joint maneuvers that take place in the South. The top US Senate Democrat on military affairs slammed Trump's order to downsize the Korean drills, and said China and Russia were "watching how easily this president abandons America's allies". "This is another inane, haphazard decision by President Trump and his chaotic administration," Senate Armed Services Committee ranking member Jack Reed said.

Indian-Origin Grandma, Living In US For 27 Years With Green Card, Detained By ICE

Washington.(Agency)

An Indian-origin woman, who has lived in the US for 27 years and is a Green Card holder, has been detained by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), even after an immigration judge dismissed an effort to remove her from the country months ago. Venkata Narsamamba Vasamsetty, a grandmother of two who has been a lawful permanent resident (LPR) in the United States since 2013, was taken into custody during a scheduled ICE check-in on August 11. She is being held at an ICE detention facility in Georgia, despite a US judge's May ruling terminating the government's

prior deportation case against her, Newsweek reported, citing data collected through ICE's Online Detainee Locator System.



The case against Vasamsetty's immigration status reportedly stemmed from a federal government's allegation that she had abandoned her lawful permanent residency when she

spent several months in India in 2022. However, her family and lawyer argue that during her extended stay in India, Vasamsetty was taking care of an ailing parent and recovering from COVID-19. They also argue that Vasamsetty maintains substantial ties to the United States through her family, employment, and home. While LPRs are allowed to live in the US permanently, green-card holders can still face removal proceedings under federal immigration law in some cases. One such circumstance is a permanent resident's absence from the US for more than six months. This could raise questions about whether they intended to abandon their US residence.

Imran Khan's eye condition 'almost normal': Pakistan jail to top court

world.(Agency)

Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's eyesight has improved considerably and is now close to normal, prison authorities told Pakistan's Supreme Court on Monday, a day ahead of a hearing on his request to be treated at a private Islamabad hospital. The plea, filed on Khan's behalf, seeks his treatment at Shifa International, a leading private medical facility in the capital. Khan, who founded the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party and has been in jail since August 2023, has been taken to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in Islamabad several times for treatment of his eye condition — right central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO) — first reported in late January. Officials at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail submitted a report to the Supreme Court on the 73-year-old leader's current health, PTI reported. According to the report, Khan's eye had shown clear improvement, and his sight had

returned to nearly normal. The report said doctors treating Khan at PIMS included the hospital's head of ophthalmology and a retina surgeon from a Rawalpindi eye hospital, and argued this showed the jail



administration had made a genuine effort to give him proper medical care. It added that medical staff checked on Khan three times a day, monitoring his meals, blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen levels, and that his full medical record had been kept since he was jailed. Several outside specialists had also visited him for check-ups, the report said. The report said both Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, who is

held at the same facility, were receiving proper healthcare, adding that their wellbeing mattered a great deal to the jail administration. It also said the couple had been allowed to meet regularly every Tuesday, with 84 such meetings recorded so far. The jail authorities asked the court to dismiss Khan's plea, saying it had no merit. A three-judge bench, led by Justice Shahid Wahid and including Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim, was set to take up the case on August 18. Khan has been in custody since 5 August 2023, when he was arrested at his home in Lahore following a corruption conviction. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi said he was seriously worried about a medical report showing high blood pressure readings for Khan, PTI reported. Speaking at a press conference in Islamabad with senior party figures, Afridi said Khan's own doctors had earlier found his blood pressure to be normal.

2 killed in shooting incident at a school in southern Philippines, gunman among casualties

MOSCOW.(Agency)

Two people were killed in a shooting at a high school in the southern Philippines on Tuesday, with officials saying the situation had been brought under control, news agency Reuters reported. It was the second such incident in the country in nearly two months. The shooting occurred at a school affiliated with Ateneo de Zamboanga University in Zamboanga City. The city's mayor, Khymer Adan Olaso told DZMM radio that both casualties were students and that one of them was the shooter, who used a "high-powered firearm." University President Ernald Andal confirmed that there was no longer an active shooting on campus and that no additional fatalities or injuries had been reported. "As of now, we confirm that there are two fatalities," Andal said. "There are no more active shooters." He added that the university was coordinating with authorities and would share further details as more information became available. "We do



not want any of these things to happen. We wish to prioritise the safety of all our students," he said. The incident comes nearly two months after a shooting at a public high school in Tacloban City in June, in which at least three students were killed, and around 20 others were injured after two of their schoolmates opened fire on the campus. The shooting occurred less than 10 days after a high-profile incident in Thailand, where a student went on a shooting rampage at a school on the outskirts of Bangkok, the country's capital.

We do not want ties with India to deteriorate over Teesta: Bangladesh Water Resources Minister

world.(Agency)

Bangladesh does not want its friendly relations with India to deteriorate over the long-pending Teesta water-sharing agreement, Water Resources Minister Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee has said, urging New Delhi to consider Dhaka's interests alongside its own. "The neighbouring country is a friendly country. They have to think that while they have their interests, we also have ours," Anee was quoted as saying by TBS News at a seminar in Dhaka. "A friend should protect the interests of a friend. We never want our friendly relations with them to deteriorate," he said. Anee's remarks came amid renewed efforts by Bangladesh to resolve the Teesta issue, including through the proposed Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project with Chinese support. The project aims to address recurring floods, river erosion and dry-season water shortages in northern Bangladesh. The minister said the government had organised several seminars and consultations since the February election to

seek expert opinions on the proposed project. A detailed study based on the recommendations would help the government take concrete steps, he said. Describing the project as a major



challenge, Anee said people in five or six northern districts had high expectations after years of suffering from river erosion and other problems. "If we fail to implement it, the damage and problems faced by families in those

areas will continue to increase. We have to overcome this challenge anyhow," he said. The Teesta dispute has remained a major point of contention in India-Bangladesh water cooperation for decades. The river originates in the Himalayas, flows through Sikkim and West Bengal, and enters Bangladesh before joining the Jamuna, the Bangladeshi name for the Brahmaputra. The river is crucial to agriculture and livelihoods in northern Bangladesh, while its waters are important for irrigation and power generation in West Bengal, where several districts depend on the Teesta. India and Bangladesh have discussed sharing the river's waters since the 1980s. An interim arrangement reached in 1983 allocated 39 per cent of the water to India and 36 per cent to Bangladesh, leaving the remaining 25 per cent unallocated.

A draft interim agreement was finalised in 2011, proposing a dry-season sharing formula. However, it could not be signed after the West Bengal government opposed the arrangement over concerns about water availability in the state.