

Those opposing reservation should face sedition charges: Ramdas Athawale

New Delhi. (Agency)

Union minister Ramdas Athawale has demanded that sedition charges be invoked against those opposing or seeking the abolition of reservation, asserting that it is a constitutional right.

In a statement issued on Sunday, Athawale said protests against reservation, including those at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, had brought the issue into focus. He also alleged that campaigns calling for the removal or alteration of the quota system were being run on social media.

"Opposition to reservation is opposition to the Constitution. Those taking an anti-reservation stand are anti-constitutional and stringent action of sedition should be taken against them," the Republican Party of India (Athawale) chief said.

Athawale said some people were demanding the abolition of reservation, but maintained that the quota system could not be scrapped as it is a constitutional right. The Delhi Police on Sunday said no permission had been granted to any individual or organisation to hold a protest or gathering at Jantar Mantar.

BJP leaders detained during march to Karnataka assembly seeking Minister Nagendra's removal

New Delhi. (Agency)

BJP leaders B Y Vijayendra, R Ashoka and several others were taken into preventive custody on Monday as they marched towards Vidhana Soudha to demand the removal of Minister B Nagendra from the Karnataka Cabinet over his alleged involvement in the Valmiki Corporation scam.

The BJP and its ally JD(S) mobilised a large number of workers for the protest, with party workers arriving from various parts of Bengaluru and other areas.

Police barricaded Vidhana Soudha and deployed personnel at its gates to prevent protesters from entering the premises. Protesters led by BJP leaders, including MLC N Ravikumar and C T Ravi, attempted to move towards the Vidhana Soudha through the Vikas Soudha gate, resulting in pushing and jostling with police. Several protesters were detained, while a BMTC bus was kept ready to transport those taken into custody.

The BJP also held a parallel protest at Freedom Park under the leadership of Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy. Party leaders and workers raised slogans against the Congress government and demanded Nagendra's resignation.

The BJP has maintained that Nagendra, who resigned as minister in 2024 following alleged irregularities in the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Corporation Ltd, should not have been re-inducted into the Cabinet. The alleged scam came to light after funds belonging to the Corporation were allegedly transferred to various bank accounts. The matter gained wider attention following the suicide.

"Standard Practice": Sources On India's Request At PM-Trump Press Meet

New Delhi (Agency)

"Discussions regarding arrangements for public appearances of leaders are normal practice ahead of any VVIP visit," sources said

It's a standard practice to discuss matters linked to visits of VVIPs and convey them to the other side to ensure clarity of the schedules and proceedings, people with direct knowledge of the matter told, following comments by US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor who said the Indian side communicated to them that it would prefer not to hold an interaction with the press before Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump met in June on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in France.

Delegations while meeting the US president are often wary of his "unpredictable behaviour", as may be seen from his interactions with the presidents of South Africa, Ukraine, etc which was why India took a cautious approach, sources said.

Gor made the remarks at a media event. He said he had explained to Trump the request by India ahead of the meeting with PM Modi, but Trump eventually ended up asking the



reporters who had gathered there: "Any questions?"

"We were behind the scenes, behind the stage, and at one point it was just the president and I, and he asked me what the Indians are going to raise. We went over some topics. And he said, 'do they have any questions?' The MEA had

one. I told the president the Indians prefer no questions. He said, 'sure, no problem'," Gor said. Nevertheless, Trump ended up saying "any questions" to the reporters who had gathered there, opening the room to a full press conference.

Discussions regarding arrangements for public appearances of leaders are normal practice ahead of any VVIP visit. In this regard, the Indian side communicated its standard practice for such visits, "people familiar with the matter told."

The two leaders met just days after Indian sailors were killed in a US military strike during its war with Iran. The prime minister had pointed at the human cost of disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz and called for protection of maritime trade routes. Though PM Modi did not directly mention that particular incident, his comments underlined India's concerns about the safety of civilian crews operating in conflict zones and the economic consequences of disruptions to maritime commerce.

Why destroy India's heritage?: Yogi Adityanath attacks Rahul Gandhi over Manusmriti

Yogi Adityanath accused Rahul Gandhi of insulting India's traditions over his Manusmriti remarks. He framed the row as a test of Gandhi's responsibility as Leader of the Opposition.

Raebareli. (Agency)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday attacked Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi over his remarks on Manusmriti, accusing him of insulting India's traditions and heritage and failing in his responsibility to democracy. He also questioned why Gandhi wanted to ruin the future of the country's present generation through what he called "urban Naxals". Speaking at a programme to mark the 222nd birth anniversary of 1857 revolt leader Rana Beni Madhav Baksh Singh, Adityanath said the country had no expectations from Gandhi as an individual, but as Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, he was answerable to democracy. "Rahul ji the country does not have



any expectations from you as an individual. But as the Leader of Opposition in India's Parliament, the country's highest panchayat, you are accountable to the country's democracy," he said. Adityanath said Gandhi had taken an oath on the Constitution but still chose to attack the

country's traditions. "You have taken an oath on the Constitution and, after taking that oath, you consider it your birthright to denounce India's traditions and heritage. When you go outside Uttar Pradesh, you defame and insult Uttar Pradesh, and when you go outside India, you insult India," he said. Raebareli, where he was speaking, is Gandhi's Lok Sabha constituency. Stepping up his attack, the chief minister said, "Whenever the Indian Army fights enemies on the borders, you demand proof from the soldiers. In the country's fight against terrorism, you directly or indirectly encourage anti-national elements. In Ayodhya, your party raises questions over the existence of Lord Ram. And what is your commitment to democracy? The country saw that during the Emergency in 1975".

TMC MP Mahua Moitra moves SC over alleged eviction from Nadia circuit house

Moitra had alleged that on the night of August 14, a large crowd gathered outside the circuit house and raised 'Jai Shri Ram' slogans after she refused to vacate the premises.

New Delhi. (Agency)

TMC MP Mahua Moitra on Monday approached the Supreme Court alleging that she was evicted from a state-owned circuit house in West Bengal's Nadia district despite having been allotted a room. The apex court, however, declined to grant an urgent listing of her plea. Moitra's counsel told a bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant and comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana that the alleged incident took place late at night in her constituency, Krishnanagar. "The matter requires an independent investigation. This has happened despite the



high court already having passed a protective order. I am only praying for listing on an early date because this involves an important constitutional issue," her lawyer said. Moitra had alleged that on the night of August 14, a

large crowd gathered outside the circuit house and raised "Jai Shri Ram" slogans after she refused to vacate the premises.

In a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, the Krishnanagar MP sought his intervention, alleging that Nadia district administration officials pressured her to leave the circuit house after she had been allotted a room.

Moitra said she had checked into the circuit house for an overnight stay after returning from a Parliament session and claimed that, as an MP, she was entitled to accommodation there. She alleged that no one informed her about any booking restrictions either when she made the reservation.

Adani's 'courtesy call' to CM DK Shivakumar sparks Congress unease

BENGALURU . (Agency)

Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani met Chief Minister DK Shivakumar for about 30 minutes at the latter's residence on Sunday morning, a meeting that both sides described as a routine courtesy call but which unsettled sections of Congress.

Some senior Congress leaders, speaking to TNIE on condition of anonymity, said, "It was avoidable optics for DKS." Other leaders from the party, when contacted, preferred not to comment on the issue.

Shivakumar told reporters that Adani had sought the appointment and that "nothing was discussed" beyond formalities. "It was just a courtesy call," he said, adding that Adani Group already has several projects under way in the state.

But it did little to quiet surprise within Congress. Many workers and leaders were reportedly taken aback by the industrialist's visit to the CM's residence. Sources, however, said this is not the first meeting between the two, and they had met earlier too.

The timing is notable. Adani Group has emerged as the lowest bidder for the ambitious 16.75-km twin-tunnel project linking Hebbal in north Bengaluru to Silk Board Junction in the south.

The infrastructure corridor, to be built at a cost of Rs 22,267 crore, is expected to ease the city's notorious traffic congestion. While the bidding process remains competitive, the meeting coming close to developments in the project has raised questions.

Before meeting Shivakumar, Adani visited the Art of Living ashram, where he met Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and touched the latter's feet.

Ashoka questions Congress over Adani

BJP leader R Ashoka questioned the Congress over its stand on Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani. He said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has often accused Adani of being close to the BJP, while the Karnataka government has "rolled out the red carpet" for him.

Amit Shah to attend national security meeting, 850 officials to discuss issues

New Delhi. (Agency)

The 9th National Security Strategy (NSS) Conference, a two-day meeting focusing on contemporary national security challenges, will begin on Monday in a hybrid format, with both physical and virtual participation. Union Home Minister Amit Shah is scheduled to attend the conference and inaugurate it in the presence of senior top-ranked police officers from various wings of police.

According to official sources, more than 850 officers from police and security forces across the country will participate in deliberations on a range of issues concerning national security. The conference is expected to provide a platform for senior officers to exchange views on emerging threats, assess existing security challenges and discuss strategies to strengthen the country's security architecture.

A senior official said wider discussions on security-related matters would take place during the two-day conference, with officers from various states and UTs expected to join both in person and virtually.

The previous, or 8th, National Security Strategy Conference was held in Delhi in 2025. It was inaugurated by Home Minister Amit Shah and organised by the Intelligence Bureau. The conference had featured extensive discussions on different aspects of national security, including threats posed by external forces considered inimical to the country's interests and their linkages within India. Sources said the 9th edition is expected to focus on the growing threat posed by drugs and narcotics.



Saudi-returned Keralam Muslims more conservative, finds study; Tharoor seeks introspection

A World Bank study found that Keralam men returning from Saudi Arabia were more conservative about gender norms. The paper was published in 2022 and had gone unreported till now. After it was widely shared, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor called for introspection within the Muslim community.

New Delhi. (Agency)

For decades, Keralam's relationship with the Gulf has been measured in remittances. The stories of Malayalis working abroad were about the money sent home, the houses built with remittances and the families whose lives have been transformed by Gulf earnings. But a World Bank study has put a "disturbing" dimension of that migration in the spotlight. It is about the social and gender attitudes, and normalisation of domestic violence that migrants return with from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries.

Saudi returnees tended to exhibit extreme attitudes relating to physical violence against women, says the World Bank paper, which was published in March 2022 but went largely unnoticed and unreported till

now. After it was highlighted by several prominent personalities, Congress MP from Thiruvananthapuram, Shashi Tharoor,



expressed concerns about the findings of the study and called for dialogue within the Muslim community.

The research paper found that Keralam migrants returning from Saudi Arabia were significantly more conservative than non-

migrants on several measures of gender attitudes, including attitudes towards gender-based violence, household decision-making and extreme gender norms.

On Sunday (August 23), Tharoor called the findings "disturbing reports" and warned about the import of "conservative and even reactionary attitudes and customs from abroad".

The World Bank's paper examined the transfer of gender norms and whether exposure to more conservative societies might influence attitudes among migrants after they return to Keralam. Keralam's society has long been known for its tradition of religious syncretism. In 2020, a mosque in Alappuzha hosted a Hindu wedding conducted with traditional rituals, including yagna fire and ceremonies led by a priest, to help an economically disadvantaged family.

Customer finds live worm in food at high-end Gurgaon restaurant

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A live worm was allegedly found in food served at a high-end restaurant in Gurgaon, raising concerns over hygiene standards after a video of the incident went viral on social media. The incident occurred at Paul restaurant in One Horizon Centre on Golf Course Road when customer Sulabh Mathur visited the outlet with friends for breakfast around 11 am on Sunday, according to news agency. According to Mathur, he had consumed nearly half of his sandwich when he noticed a live white worm crawling inside the meat. Mathur recorded a video of the food and shared it on Instagram. In the video's caption, he wrote, "A truly shocking incident took place today at Paul restaurant



in Gurgaon's Horizon Centre!"

The video quickly gained traction online and had garnered over 1.3 million views at the time of writing. Several social media users criticised the restaurant management over the incident and questioned hygiene standards at the upscale establishment. The restaurant management later apologised to Mathur. He also shared a screenshot of the apology on social media.

Repeated attempts to contact the restaurant management for a response remained unsuccessful.

A senior official from the food and supplies department said no formal complaint had been received so far. However, the department was examining the matter on its own.

Class 11 student found dead days after he went missing in Faridabad

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 16-year-old boy was found dead at his home in Faridabad on Saturday. The family found the Class 11 student's body in a room behind the house, police said. Alfaz, a resident of Khorī Jamālpur village, had been missing for two days. His family said he left home for school around 8am on Aug 20 but did not return. They contacted the school and his friends and learnt that he had not attended classes that day. The family circulated information about his disappearance on social media.

According to the family, around 9am on Aug 22, a family member found the room behind the house locked from inside. After repeated calls went unanswered, they broke open the door and found Alfaz dead. His family said Alfaz had been struggling after opting for the science stream in Class 11. His parents wanted him to choose arts or commerce, but he wanted to pursue medicine and was admitted to the science stream. Alfaz's father, farmer Hidayat Khan, said he later found the subjects difficult, spoke several times about quitting his studies and frequently skipped school. The family had advised him to complete Class 11 and consider changing subjects in Class 12.

Alfaz is survived by his father, mother and elder brother Rahul (25), who works for a private firm in Faridabad.

Businessman stopped on DME, held hostage in car & robbed of Rs 25 lakh

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

A businessman carrying Rs 25 lakh in a bag was stopped right in the middle of Delhi-Meerut Expressway by armed men who blocked his Thar with two cars, held a pistol to his head and fled with the cash. The robbery took place around 7pm on Friday, when traffic continued to pass around the vehicle, oblivious to the crime the gang carried out inside the Thar.

Gillaman, a Meerut businessman who owns a factory recycling waste material, was driving to Jafrabad in Delhi with his cousin Samad and relative Saleem to pay for supplies. He left Meerut around 5pm and reached Dasna in a couple of hours, when he was stopped on the expressway. "A Scorpio overtook us a few times. Then suddenly, the driver signalled us to stop. I applied the brakes and pulled over by the expressway," Gillaman told. According to police, five men emerged from the Scorpio and began searching the Thar frantically, as if to look for something. Another car stopped behind them. The men claimed their sister had been kidnapped for marriage and that they were looking for her. When Gillaman told them to leave because they had stopped the wrong car, the situation turned violent.

"They whipped out a pistol and pointed it to my head. I was shocked. When my cousin tried to intervene, they attacked him with the butt of a revolver," he said. The men found the bag containing the cash and left the Thar. The entire assault spanned around 10 minutes. "All this while, two persons pointed a pistol at my head. They then got out one by one and escaped in their vehicles," Gillaman said. ACP (Wave City) Priyashri Pal said an FIR was registered against unknown persons under Section 309(4) of the BNS for robbery. "Five teams are working on the case. CCTV footage showed the accused had followed the victim from Meerut in two cars — a Swift and a Scorpio. We have detained three suspects and seized both cars. Questioning is underway to find out more about the others in the gang," she added.

7 homes face demolition for building rule violations in DLF 3

Gurgaon.(Agency)

District town planner (enforcement) on Saturday carried out a major demolition and encroachment-removal drive in DLF Phase 3, razing unauthorised structures at seven houses in V-33, V-34 and V-35 blocks and clearing encroachments along nearly 1.3km of road right of way. The enforcement team targeted illegal rooms, toilets and kitchens built in stilt parking areas and rear setbacks, besides removing encroachments on public road land. At V-33/6, four rooms and two toilets constructed in the stilt parking of an S+4 house, along with coverage in the rear setback, were demolished. Similar action was taken at V-33/7, where four rooms and two toilets had been built in the stilt parking area besides unauthorised coverage in the rear setback. In V-34, the team demolished a bedroom, toilet and kitchen constructed in the stilt parking at V-34/16, and removed a similar unauthorised



bedroom-toilet-kitchen construction at V-34/10A. The drive continued in V-35, where four rooms and toilets built in the stilt parking were demolished at V-35/13, while two drawing rooms, a domestic help room and toilets built in the stilt area were removed at V-35/11. The team also acted against encroachment on public land at V-35/21,

where around 15 feet of road land had allegedly been covered by the property owner and incorporated into the front lawn. The structure and encroachment were demolished and the road land restored. Officials said the team separately cleared the road right of way along a stretch of around 1.3km in front of nearly 45-50 houses, where various

encroachments had reduced usable road space. The clearance is expected to improve movement and restore the designated road width. Following the drive, DLF management was directed to remove construction and demolition (C&D) waste generated during the action, and to clear accumulated debris from V Block and W Block through the prescribed process so that public roads and common areas are not obstructed.

The enforcement department said action against unauthorised construction, misuse of stilt parking, setback coverage and encroachment on road land would continue in DLF Phase 3, warning that further action would be taken wherever violations are found.

"Stilt parking is meant for vehicles. Construction of rooms reduces parking space and forces vehicles onto roads, affecting traffic. PGs and guesthouses operating without permission also inconvenience residents," DTP (enforcement) Amit Madholia had earlier said.

Built just 18 months ago, internal roads riddled with craters in Gurgaon Sector 45

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Internal roads in Sector 45 have developed deep potholes, craters and uneven patches barely 18 months after construction, prompting residents to question the quality of the work and seek repairs. The affected stretches include the road from Kisan Mandi towards DPS, the stretch from the community centre towards St Angel Junior School and the stretch from St Angel Junior School towards Ardee City. Residents said the 18-metre-wide roads serve as key internal links, but several stretches are now in a poor condition.

"In some places, the potholes are nearly two feet deep. Residents have been forced to put construction debris into them to make the stretches motorable," said Puneet Pahwa, general secretary of the Sector 45 RWA.



The residents said the condition of the roads has deteriorated further after recent rain, with water and traffic damaging the uneven stretches. They said debris used to fill potholes provided only temporary relief, with the craters reappearing within days. "We are not asking for cosmetic work. The road should be made properly and with good quality. Older roads in the sector have survived for years. If a road

constructed only one-and-a-half years ago is already full of craters, its quality and supervision need to be examined. We have spent money from our pockets to fill potholes as the commute became difficult," said OP Yadav, RWA president.

The residents said they had raised the issue with civic authorities, but no solution had been implemented. They also said the problem extended to recently constructed 10-metre and 12-metre roads. Meanwhile, an MCG official said a fresh estimate is being prepared for the construction of the 18-metre roads. "The roads are no longer under defect liability period. A fresh estimate is being prepared and will be placed before the competent authority for approval," he said. Regarding the 10-metre and 12-metre roads, the official said work was still in progress and defects caused by rain would be rectified.

Who failed to check Hindon pollution? NGT seeks names

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

The National Green Tribunal has directed Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board to disclose the names and full particulars of officers against whom complaints have been filed over violations linked to Hindon pollution. The direction came after UPPCB filed an affidavit on Aug 14 before the tribunal stating that complaints had been lodged against erring officers before the special judicial magistrate (first class) under sections 41, 43 and 44 of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. The principal bench, comprising NGT chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava and expert member Afroz Ahmad, found the affidavit inadequate. "This affidavit does not disclose the name of the officers

against whom such complaints have been filed. Hence, UPPCB is directed to file a fresh affidavit disclosing the names and full particulars of the officers against whom those complaints have been filed and the status of those complaints," the bench said on Aug 17. The directions were issued while hearing a petition filed by environmentalist Abhisht Kusum Gupta. The UPPCB affidavit was filed after the UP chief secretary informed the tribunal there was a gap between sewage generation and treatment. In Ghaziabad, the affidavit said about 258 unauthorised colonies, home to an estimated 2.6 lakh people, generate nearly 31.5 million litres of sewage a day. Much of it enters Hindon through untapped drains, it said. Beyond Ghaziabad, the affidavit said Saharanpur has six unauthorised colonies with an estimated population of

2,000 generating 0.22 million litres of sewage daily. Baghat has 180 unplanned colonies generating four to five million litres. Muzaffarnagar has 31 unauthorised colonies with an estimated population of 14,694 generating 1.76 million litres daily. In each case, the absence of sewer connections meant wastewater flowed untreated into Hindon. Gupta, who first filed the petition in 2022 over untreated effluent discharge into the river, said the chief secretary's admission of a treatment gap was significant but insufficient. "There has to be a timeline to bridge the gap. Furthermore, the officials against whom UPPCB has lodged complaints should be taken to task," he said. A GMC official told TOI the city had a sewage network of 2,488 km, with around 3.5 lakh residents connected.

Nigerian arrested with MDMA outside nightclub

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A Nigerian man was arrested with nearly 14 grams of a substance believed to be MDMA near a club in Silokhra village on Saturday night, police said. The accused, Okake Friday alias Richard, was apprehended by a team of Haryana State Narcotics Control Bureau (HSNCB) near the parking area of Ebowla Club Byob after an informer told police Friday had been involved in the illegal sale of the drug for some time and he would come to the club on Saturday. "The informer also provided information about the motorcycle allegedly being used by him and said he would arrive near the club carrying the drug in a backpack," the FIR filed at the Sector 40 police station read.

The police team reached the parking area and started surveillance. A local man, Sunil, was also included in the raiding team as a witness. "Around 9.25pm, a man arrived on a black Splendor motorcycle. The informer identified him as Friday," a police officer said. The team searched the man and his backpack. A plastic pouch containing a substance suspected to be MDMA was found inside. The substance weighed 13.72 grams along with the pouch, according to the seizure proceedings. Police said the accused could not produce an identity card or any licence or permit for possessing the substance. "The suspected MDMA was sealed in a parcel and taken into possession along with the backpack and motorcycle," the officer added.

He has been charged with Sections 22© (contravention with commercial quantity) and 61 (confiscation of any goods used to conceal illegal drugs, psychotropic substances, or controlled substances) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act.

RWA escalate protest over delayed maintenance handover at BPTP Park Serene, to withhold payments

GURGAON.(Agency)

Months after the builder raised upkeep fees, residents of BPTP Park Serene in Sector 37D have decided to withhold future common area maintenance (CAM) payments and stepped up their demand for the formal handover of maintenance services to the residents' welfare association (RWA). In a resolution and consent letter, the RWA said the maintenance of the society was still being managed by the builder, BPTP/BPMS. Despite repeated demands, the builder had not completed the legal handover of maintenance responsibilities to the elected governing body, it alleged. According to residents, the builder has allegedly been delaying the handover process by repeatedly modifying drafts of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) and introducing "conflicting clauses". The association claimed that the delay had allowed the continuation of certain maintenance-related charges that they consider unjustified. The RWA said these include management fees and what it terms "exorbitant" dewatering charges. It estimated that the cumulative financial



impact on the society's residents was around Rs 2 crore annually.

In April, BPTP Serene, along with Park Generations and Spacio, held another demonstration claiming the builder had failed to provide financial records, including income statements, bank transactions and vendor payment proofs. As part of its resolution, the RWA has called for an immediate halt to payments towards CAM, club charges, water charges and other allied

maintenance invoices. The payment stoppage, it said, would continue until two key demands are addressed — commencement of the formal handover process and withdrawal or recalculation of charges that residents dispute.

The association has demanded that the builder sign the agreed-upon MoU without adding what it described as fresh or arbitrary clauses, followed by the physical and financial transfer of the maintenance infrastructure. It has also

sought withdrawal of alleged management fees and dewatering charges and recalculation of what it considers genuine CAM dues. The resolution includes a resident consent declaration supporting the decision to withhold maintenance-related payments until the handover process begins and disputed charges are rolled back. Signature and consent sheets attached to the document contain endorsements from residents across several towers, including B, C, D, E, F, H and J.

The RWA has appealed to residents to remain united, arguing that collective action on payments is its strongest leverage to secure what it describes as residents' rights. In its response, BPMS said the RWA's claims were "entirely false and without basis". "We have already shared supporting documentation and details of the actual expenses incurred and remain fully committed to completing the handover. We have been actively engaged with the RWA on the handover for over four years; however, the requirements have repeatedly changed, preventing closure," said Shyam Sunder, the managing director of BPMS.

He waited a year to welcome Ganpati. Now his 2-year-old son asks: 'Where is he?'

Mumbai. (Agency)

For 33-year-old Brijesh Joshi, Saturday night was supposed to be a special evening as preparations for the upcoming Ganeshotsav festival got underway. Instead, he was trapped under the rubble of a 22-foot Ganpati idol that collapsed onto a crowd at Jay Ambe Chowk in Bhuleshwar, leaving behind a two-year-old son. The other victim, 30-year-old Sanket Nevshe, a businessman and Shiv Sena subdivision head in Colaba, was closely involved in organising the local Ganpati celebrations. He was also the head of Bhuleshwar Cha Raja Ganpati Mandal and, according to residents, was at the forefront of preparations for this year's festival. The two were killed after the Plaster of Paris (PoP) idol collapsed around 9.51 pm on Saturday. Five others, including two children, sustained minor injuries. For Joshi's family, the loss has been particularly devastating. His brother Jay Joshi said Brijesh was the family's sole source of income. "We are deeply disturbed by the incident. My brother worked in a private firm and was the sole breadwinner. His two-year-old son is asking where he is, and we are unable to answer this question. We demand compensation as his son needs to have a better future," he said.

3 newborns killed in fire at Maharashtra government hospital

Mumbai. (Agency)

Three premature newborns died after fire broke out in one room of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of the government-run Amravati District Women's Hospital around 3.30 am on Monday. According to preliminary information, the fire was caused by a technical fault in a thermal unit in the NICU. Nine infants were present in the affected room at the time. Hospital staff and attendants managed to evacuate all nine babies, of whom three died. The infants were premature and were undergoing treatment, including for jaundice, officials said. Amravati Deputy Commissioner of Police Shyam Ghuge said the fire was confined to one room of the NICU and was extinguished within around 30 minutes. "There was a technical fault in the thermal unit, following which the fire broke out. The attendants immediately took out the nine babies from the room, of whom three died," he said. "We will conduct a further investigation to ascertain why the fire broke out and whether all the required fire-safety norms were being followed at the government hospital. The technical equipment involved in the incident, as well as the fire-safety arrangements at the hospital, are likely to be examined as part of the probe."

Mumbai knows where landslide risks are. It still can't move the people

Mumbai. (Agency)

Eight people, including two toddlers, were killed when a portion of Kurla's Hill Number 3 came crashing down on four shanties on August 12. A month earlier, six people, including five minors, were killed when a four-storey structure in Mankhurd collapsed onto adjoining shanties.

In both cases, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said it had warned residents to vacate on safety grounds. Yet the people remained. And after the deaths, the BMC and the Mumbai Collector's office again pointed to each other over who was responsible for removing them. This has become a recurring pattern in Mumbai. Identify settlements at risk, issue notices, leave people in place, and after a disaster, debate which agency had the authority to act. It is not new. In July 2021, 29 people were killed in two separate landslides in Vikhroli and Chembur when portions of hill slopes collapsed onto adjoining shanties. The problem is not that the city does not know where the risks are. In 2018, the Geological Survey of India (GSI) submitted a 435-page risk assessment report to the BMC identifying 45 highly vulnerable, inhabited landslide-prone locations across Mumbai. The report noted that the city had recorded six major landslides between 2000 and 2016, which claimed 119 lives. Eight years later, the disasters continue. The BMC's Mumbai Climate Action Plan identifies 287 landslide-prone locations, of which 209 are within informal settlements. More than 340 people have been killed in landslide incidents reported in these areas between 1992 and 2026, according to BMC data.

Man found dead, intestines in envelope, wife accused: A brutal Haryana murder

Police said the couple, who were from Uttar Pradesh's Sitapur district, had been living in Kurukshetra for about a year.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

The body of a 40-year-old man in a pool of blood, a 35-centimetre cut in his abdomen and his wife's jump from the roof – a residential neighbourhood in Haryana's Kurukshetra has been shaken by a grisly murder that has spawned many questions. The main accused in Rajesh's murder is his wife, Vimla Devi, but police are yet to confirm the motive. Vimla, who has suffered injuries after she jumped off the roof of the building where the couple stayed on rent, has been arrested. Police said the couple, who were from Uttar Pradesh's Sitapur district,

had been living in Kurukshetra for about a year. Rajesh worked as a water supplier for a water trading company on Kurukshetra's Pehowa Road. Surrender Singh, Station House Officer (SHO) of Kurukshetra University police station, said police received information about a quarrel between the couple on Saturday evening and reached the spot soon after. "When the police reached there, Rajesh was found in a pool of blood. He was dead," he said. According to the police, Vimla allegedly attacked Rajesh before jumping from the roof. She is now in hospital. Police said she would be questioned after her condition improves. Intestines found in envelope: Police

Sources said the postmortem examination found that Rajesh's abdomen had been cut

open by approximately 35 centimetres. The injuries were so deep that his intestines had come out. Sources also claimed that parts of his liver and his right kidney were found



missing. "She had taken out his intestines and put them in an envelope, and it is possible that she wanted to make them

disappear," said the SHO. The landlord, Rinku, told the local media that he rented out a room to the couple nearly a year ago. He said he heard Rajesh and Vimla shouting around 5 pm on Saturday and went to the roof after hearing the commotion. There, he found Rajesh in a pool of blood with severe injuries on his abdomen. Police have recovered three knives of different sizes from the spot. Rinku also told local media that the couple frequently quarrelled. Police are yet to establish any other reason that led to the murder. "The reasons would become clear after her interrogation. If required, police will seek her remand from the court," the SHO said. The couple had no children and had been married for years, police have found. They are now investigating what could have led to the murder, which stands out for the brutality.

Yusuf Pathan to ISKCON: The many characters in Vadodara auction debate

A plot of land occupied by cricketer-turned-politician Yusuf Pathan in Vadodara brings six other plots back to the drawing board at the Vadodara Municipal Corporation after questions were raised on the fairness of the process. ADITI RAJA digs deeper.

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

On August 10, when the Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC) general board, the final decision-making body, met to decide about seven plots to be valued after the Gujarat High Court raised questions on how the plot adjoining former India cricketer and Trinamool Congress MP Yusuf Pathan's residence was allotted without following due process, elected members asked how they could be auctioned — the next step after valuations — before removing encroachments.

Municipal Commissioner Arun Mahesh Babu promptly withdrew the resolution for valuation, cleared earlier by the Standing Committee and awaiting approval of the

General Board. Civic bodies frequently auction land parcels to raise money, and



these plots were part of the process. The market rates of these plots range from Rs 1.2 lakh to Rs 2.35 lakh per square metre. But now the process has run into a fundamental

question: what exactly is the civic body proposing to sell — land that is vacant and accessible, or land that is already under somebody else's physical control and under litigation? Apart from Pathan's case, the ISKCON temple has been alleged of encroaching a nine-metre public road in the Gotri area of the city. Members of the Board asked the administration to first examine how the auction will be carried out if the valuations are approved without removing encroachments from the land.

Varsha Vyas, Chairperson of the VMC's Standing Committee told The Indian Express that the Committee had cleared the proposal for determining the land valuations in July as part of the plans to dispose of the plots through a public auction after fixing their market value.

'What about common citizen?' Ex-ambassador on citizenship list 'trouble'

Amritsar. (Agency)

Former diplomat Navdeep Suri on Sunday raised concerns over the process of establishing citizenship during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Punjab.

Taking to X, Suri detailed his experience navigating the SIR process and questioned what it meant for ordinary citizens if a former ambassador found the process difficult. He wrote that he was issued a notice by the election commission and asked to produce documents after discrepancies were flagged in his details from the 2003 electoral roll.

"I happen to have documents other than voter ID and Aadhaar card. But can't help asking: If I have trouble establishing my citizenship after representing India in three countries, what's the fate of the common citizen? Ease of Living, I presume!" Suri

wrote. He went on to describe the specifics of his interaction with local election officials. "Spoke with BLO, was told that I should come and collect the notice. And then come again with unspecified documents that show



I am an Indian citizen. I replied that I was not in India in 2003, so they have asked for passport as proof. Documents uploaded in 2026 don't match my details from 2003. Weird because I was at the Indian High Commission in London in 2003 and didn't

participate in the SIR," he Suri.

Suri served in India's diplomatic missions in Cairo, Damascus, Washington, Dar es Salaam and London, and was India's Consul General in Johannesburg. He was also India's High Commissioner to Australia and Ambassador to Egypt and the UAE. In recognition of his service, the president of the UAE conferred on him the Order of Zayed II, the country's second-highest civilian award. Meanwhile, when contacted, Punjab Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Anindita Mitra said Suri's name was never removed. "The name of former diplomat Navdeep Suri is part of the draft electoral roll published on August 13. It was never removed. His vote was registered in Amritsar and continues to be registered there. He received a notice and was asked to submit documents as he was not mapped in the 2003 SIR. After getting the documents, his name was published as part of electoral roll," Mitra said.

Gas leak at Nagpur water plant exposes 40 to chlorine, area cordoned off

The Nagpur police, fire brigade teams, and NDRF launched rescue and neutralisation operations after the leak at the Godhani Nagar Panchayat's water treatment plant.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

As many as 40 people were hospitalised after a chlorine gas leak at a water purification plant in Nagpur district early Monday, with plant workers and nearby residents reporting breathing difficulties.

Officials said the leak began around 1 am from a 900-kg chlorine gas cylinder at the Godhani Nagar Panchayat's water treatment



plant near Fago Patil Layout and Nag Mandir Tekdi. As the gas spread to nearby residential areas, several people reported coughing and breathing difficulties. Around 8-10 plant employees and 20-25 residents were affected after the leak. The police said 40 people are being treated at Sparsh Hospital and Mayo Hospital. The police, fire brigade, and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams reached the spot and began rescue and neutralisation operations. NDRF personnel entered the facility wearing protective suits to neutralise the leaked gas. At around 5.30 am, after the leak subsided, the chlorine cylinder was placed in a tank containing water mixed with caustic soda, with the assistance of NDRF, the fire brigade, and Orange City Waterworks personnel. As a precaution, the police have advised residents to stay at least 200 metres away from the plant until 11 am. Authorities said the situation is currently under control.

Gujarat doctors race against metabolism to save those who drank toxic liquor

In the Bhavnagar tragedy, many patients started going to hospitals only after it was reported in the news, and many of them were taken to hospitals by the police.

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

On August 18, Upendrasinh Chandrasinh Gohil, 25, became the first casualty of the latest liquor tragedy in the 'dry state' of

Gujarat, where a prohibition policy has been in force since the 1960s. Within six days, the death count of the Bhavnagar liquor tragedy has reached 13. A total of 60 people have been affected after consumption of the

methanol-laced drink. The Bhavnagar tragedy comes four years after 42 people died across three districts of Gujarat in a "lattha kaand" — a Gujarati expression used to refer to poisoning due to contaminated liquor. Before 2022, hooch tragedies in Gujarat claimed 148 lives in Ahmedabad in 2009, 132 in Vadodara in 1989, and 101 in Ahmedabad in 1977.

What is a 'lattha kaand'?

In Gujarat, a 'lattha kaand' refers to loss of lives or hospitalisations due to consumption of illegally manufactured liquor. While licensed liquor manufacturers use ethyl alcohol, hooch makers replace it with cheap ingredients such as industrial-

grade Methanol, highly toxic to the human body.

In most cases, this drink is illegally marketed and sold as country liquor or moonshine. But in the Bhavnagar incident, this Methanol-



laced liquor was filled into bottles of a popular brand of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) using forged stickers and caps and sold to unwitting victims. Police believe that 25 cartons comprising a total of

300 bottles of this toxic concoction were sold to retail bootleggers. This means that at 750 ml per bottle, 225 litres of this poisonous drink were in circulation. Forensic reports have found that this liquor contained 38.59 per cent Methanol. In comparison, the toxic drink that led to the 2022 tragedy was 98 per cent Methanol.

What are the symptoms?

The Indian Express spoke to Dr Sunil Panjwani, Head of the Department of General Medicine, at Sir Takhtasinhji General Hospital in Bhavnagar, whose team has treated patients after this tragedy, and the one in 2022. "The symptoms start with nausea, vomiting, blurring of vision, and breathlessness. There are also neurological symptoms such as clumsiness. Generally, symptoms start after 2-4 hours. But if a large amount of the tainted liquor was consumed, they could begin immediately... Breathlessness and kidney (acidosis) symptoms begin after 10-12 hours."

Sparked with insult, poked with innuendo, replied with mockery

Giving and taking offence is a large part of Indian public life, and it has a legal history. The Indian Penal Code's Section 295A, which criminalises acts intended to outrage religious feelings, was drafted in 1927 after a quarrel over a scurrilous pamphlet. Rather than containing communal conflict, it supplied the vocabulary for conducting it: complainants learned to say their feelings had been wounded, and in saying so produced the feeling. The law educated its subjects in outrage, and that education has mostly served reactionary ends. Today, it corresponds to Section 299 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Which makes the seven-week sit-in at Jantar Mantar worth examining, because the insult in question found no such channel. On May 15, hearing a contempt petition, the Chief Justice of India likened unemployed young people to cockroaches and parasites attacking institutions through social media activism and litigation. He reframed it later, but he had disclosed what everyone recognised perhaps as the oldest law of society: that the strong may scorn the weak. Within a day, a post on X asked what would happen if all the cockroaches came together. By nightfall, there was a website and a set of handles. Ten weeks later, the Union education minister had resigned—an act without precedent in this government's 12 years. Those mobilised were the educated unemployed, who had no identity to defend or temple to protect. Politics ordinarily begins with a demand, when people discover that their claims converge on the same authority. This protest was sparked by an insult, which is a different thing—and the difference is where the interest lies. The insult disclosed a structure of feeling one might call anti-social, since it ridiculed young people for doing no more than trying to make their way by the means available to them. Once, the majority were denied education by the rules of caste. Today, they are educated and unemployed, and mocked from the Bench for it, as though society bore no responsibility for them. Such a negative form of sociality is what caste has always practised. Hierarchy of this kind works by shaming, without ever stating itself. A young man told to wait outside, served tea in a separate glass, asked his surname before his marks are handed over: none of it can be lodged anywhere. Its efficiency lies in becoming a property of the sufferer: a sense of one's own place, carried about and even defended. This is the psychic life of power. In Judith Butler's phrase: subordination does not merely constrain a person, it forms one. It is through such unrecorded daily traffic that caste is maintained. Ambedkar put it at its sharpest in Annihilation of Caste: the missionary religions had been cruel, forcing their truths on the unwilling; the Hindu had been mean, keeping others in darkness rather than share an inheritance, and meanness is worse than cruelty. It is meanness one hears in the name "cockroach": not the wish to destroy, but the refusal to admit. The law defines the act of discrimination but not the attitude, and attitudes shift only when what may be said in public shifts. Which is what a remark from the Bench does and a remark in a corridor cannot: it is dated, attributable, replayable and can therefore be answered. The old order has not given way; it has relocated. Within months of the 2012 Supreme Court judgement upholding the Right to Education Act, a Dalit organisation in Bengaluru alleged that quota children at a city school had had tufts of hair cut off so that they could be told apart at a glance, and were seated at the back with their lunch baskets kept separate. The mark of distinction, once carried in a name or a street, had been reissued as a haircut. Exclusion migrates from the prohibition to the procedure. The gate is open and the threshold is technical: the entrance test, the admissions portal, the merit scale. Nobody now says that you may not enter. It is said that you did not qualify. Meanness has acquired a technique, and the technique claims neutrality.

Delhi can't afford to lose Dhaka connect

The Great Game: PM Modi has done well by absorbing Tarique Rahman's Sheikh Hasina tantrum

BANGLADESH's new President, the once Left-leaning Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, was all of 23 years old back in March 1971, at home in Thakurgaon in northern East Pakistan, when he heard that Pakistani military officers had unleashed Operation Searchlight all over the country and were massacring unarmed Bangladeshi nationalists, intellectuals and politicians. Two days later, on March 27, Alamgir and friends heard Major Ziaur Rahman, a serving Major in the Pakistan Army, give the rousing call for an independent Bangladesh over radio, on behalf of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, from his hideout in Chattogram (then Chittagong) — a message that was picked up by BBC and Radio Australia and relayed across the world. Joy Bangla! said Major Zia as he ended his speech, unleashing for the first time a cry that would transform into a freedom chant in the coming weeks and months — admired by celebrities as diverse as Indira Gandhi and George Harrison, and equally disliked by Yahya Khan and Henry Kissinger — rallying the entire nation to join hands with India and forge the Mukti Bahini, which would lead by the end of the year to the India-Pakistan war and the liberation of Bangladesh. As the situation deteriorated in April 1971 in Thakurgaon — named for a Chakraborty family with large lands, with a twin town called Thakurganj only 55 km away, across the border in Kishanganj district of Bihar — Alamgir and his family crossed the Nagar river into India's West Dinajpur district, part of a swelling flood of refugees. There, in Islampur, a cycle repair shop man called Dilip allowed the family of seven to sleep in a room behind an almshouse. Jyoti Basu's West Bengal and Karpooi Thakur's Bihar offered clothes to the refugees and "training" to able-bodied men in youth camps. Weeks later, Indira Gandhi's government got properly involved and Alamgir, amongst others, received "training" in earnest in Dehradun. More than 55 years later, if the Dhaka elite is to be believed, senior Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader and now President Alamgir has advised Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, son of the selfsame Major Zia whose cry of "Joy Bangla" electrified the world — and gave its name to many things, including the contagious fevers then sweeping India as a result of the hundreds of refugee camps set up across the Bengal-Bihar-Tripura-Assam borderlands — that he should travel to Delhi to meet Prime Minister Modi, notwithstanding the Sheikh Hasina brouhaha. Alamgir is believed to have pointed out that one woman, Sheikh Hasina, even if she was



wake of Bangladesh hardening its stance last week and making Tarique's visit to India conditional on the extradition of Hasina, has not been lost on Dhaka.

It needed the PM to make that overture — come, we will give you an "honourable reception", he said in a message to Tarique, keenly aware that Sheikh Hasina's August 5 press conference had seriously upset him. Modi understood quickly that only he could save the situation. That Bangabandhu's daughter, a VVIP who could do no wrong because her father had helped India break up Pakistan, could not be allowed to hijack the relationship. That the world had changed. That Bangladesh was again swimming in a dangerous sea, surrounded by sharks with names like China and Pakistan. That Tarique's first visit as PM had been to Beijing and Kuala Lumpur, not Delhi. That the Bangladeshis, after all these decades, were being wooed

by the military establishment in Rawalpindi — that Dhaka was crawling, once again, with ISI spies.

Certainly, the PM knows that India's eastern flank needs protecting — that it remains not just the gateway to South-East Asia, but is key to security in India's eight North-East states; Bangladesh shares common borders with five Indian states; last time there was a BNP government in power, 2001-2006, when Tarique's mother Khaleda Zia was PM, a huge arms haul in Chittagong was seized just in time. There's also the realisation that India's neighbourhood is in a bit of a churn. Pakistan remains in deep freeze, despite pleas by senior RSS leaders like Mohan Bhagwat and Dattatreya Hosabale to repair ties. Nepal's PM has finally met the Indian ambassador, but continues to mutter threateningly about China. Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives are quiet, but China's shadow looms large. Certainly, India cannot afford to lose Bangladesh. It must find ways to revamp the old connect. The one big difference between 1971 and 2026, of course, is that India's hugely improved tie with the US has meant that India works much more closely today with the Americans in all parts of its neighbourhood, not just in Bangladesh — back in 1971, the US and Pakistan were a cinch. The rest of the story doesn't need retelling. Perhaps, PM Modi should take a leaf out of how big powers like the US and China play the game, both hedging and reaching out to smaller powers at the same time. India's unique civilisational strength, meanwhile, demands that it punch much above its economic weight, especially in its neighbourhood, where ties are weighted down by language, religion, culture and ethnicity, imparting a continuum to the ends of

India.

That's why PM Modi has done well by absorbing Tarique Rahman's Sheikh Hasina tantrum, and for the time being, putting it on the backburner — where it will be definitely resolved soon, a probable quid pro quo being that when she returns home to Bangladesh in December, which she has publicly promised to do, no harm will be allowed to come to her person and that of her family — and foregrounding the all-important tie between Delhi and Dhaka. That's why the sky must be the limit between India and all her neighbours, from the Karakoram to Cox's Bazar — India First, yes, on the part of the neighbours, but also Neighbourhood First, on the part of India, signifying both an open wallet and an open heart. Certainly, a neighbourhood as diverse as this one is no child's play. Restoring trust will take time. With the 'Arthashastra' by his side, the PM has taken the first move with Bangladesh.

Jury out on prospect on all three economic engines firing in 2026-27

Economic momentum is likely to be affected by food and fuel inflation, the potential impact of El Niño on agricultural output and softening private consumption

India's real GDP growth for the first quarter of the current fiscal year is projected to exceed consensus estimates. While the RBI estimates Q1 growth at 7 percent, private forecasters peg it higher at 7-8 percent. This optimism is driven by near-term trackers showing resilient private consumption, healthy exports, robust tax collections and strong output in both manufacturing and services. Full-year fiscal growth could approach 7 percent, exceeding the central bank's 6.7 percent estimate despite the triple shock of soaring oil prices, shifting US tariffs and heightened geopolitical uncertainties. Despite these headwinds and the possibility of erratic rainfall, the broader economy should remain resilient. Nevertheless, a few analysts expect 2026-27 growth to moderate towards 6 percent, with a sharp slowdown in the second half. Economic momentum is likely to be affected by food and fuel inflation, the potential impact of El Niño on agricultural output and softening private consumption. As it is, rating agency ICRA pointed to signs that services



sector growth slackened in Q1 alongside industry. It further noted that the business sentiment of services companies weakened in the quarter, with optimism dipping to the lowest in five years amid headwinds blowing in from the West Asia crisis and persistent wage cost pressures. In contrast, SBI Research was upbeat about

domestic consumption, government capital expenditure and, importantly, industrial and services activity flashing green. Official data slated to be released on August 31 will confirm how the two key engines of the economy fared during the quarter. Much also depends on how global oil prices behave. Currently, most of the inflation and growth estimates are based on the assumption that India's crude oil import basket will likely average \$80-90 a barrel in 2026-27. But if the precarious situation around the Persian Gulf goes out of hand and oil prices firm up beyond \$90, it can potentially revise the growth forecasts downwards and inflation estimates upwards. Likewise, trade war uncertainties continue to dampen sentiment. While merchandise exports are holding up well, thanks to bilateral trade pacts with Asian and Western economies, US tariff shocks — like the recent 100-200 percent levies on Indian pharmaceutical exports — could drag growth potential overnight. Lastly, while headline economic activity may appear robust.

The future belongs to Fifth Estate

While the four traditional Estates of society hem and haw, the Fifth Estate—which includes honest administrators, farmers' unions, advocacy collectives and digital activists—is buzzing. It's a long line that can be traced back to Sunderlal Bahuguna and Chandi Prasad Bhatt's Chipko movement

We Indians take a salacious interest in non-standard behaviour because in our regimented, hierarchical society, difference looks like wilful deviance. So, from the moment when it became clear that the students' agitation had tapped an unstoppable force and the ruling party was no longer an immovable object, pompous questions arose. Why aren't the cockroaches forming an actual political party? Why do they want to remain a pressure group? Aren't their intentions honourable? Received wisdom holds that legitimacy in representational democracy flows solely from electoral victory. Political actors outside of the electoral system are deemed to be useless, and up to no good — Naxals and cockroaches messing up a beautiful democracy.

This democracy is portrayed as a neat system of checks and balances created by counterpoising its three main Estates—the Executive and the Legislature, which are descended from the royalty and nobility of pre-modern times, and the Judiciary, which has taken on one of the roles of the clergy. But the checks and balances have crumbled like termite-infested timber and part of the Fourth Estate, the press, has also fallen in a heap.

The future belongs to the Fifth Estate, which consists of restless resistance groups in Brownian motion, drawn together by gravity—trade unions, farmers' unions, advocacy collectives, lone warrior academics and creative artists, nonprofits, fact-checkers, peacemongers, whistleblowers and much-transferred honest



administrators, social media publics, independent journalists and analysts who challenge State narratives with facts. Individually, each component looks like a minority. Together, they form a cohort. Fittingly, the word originally described a military unit.

India's Fifth Estate is buzzing. Seventeen years after it was enacted, the Right to Education Act could finally mean something for schoolchildren. Mafias which have toiled since the 1970s to reduce higher education to paid-for certification are threatened. To widen the scope of the question, was the grand edifice of Indian democracy ever

for real? And does legitimacy flow only from multiparty politics? × The Fifth Estate is always pooh-poohed as undignified and ineffectual, even an impediment. But it is to institutional politics what street theatre is to playing Shakespeare. It bypasses formalities and is more alive. It turned Jantar Mantar into a village square for public discussion—an echo of republicanism in ancient India, in the time of the Buddha. Its cascading effects are now influencing all of Indian politics. Looking back, so many of India's great transformations—and transformative legislations—owe to cockroaches past. Environmental movements have changed how we think of the commons, and given it a central place in policymaking. Sunderlal Bahuguna and Chandi Prasad Bhatt's Chipko movement led to a 15-year ban on felling trees in the Himalayas. Medha Patkar, Baba Amte and others who opposed big dams highlighted the crisis of mass displacement. The Supreme Court advocate M C Mehta sued the government repeatedly to contain industrial pollution. Anil Agarwal and Sunita Narain launched dedicated media for the environment. Together, such people have done more for public health—the eventual goal of environmental action—than the 20 environment ministers so far. Stories about tree-felling make banner headlines today because of their work. In 2005, a cluster of movements led to the Right to Information Act and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The Right to

displacement. The Supreme Court advocate M C Mehta sued the government repeatedly to contain industrial pollution. Anil Agarwal and Sunita Narain launched dedicated media for the environment. Together, such people have done more for public health—the eventual goal of environmental action—than the 20 environment ministers so far. Stories about tree-felling make banner headlines today because of their work. In 2005, a cluster of movements led to the Right to Information Act and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The Right to

Food campaign secured the National Food Security Act in 2013. These movements featured stellar talent: Aruna Roy, Nikhil Dey, H D Shourie, Jean Drèze, Jayati Ghosh, Prabhat Patnaik, Reetika Khera, Harsh Mander, Colin Gonsalves and many more. Also in 2005, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act flowed from the groundwork done since 1981 by the Lawyers Collective. Launched at a time when sexual violence was heavily underreported, pioneers Indira Jaising and Anand Grover fostered an enabling legal environment to support women at home and in the workplace. After decades of combat in court, homosexuality was decriminalised by the initiative of individuals like Navtej Singh Johar and NGOs like Naz Foundation. In 1993, manual scavenging became illegal largely due to the tireless efforts of one man: Bezwada Wilson. In 2006, following decades of campaigning by Adivasis and allied groups, the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers Act recognised traditional community claims to forest resources. Six decades after independence, the colonial view of seeing forests as ownerless wildernesses fit for extractive commerce was challenged. Also in 2006, former Director General of the Border Security Force Prakash Singh, who had sued the Union of India in the Supreme Court, won a writ of mandamus outlining steps to professionalise the police and free it of political control. Had they been taken in the last two decades, the government would not have been able to unleash maximum violence on students in Jantar Mantar. The Supreme Court has now formed a committee to probe the excesses. If meaningful change results, it will again be thanks to the Fifth Estate—in this case, the disciplined students who took a savage beating without striking back.

Standing

desks may help
reduce weight in kids



Struggling to shed those extra kilos in your kids? Standing desks in schools may prove beneficial as they cut down on sedentary time in classrooms as well as help reduce body mass index (BMI) -- a key indicator of obesity -- by an average of 5.24 percentile points, new research has found. The findings showed that the students who had the stand-biased desks for two years averaged a three per cent drop in BMI, while those in traditional desks showed the two per cent increase typically associated with getting older. However, even those students who spent just one year in classrooms with stand-biased desks had lower mean BMIs than those who had traditional seated classrooms in their third and fourth grade years.



Mark Benden, Associate Professor at the Texas A&M School of Public Health, US.

Moreover, these standing desks might also help students who aren't overweight maintain their BMI, while at the same time help those who are overweight or obese get to a healthier weight, said the paper published in the American Journal of Public Health.

"Research has shown that standing desks are positive for the teachers in terms of classroom management and student engagement, as well as positive for the children for their health, cognitive functioning and academic achievement," Benden added.

Previous studies have also shown that children who stand burn 15 per cent more calories, on average, than those who sit in class.

For the study, the team followed 193 students from three elementary schools in US, from their third grade to the end of fourth grade.

At each school, four classrooms were outfitted with stand-biased desks (which allow students to sit on a stool or stand at will), and four classrooms in each school acted as a control and utilised standard classroom desks.

In addition, there weren't major differences between boys and girls, or between students of different races, suggesting that this intervention works across demographic groups. "These types of standing desks encourage the students to move instead of being forced to sit in poorly fitting, hard plastic chairs for six or seven hours of their day," said

Are you fit to work?

According to psychologist Daniel Goleman, "Emotional intelligence matters twice as much as technical and analytical skill combined for star performance... And the higher people move up in the company, the more crucial emotional intelligence becomes." Going back in time, there were jobs for everyone. However, since then the rules have changed drastically, giving no choice to employees to choose their own faith. Moreover, they have accustomed to shorter deadlines, long working hours with no promises of job security.

Recent rise in deadly health threats are mostly linked to hectic work schedule. Several organisations in India are taking steps towards better health for their employees, some have allied with wellness companies to monitor employees' health.

According to Ravi Krishnan, CEO & Co-founder, Stepathlon, "One of the biggest challenges we face is changing the mindset about fitness and embedding the gravity of the ill-effects of a sedentary lifestyle. Historically, in India, companies and employees have focused on illness, not on wellness. The rest of the developed world realised, more than two decades ago, that preventative programs benefit both individual and company from both a health and productivity perspective."

The companies should also take special interest in their employees and gain their trust by offering them options to work from home or reduce their hours of work. Recently, Cognizant Technology Solutions has asked its employees in India to work from home. Too add on "Developed countries realize this and lay a lot of emphasis on productivity and efficiency. Countries like Sweden have introduced 5-6 hour work days keeping in mind that employees are most productive in that time frame. Indian organizations must initiate employee wellness programs that enable them to live better personal and professional lives", remarks Ravi Krishnan.

However, some employees need to cut down on certain bad habits that can alter their life. For instance, cigarette breaks at work or going for drinks post work. These habits will only pile up more health issues while one is burdened with work. Time that's gone will never come back.

There are several ways to pursue healthy lifestyle. Nonetheless, it's crucial to segregate these issues into mental and physical categories. Usually, health deteriorates when one stops listening to body needs. It could be a simple thing like drinking water at regular intervals or stretching at your desk while working on computer. However, one of the most common health issues at work is stress. Stress alone can magnify issues that would lead to bigger risks. It is difficult to diagnose problems at the beginning, but it's not impossible—few good habits can do the trick!

How does one inculcate good habits? It's simple, one has to understand the knowledge, skill and desire to create a habit. For instance, an obese who wants to lose weight because it is affecting his health—is the

Fit for Work launches



knowledge. To understand what skills are required to lose weight, he

has to find out different ways that will help him achieve the goal. At last, he requires motivation to persevere with his plan to lose weight. Nonetheless, according to psychotherapist Alfred Adler, "The hardest thing for human beings to do is to know themselves and to change themselves."

In some countries, like India, employees are usually over loaded with work without sufficient breaks, which can lead to stress. And stress increases the level of hormones—the rest is history when it comes to making bad choices at work in regards to health. However, it takes two hands to clap, which means organisations should help employees to work in a stress free environment. Companies can offer recreational activities to their employees—it could be a simplest thing like a small library or provide healthy food in the canteen.

"The World Economic Forum listed health as one of the top 10 global concerns last year. India's diabetes rate has gone up by 123% in the last 25 years. We are sitting on a ticking time bomb, with an alarming 70% of our urban population in the obese or overweight bracket. An ASSOCHAM survey shows that nearly 42.5% employees in the private sector suffer from general anxiety disorders. This highlights a burning need to address employee health and wellbeing across all companies and industries", adds Ravi Krishnan.

As an employee, it's important for him to be self-aware of his surroundings to choose what suits him in long run, rather than become part of a never-ending rat race. As rightly put by psychotherapist Alfred Adler, "The power-hungry individual follows a path to his own destruction." Nonetheless, all one has to do is break the bad habits, and follow a better lifestyle that will lead to his well being.

Wearable activity trackers may not boost

Weight loss



and physiology are not fully understood. "Our programme of research is dedicated to addressing these gaps in the literature," first author Christine Tara Peterson said.

"Panchakarma refers to a detoxification and rejuvenation protocol involving massage, herbal therapy and other procedures to help strengthen and rejuvenate the body," Peterson pointed out. The study involved 119 healthy male and female participants between 30 and 80 years of age who stayed at the Chopra Center for Wellbeing in Carlsbad, California.

Slightly more than half were assigned to the Panchakarma intervention and the remainder to a control group.

Blood plasma analyses, using liquid chromatography and mass spectrometry, were taken before and after the six-day testing period. The researchers found that in the Panchakarma group there was a measurable decrease in 12 specific cell-membrane chemicals (phosphatidylcholines) correlating with serum cholesterol and inversely related to Type-2 diabetes risk.

"These phospholipids exert broad effects on pathways related to inflammation and cholesterol metabolism," Peterson explained.

"Plasma and serum levels of the metabolites of phosphatidylcholine are highly predictive of cardiovascular disease risk," Peterson noted.



One week of Panchakarma programme -- an Ayurvedic-based well being programme that features a vegetarian diet, meditation, yoga and massages -- can lead to measurable decreases in a set of blood-based metabolites associated with inflammation, cholesterol regulation and cardiovascular disease risk, the results of a clinical trial have shown.

"It appears that a one-week Panchakarma programme can significantly alter the metabolic profile of the person undergoing it," said senior author Deepak Chopra, Professor at the University of California San Diego School of Medicine and a noted

proponent of integrative medicine.

The findings, published in the journal Scientific Reports, represent an attempt to use metabolic biomarkers to assess the reported health benefits of integrative medicine and holistic practices.

"As part of our strategy to create a framework for whole systems biology research, our next step will be to correlate these changes with both gene expression and psychological health," Chopra said.

The research team from the University of California San Diego School of Medicine noted that alternative and integrative medicine practices, such as meditation and Ayurveda, are extremely popular, but their effects on the human microbiome, genome

4 stretches you must do every morning

Now finally, you have a legit reason to stay in bed a tad bit longer. And no, you won't be branded lazy for it! Experts say that stretching your body gently post waking up, helps deal with the sluggish early-morning feeling, and also give relief to your aching and tight muscles. Do the following stretching exercises, before you kick-start your day.

Sit in Padmasan or with your legs crossed in the lotus position. As you stretch out your hands in front of you, slowly link and interlace fingers. Your palm should be facing outwards. Stretch your arms out as far and then slowly extend your arms up above your head. Keep your fingers interlaced all the time as you stretch. Then, slowly (from your waist) bend towards your right as far as you can, come back straight up and then bend towards your left.

Lie down on your back. Now, raise your leg and bring one knee towards your stomach and hold it with your opposite hand. Next, gently twist your spine as you pull your knee towards the floor across your body. You don't need to touch the floor with your knee. The key is to keep both your shoulders on the floor as you stretch and twist your spine. Once back to the starting position, you can do the opposite side.

Sit with your legs crossed and place both hands behind you with palms flat on the floor and fingers pointing outwards. Shift your weight to your hands as you slowly let your head fall back. Apply pressure on your palms as you lift off your body and butt off the floor, and you slowly bring

your chest and hips towards the ceiling. Pause for a few seconds, go back to the starting position and repeat.

Stand straight and inhale as you reach your arms high up over your head. Stretch your arms up as you gradually stand on your toes. Feel your entire body stretching. Exhale and return to the standing position. Now slowly bend forward and touch your toes. Feel every bone in your spine bend one after the other slowly. Avoid bending your knees. You can feel your entire torso stretch, beginning from your neck, to upper back, middle back, lower back, hamstrings, feet, shoulders and hands.



Tech & Career

Putting the fun into Work

Getting back to work after a long vacation or after that relaxing weekend can be quite a task. Mondays are daunting, while mid-week blues are enough to make you want to crawl under the covers and not go to work. But what happens when going to work becomes something to look forward to? Of late, many employers are getting quirkier and more innovative with their team bonding activities, engaging their employees in a fun and interactive atmosphere and making offices an actual fun place to work. From themed potlucks and TGIFs to traditional games, it looks like corporate offices today are breaking out of the strictly professional tag, and are focusing more on the person who matters the most—the employee.

Shrinika Thanikachalam, who works in a media agency in the city, says that their agency had recently organised a corporate pot luck contest among the employees. "It was a really huge deal. We were asked to draw lots and we were split into three teams. Each team had to come up with a team name, a logo and a menu in a stipulated period of time. It was fun because everyone, men included, had to cook. We even formed a WhatsApp group to plan the entire thing."

The actual potluck happened over a three-day period, and our team, Bite and Chew, dialled things up with a live barbecue and mocktail counter in office. We had someone from another agency be the judge and we were asked to plan things out carefully, ensuring that food did not go to waste. While our team did not follow a particular theme, one of the other teams chose Kerala cuisine as their theme, and served dishes pertaining to that cuisine alone. We plan to make this a regular activity going forward." Tarun Mishra, who works with an IT firm in the city adds, "Potlucks are the easiest way to bond, as food is the binding factor among most people.

They also add a personal touch as people

bring home-cooked meals. It involves a bit of self-pride, too, when people like your dishes. At our firm, we have potlucks on a regular basis, where people bring different kinds of dishes - it is like India on a platter. I remember once a girl had brought beetroot halwa and the dish was so tasty, it became a conversation starter for us. I had never spoken to this girl before. It does a lot in bringing out the best in people." There are other corporates which indulge in team bonding activities, which include team outings. Nomitha Nandakumar, who works at an MNC says, "We have regular team outings, not just within departments, but interdepartmental ones as well. These outings are usually fun, and packed with activities which include games you can play in groups such as treasure hunt and charades. At office, we have this break group and interchange policy, where employees are encouraged to come out of the comfort zone of their group and interact with new members of the team and work together. This ensures that there is no groupism of any sort. Then of course, there are the usual sports teams that each department has, and inter-department sports tournaments, too." Festivals are also a time when team bonding activities are at their peak. What is fascinating to note is that this is also the time when employees themselves take the initiative to do something out-of-the-box and quirky, keeping up with the general good spirit and cheer of the season. From Secret Santas and Best Christmas Tree contests during Christmas, to dressing up in ethnic wear for Pongal, there are many activities that take place. Poormima Ranjit, who works with a multiplex chain in the city says, "We are over 200 employees, and during festival times, we have activities where

we have almost everyone participating in various games that are organised, depending on what festival it is. For instance, for Pongal, we had traditional games like lemon and spoon race. Apart from that, we also have activities in smaller groups like there was this game where we merged photos of two people in office and we had to identify who those people were. There was another game where we played only a video without the voice of a popular punch dialogue in a movie and the teams will have to enact and repeat the dialogue. Games like this is a great way to get to know people from other teams as well as take a break from the usual pressure you deal with at work." At Deepa and Arvind Athreya's event management company, there is no concept of employees—they are all family. "We have a number of activities in

place which take place on a regular basis—including TGIF, where we have book reading sessions and beer party on Fridays, flexi timings for ladies, movie nights once a month, fitness challenges for everyone (where we encourage people to walk 2 lakh steps every day).

We also babysit the children of our women employees from time to time, so they don't have to worry if they aren't able to find someone to look after their kids at any time," says Deepa, adding, "The concept is simple really. There is an environment of ownership and freedom here. We have witnessed people in our team walking that extra mile when in need. We build teams we love." Going that

extra mile to make employees, in fact, can indeed have tangible results. At Shrinika's firm, the employees got together to make an actual difference in their workspace. "We wanted to make the office a little more environment-friendly, so the employees got together and drafted a plan to convert our office balcony into a little green space. Once we got the approvals, we went all out and made a beautiful garden in the balcony, which we continue to nurture. We also converted our pantry into a sports-themed cafe. We painted the entire thing ourselves, and hung up posters of sportspersons...we went all out," shares Shrinika.

When your ex becomes your co-worker

Office breakups are the toughest, especially because you have to see you're ex every day at work and if that is not enough you've to work with them as well. An office breakup can affect you in several ways and can be very demotivating. We give you a few tips on how to deal with your ex when he/she is a co-worker...

- Be professional. Don't bring your personal problems to work. As difficult as

ex to your other co-workers, as they are going to find out sooner or later. Let the breakup stay between the two of you.

- Your ex is going to move on. If you see him/her get close to someone else at work, just ignore. It is hard to watch the person you loved, flirt with someone else, but acceptance is the best way to go about it. Do not react.

- If he/she is ignoring you at work and behaves as though nothing has happened, follow suit. You don't have to go out of the way to find out what the issue is. Now that you have broken up, it is better to mind your own business.

- Don't let the breakup demotivate you at work. Set higher goals and work towards them. Distraction will help.

- Increase your non-work social life. It is better to hang out with friends who are not your colleagues. Avoid talking about the breakup, and distract yourself completely.

- If you ex is doing everything to sabotage you at work, take time and clear out the differences. If that doesn't work, take the issue to a higher official and discuss the matter.

- Let time heal you. It might take a while, but time certainly will help!



it may seem, treat your ex as just another employee at work.

- What is the status of the relationship now? Is he/she your friend now or just a colleague or will you consider dating them again? If you have made up your mind about moving on in life, it is better to cut them out.

- If you haven't gotten over the breakup as yet, don't talk about the relationship with your ex at work. It will only disturb the both of you!

- Don't gossip. Don't backbite about your

Sharing personal information helps women get hired

A female applicant strongly raises her chances of getting hired if she gives out personal information, finds a new study, contradicting the conventional theory that if a woman wants equal footing professionally, she should not share any personal information.

The findings showed that female candidates who gave personal information clarifying her resume gaps raised their chance of being hired by 30 to 40 per cent, compared to a comparable female candidate who provided no personal information. "Our study provides the first-ever evidence that women who conceal personal information dramatically lower their hiring prospects," said Joni Hersch, a professor involved in the research.



Employers overwhelmingly preferred to hire female candidates who provided information to explain a resume gap, regardless of content.

"If we start to encourage honest conversations between employers and employees on an official level, it could lead to meaningful change in the quality of applicants, particularly in industries that have been so resistant to providing family-friendly work policies," added one of the researchers, Jennifer Bennett Shinnall.

For the study, the team included 3,022 people who acted as potential employers and had to choose between two job candidates, described as mostly similar except for their openness about a 10-year gap in their job histories. The gap was explained with information such as taking time off to raise children or a recent divorce as the reason for leaving and wanting to re-enter the workforce.

The link between grit and performance revealed



There are many paths to success, but the significance of grit in helping you reach that goal has been greatly overstated, according to a psychologist. Researcher Marcus Crede and his colleagues conducted a meta-analysis of all prior research on grit.

Their results found no evidence that grit is a good predictor of success. While some educators are working to enhance grit in students, Crede says there's no indication that it's possible to boost levels. And even if it was possible, it might not matter.

Grit is defined as perseverance and commitment to long-term goals. The research is relatively new compared to the decades of work on performance indicators such as conscientiousness and intelligence. "If you look at the questions on the grit measure, they're often almost identical to the questions that we ask when we measure conscientiousness. Many are almost word-for-word the same. It's really just a repackaging or relabeling of conscientiousness, which we've known about for over 50 years. It's perhaps a sexier title, but it's nothing new," Crede said.

BJP Smells Something Fishy In Opposition's Ayodhya Event, Congress Hits Back

Congress MP Pawan

Khera said Ajay Rai

is a vegetarian and

rejected the BJP's

charge as an

attempt to divert

attention of the

public from critical

issues like exam

paper leaks

Delhi. (Agency)

A feast organised by the Congress party to welcome its Uttar Pradesh chief Ajay Rai in the temple town of Ayodhya has ignited a bitter exchange with the ruling BJP over the dish that was served - fish curry. BJP leaders including UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath have questioned the Congress for serving fish in the "abode" of Lord Ram and home to the Ram temple. The ruling party leaders also reminded the Congress that the holy months of Sawan have not ended yet and eating fish during this time hurt sentiments.

Congress MP Pawan Khera said Ajay Rai is a vegetarian and rejected the BJP's charge as an attempt to divert attention of the public from critical issues like exam paper leaks and the Ram temple donations theft case. Rai told

reporters he would like to challenge BJP leaders to show a single photo of him eating fish and he would gladly resign. "If he does



not have the photo then he should resign from his post. He lies everyday, wearing saffron clothes," Rai said, alluding to UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who had slammed the state Congress chief over the matter. Visuals from the Congress's event venue

showed people washing and cutting fish and some chopping onions and other vegetables near a large tub laden with fried fish. A fabric wall divided the cooking area from the large tent where the Congress held its programme, keeping the outdoor kitchen out of view.

A few local residents protested when they came to know about the dish served at the event. Soon, BJP leaders joined in criticising the Congress leaders for disrespecting the temple town and hurting sentiments.

"You must have seen how Congress members show disrespect for our heritage. The Congress president visits Ayodhya to offer prayers at Hanuman Garhi temple and then proceeds to feast on fish. They chant 'Ram Ram', yet there is a limit to shamelessness," Yogi Adityanath said.

"Who asked them to visit Hanuman Garhi? If they wanted to eat fish, they could have simply gone outside Ayodhya," said, adding it

showed the "duplicitous nature of the Congress."

"Even a chameleon would likely feel embarrassed seeing them, wondering what kind of species has appeared in human form chanting 'Ram Ram'... only to step outside and feast on fish," the chief minister said.

Congress leader Ram Nihal Nishad had organised the feast to welcome the state's party chief and celebrate new members who recently joined his outfit.

He defended the decision to serve fish to guests and sought to know what violation and, in a swipe at the BJP, under what law would such an act be considered unlawful. "What's wrong with eating food? Why can't we eat fish? Since the Constitution came into effect on January 26, 1950, anyone can eat anything," Nishad said. He said that for the Nishad community, fishing and eating fish are part of tradition.

Delhi government to send gangsters to other states to stop prison facility abuse

Delhi. (Agency)

To curb organised crime in the national capital, the Delhi government plans to shift "hardened and notorious" prisoners to jails in other states. According to the Chief Minister Office (CMO), the government identified 188 members of 26 gangs in May 2026, arresting 107 of them.

Despite being jailed, these "hardened criminals" exploit prison welfare facilities and local networks to run extortion rings, orchestrate targeted killings, trigger gang wars and expand alliances. Moving them outside Delhi aims to isolate them, preventing them from influencing witnesses, disrupting trials or conspiring from behind bars.



A plan has been chalked out in this regard to transfer undertrial gangsters, organised criminals and other high-risk prisoners lodged in the capital's jails to prisons in other states, if required. For this, the government will implement the Transfer of Prisoners (Punjab Amendment) Act, 2025, in Delhi.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the move aims to enable the inter-state transfer of such prisoners in the interest of prison security, law and order and public interest, while strengthening cooperation among states in tackling organised crime. Under the proposal, undertrial gangsters, organised criminals and other high-risk prisoners can be transferred from one state to another with mutual consent.

Stop private schools from financially burdening parents: BJP spokesperson to Ashish Sood

Delhi. (Agency)

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor has urged the Delhi government to take steps to reduce the financial burden on parents caused by private schools, alleging that schools are forcing families to spend heavily on uniforms, shoes and other educational items. In a letter to Education Minister Ashish Sood, Kapoor said private schools were requiring students to buy separate summer, winter, sports and activity uniforms, along with three types of shoes. He alleged that these items were sold at high prices through school-



designated vendors. Kapoor said families with two or more children end up spending thousands of rupees every year, with growing children often requiring new uniforms twice a year. He made two requests to the government. From April 1, 2028, he sought a mandate for only one simple, single-colour uniform in all private schools, with uniforms and shoes made available freely in the market. He also sought a ban, from April 1, 2027, on schools selling books, stationery, bags and uniforms to new admissions. He expressed confidence that Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and Education Minister Ashish Sood would take a swift decision in the public interest.

Uniforms at high prices

Kapoor said families with two or more children end up spending thousands of rupees every year, with children often requiring new uniforms.

Delhi Police bust fake call centre offering airline jobs, arrest 3

Delhi Police say three people ran a fake call centre in Laxmi Nagar to offer bogus airline jobs for money. The case highlights how job seekers are being targeted through UPI-based recruitment frauds.

Delhi. (Agency)

Delhi Police have arrested three people, including two women, after busting an alleged fake call centre in east Delhi that promised airline jobs to job seekers in return for money. Police said the accused posed as HR representatives of an airline company and offered ground-duty jobs before asking victims to pay registration and other employment-related charges through UPI. The three arrested have been identified as Mohammad Zaid, 30, Sadaf, 24, and Tanisha, 21, all from Delhi. Police said

the case surfaced after a Chhattisgarh resident complained on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal that he had been offered a job for Rs 14,000 by a person posing as an HR representative. The complainant transferred Rs 14,500 through UPI but later realised he had been cheated. "During the inquiry, the



money trail was traced to a bank account from which the amount was withdrawn through an ATM in east Delhi. An FIR was subsequently

registered on August 20," Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Rajeev Kumar said.

During the investigation, police found that the bank account was in Zaid's name. His movements were tracked and he was arrested from Laxmi Nagar. His questioning then led police to Sadaf and Tanisha. Police said the trio was allegedly running a call centre from Laxmi Nagar to target job seekers.

"The accused used multiple mobile numbers to contact prospective victims, impersonated as HR personnel of the airlines company and offered them ground-duty positions," the officer said. Victims were asked to transfer money to different bank accounts through UPI, after which the cash was withdrawn from nearby ATMs and shared among the accused, he added.

15 Flights Diverted From Delhi Airport Amid Heavy Rain, Traffic Jam On Roads

Delhi. (Agency)

Heavy rainfall and thunderstorms in Delhi disrupted flight operations on Monday, affecting arrivals and departures at the city airport and triggering delays across connected routes. A total of 15 flights were diverted from Delhi airport due to adverse weather conditions, including three international flights. Of these, 12 were diverted to Jaipur, two to Chandigarh and one to Lucknow.

Notably, intense showers were reported from parts of South Delhi and nearby regions, while the weather office, India Meteorological Department (IMD), issued a red alert for heavy rain and a yellow alert for moderate rain across several districts, with thunderstorms, lightning and winds of 30-40 kmph also expected in

parts of the city. Airlines, including SpiceJet, issued advisories warning that consequential flights could also be impacted due to the adverse weather, and urged passengers to check their



flight status before leaving for the airport. Air India issued an advisory, saying, "Adverse weather conditions may impact flight operations to and from Delhi today."

IndiGo said, "Bad weather over Delhi has impacted flight schedules. We are

closely monitoring the weather and doing our best to get you where you need to be, safely and smoothly." SpiceJet said, "Due to bad weather in Delhi (DEL), all departures/arrivals and their consequential flights might be affected. Passengers are requested to check their flight status." Akasa Air said, "Due to severe weather conditions in Delhi certain flights across our network have been impacted. We realize that this may inconvenience your travel plans and seek your patience and understanding." The IMD, in its advisory, said that heavy rain accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning, and winds of 30-40 kmph is very likely at isolated places in parts of South East Delhi, East Delhi, Shahdara, Central Delhi, North East Delhi, South Delhi, New Delhi, South West.

Crime reaching capital's most vulnerable

Delhi. (Agency)

A few weeks ago, we had had written in these columns about the national capital's "fuming underbelly", an increasingly disturbing ecosystem of organised crime, narcotics, extortion, gang violence and contract killings that appears to be growing beneath the surface of the city's everyday life. The concern was not about one isolated incident, but about a pattern of the criminal networks are changing faster than the systems meant to contain them.

The murder of a sanitation worker in East Delhi has now provided another, particularly worrying, dimension to that argument. A young sanitation worker was stabbed to death in Kalyanpuri while on duty. Police suspect that the victim may even have been mistaken for another person because of a physical resemblance. The killing triggered protests among sanitation workers, who demanded immediate action and compensation for the victim's family.

At first sight, this may appear to be another murder in a city that unfortunately witnesses too many. But it is the circumstances surrounding the crime and its aftermath that should worry the administration.

The most disturbing element is that the alleged criminal ecosystem has apparently penetrated to such a low economic and social level that even a sanitation worker can become the target of what appears to be a targeted killing. Contract killings and gang violence are no longer necessarily confined to businessmen, property dealers, politicians or wealthy individuals caught in criminal rivalries. When violence reaches people at the very bottom of the economic ladder, it suggests that the criminal economy has acquired a much wider and deeper reach.

And that is where a crime begins to become a law-and-order challenge. The immediate aftermath of the killing demonstrated this vividly. Sanitation workers threatened collective action, raising the prospect of disruption to essential civic services across Delhi. A murder, therefore, had the potential to snowball into a citywide administrative crisis.

Supreme Court bans construction within 100m of Rajasthan's Jojari river

The Supreme Court has imposed interim no-build and anti-pollution restrictions along Rajasthan's Jojari river. The move seeks to protect the damaged riverine ecosystem until scientific buffer lines are finalised.

Delhi. (Agency)

The Supreme Court on Monday barred any construction or development activity within 100 metres from the edge of Rajasthan's Jojari river, saying interim protection was needed to safeguard the riverine ecosystem while a scientific exercise to determine the high flood line and ecological buffer zones is still pending.

The court also said no hazardous industry or activity with the potential to cause pollution, contamination or other damage to the riverine ecosystem will be allowed within 500 metres on either side of the existing flood line, wherever it has been identified, or the river's present flow path. The matter has been posted for hearing on September 22.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and ecological buffer zones." It added, guidelines."

Sandeep Mehta passed the order in a suo motu case concerning contamination in the Jojari river. The bench referred to the serious extent of ecological degradation and the widespread destruction of the riverine ecosystem. Earlier, the apex court had also flagged pollution in the Bandi and Luni rivers in the state.

In its order, the bench said, "... we are of the considered view that it is necessary to put in place an interim, definite and measurable area of protection so as to adequately safeguard the riverine ecosystem during the pendency of the scientific exercise for determination and demarcation of the high flood line and the requisite



construction or development activity of any nature whatsoever shall be permitted within a distance of 100 metres from the edge of the river in accordance with the aforesaid

Observing that the high flood line is yet to be scientifically determined and demarcated, the bench further said, "... we consider it necessary, as an additional interim safeguard, to direct that no hazardous industry or activity having the potential to cause pollution, contamination or other damage to the riverine ecosystem shall be permitted within a distance of 500 metres on either side of the existing flood line, wherever such flood line has been identified, or the present flow path of the river until completion of the scientific exercise for determination and demarcation of the high flood line and the requisite ecological buffer zones." The detailed order is awaited.

August 31 ITR deadline: 5 key forms for professionals and business taxpayers

New Delhi. (Agency)

If you earn money through a business or profession, filing your income tax return is not just about picking the right ITR form and hitting 'submit'. Before you file, it is important to check your income, TDS, tax payments and other financial details to avoid mistakes. With the August 31 deadline for non-audit taxpayers approaching, the Income Tax Department has reminded taxpayers with business or professional income to file their returns on time. The department posted on X: "Do you have business or professional income? If yes, and your return for AY 2026-27 falls under the non-audit category, remember to file your applicable ITR (ITR-3, ITR-4, ITR-5 or ITR-7) by 31st August 2026." FORM 26AS AND AIS: CHECK BEFORE YOU FILE

One of the easiest ways to avoid errors is to check your Form 26AS and Annual Information Statement (AIS) before filing the return. Form 26AS mainly provides details of TDS and tax collected at source (TCS). AIS gives a broader picture of the financial information reported to the tax department. It can include TDS and TCS details, Specified Financial Transaction (SFT) information, tax payments, refund and demand details as well as certain GST-related information and other information available with the department. Taxpayers should compare these details with their own records. If there is a mismatch, it is better to check and address it before submitting the ITR.

FORM 16A: DON'T FORGET TDS ON NON-SALARY INCOME

If you earn income other than salary and tax has been deducted from it, Form 16A is an important document. It is a quarterly TDS certificate issued by the person or entity deducting the tax. It helps taxpayers check the income or payment on which TDS was deducted, the amount of tax deducted, the nature of the payment and the tax deposited with the government.

Lalithaa Jewellery lists at 32% premium: Should you buy?

New Delhi. (Agency)

Lalithaa Jewellery Mart made a strong debut on the stock exchanges on August 24, with its shares listing at Rs 265, a 31.84% premium over its issue price of Rs 201. The strong listing came after the jewellery retailer's Rs 1,700 crore initial public offering (IPO) received a massive response from investors. The issue was subscribed 66.63 times during the three-day bidding period from August 17 to August 19.

LALITHAA JEWELLERY IPO DETAILS

The IPO was a combination of a fresh issue of 5.97 crore shares worth Rs 1,200 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of 2.49 crore shares worth Rs 500 crore. The company fixed the final issue price at Rs 201 per share. The lot size was 74 shares, which meant retail investors needed Rs 14,874 to apply for one lot. The IPO also had a reservation of up to 3,29,670 shares for employees. These shares were offered at a discount of Rs 19 to the issue price. The allotment was finalised on August 20, while the shares were listed on both the NSE and BSE on August 24.

STRONG FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Lalithaa Jewellery Mart, which was incorporated in November 1985, has a strong presence across South India. The company mainly caters to mass-market and value-conscious customers.

Sarvam has India's AI edge, but can it survive Big Tech's shadow?

New Delhi. (Agency)

India's AI market is already crowded with global players, but Sarvam AI is betting that it can carve out a space of its own by building models and infrastructure specifically for the country. The question is whether localisation can give Sarvam an edge over companies with far greater capital, computing power and distribution.

What Sarvam is building

Founded in 2023 by Vivek Raghavan and Pratyush Kumar, Sarvam describes itself as a full-stack sovereign AI platform, spanning large language models, speech recognition, translation, document processing, conversational agents and coding across 22 Indian languages. The company raised \$234 million in its first Series B close, led by HCLTech, followed by a \$75 million Nvidia extension, taking the round to about \$309 million and its valuation to \$1.51 billion. Total funding since 2023 is close to \$349 million. At its July developer conference, Epoch, Sarvam launched Sarvam Inference, hosted in India, and said it handles more than two million conversations and 10 million API calls a day. Its document systems have digitised more than 35 million pages, while its speech models transcribe over 500,000 hours of audio every month. Sarvam has access to about 2,000 Nvidia Blackwell chips and aims to scale this to 10,000, alongside a \$1.5 billion HCLTech data centre partnership in Odisha. It released Sarvam 30B and 105B under an open-source licence and is building a model with more than one trillion parameters. Its technology powers Aadhaar voice services in 10 languages.

India's affluent consumer class could quadruple by 2036, overtake China

Kolkata. (Agency)

A report projects India's affluent consumer base to rise to 10.8 crore by 2036, slightly ahead of China's 10.3 crore. The estimate points to a shift in spending power, though the category is based on daily expenditure and actual outcomes may differ.

India's affluent consumer base is projected to grow more than fourfold over the next decade, potentially overtaking China by 2036 as the country adds millions of consumers with higher spending power. According to the latest report by NielsenIQ (NIQ) and World Data Lab, India is estimated to have around 2.6 crore affluent consumers in 2026. That number is projected to rise to 10.8 crore by 2036, an addition of about 8.2 crore consumers over the decade. China, meanwhile, is projected to add around 6.2 crore affluent consumers, taking its affluent consumer population to 10.3 crore by 2036. This would put India marginally ahead of China in terms of the number of consumers falling into the report's affluent category.

WHAT DOES 'AFFLUENT

CONSUMER' MEAN?

The report's definition of an affluent consumer is important. It refers to people who spend more than \$90 a day. The



classification is therefore based on daily spending rather than income, wealth or net worth. This means the projection should not be interpreted as India having 10.8 crore "rich people" by 2036. It indicates that the number of people crossing the report's spending threshold could rise sharply.

India is also estimated to have 64.9 crore "core consumers" in 2026, defined as people spending between \$13 and \$90 a day. This is a separate category and is not included in the affluent-consumer count. Among the countries separately identified in the report, India is projected to record the largest increase in affluent consumers between 2026 and 2036.

The country is expected to add 8.2 crore affluent consumers during this period, compared with China's projected addition of 6.2 crore. The US is expected to continue having the world's largest affluent consumer population in 2036, with 23.1 crore people in the category.

The report's projections put Germany at 3.2 crore affluent consumers in 2036, Japan at 3 crore, the UK at 2.7 crore and Brazil at 2.3 crore. Globally, the affluent consumer population is projected to increase from 65.7 crore in 2026 to 102.5 crore in 2036.

Sensex, Nifty rise as IT stocks lead gains; crude prices cap upside

Mumbai. (Agency)

Benchmark indices opened higher on Monday, with IT stocks doing much of the heavy lifting, while elevated crude oil prices and geopolitical tensions kept gains in check. The BSE Sensex was up 206.06 points, or 0.27%, at 77,746.89 around 9:26 am. The index opened at 77,629.56 and touched an early high of 77,789.40. The Nifty 50 rose 43.40 points, or 0.18%, to 24,295.40 after opening at 24,285.05. IT stocks led the gains in the Sensex pack. Infosys was the top gainer, adding 1.85%, followed by HCL Technologies, which gained 1.14%. Tata Steel rose 1.12%, while HDFC Bank, Tech Mahindra and TCS added 0.68%, 0.63% and 0.61%, respectively. Indigo, Kotak Mahindra Bank, ICICI Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Ultratech

Cement and NTPC were also trading higher. On the other side, Asian Paints fell 0.42%, making it the biggest loser among Sensex stocks. Titan declined 0.36%, while BEL,



Adani Ports and Bharti Airtel fell 0.29%, 0.27% and 0.21%, respectively. Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, Sun Pharma, Eternal, Power Grid and M&M were also in the red.

BROADER MARKET OPENS HIGHER

The broader market was largely positive in early trade. Nifty 100 added 0.02%, Nifty 200 gained 0.03% and Nifty 500 rose 0.07%. Nifty Midcap 50 added 0.11%, while Nifty Midcap 100 gained 0.10%.

The Nifty Smallcap 100 was the strongest performer, rising 0.69%. India VIX, however, climbed 4.09%, indicating some increase in market volatility. Sectoral indices were mixed. Nifty Private Bank gained 0.51%, Nifty Realty added 0.40% and Nifty Financial Services 25/50 rose 0.23%. Nifty Midcap Financial Services gained 0.61%, while Nifty Consumer Durables added 0.19%. Nifty FMCG was among the biggest drags, falling 0.74%. Nifty Auto declined 0.60%, Nifty Media fell 0.54% and Nifty IT slipped 0.46%. Nifty Pharma and Nifty Healthcare also traded lower.

He left behind crores. She got Rs 1,000 a month: A money lesson for couples

New Delhi. (Agency)

Once, Anuradha's purse was always full. Today, at 66, she waits for her sons to give her Rs 1,000 a month to meet her everyday expenses. This is the real-life story of Anuradha (name changed), a widow from Jaipur, whose life went from abundance to financial dependence after her husband's sudden death. There was a time when money was never a concern in her household. Her husband was a crorepati businessman who owned several properties across the city, rented out shops and also lent money on interest. Anuradha lived like a queen. She was always decked out in gold jewellery, had maids to run the household and rarely had to think twice before spending. Her purse was usually full of cash. In fact, she was often the one giving money to others. Neighbours and relatives affectionately called her "Sethani".

Then, one day, her husband suffered a massive heart attack and died. With him went something Anuradha had never realised she needed, i.e., a clear understanding of the family's finances. She knew her husband had built considerable wealth. What she did not know was where that wealth was held, how it was invested or what



documents would be needed to access it. As long as he was around, that gap did not seem important. Today, the woman who once lived surrounded by wealth depends on her sons for Rs 1,000 a month. Anuradha's story is a stark reminder that financial security is not just about how much wealth a family has. It is also about whether both spouses know where that wealth is, how to access it and what happens to it when one of them is gone.

WHEN "MY HUSBAND HANDLES THE MONEY" SEEMS LIKE ENOUGH

For many couples, particularly from an older generation, finances followed a familiar division of responsibility.

Record sugarcane, soaring prices: Inside India's sugar supply squeeze

India is grappling with rising sugar prices despite record sugarcane production. Lower recovery, exports, ethanol diversion and delayed action tightened domestic supply.

New Delhi. (Agency)

India produced a record amount of sugarcane this season. Yet sugar is getting costlier. Retail prices that were around Rs 48 per kg have risen sharply, crossing Rs 65 in some markets and putting pressure on consumers ahead of the festive season. The contradiction goes to the heart of India's sugar squeeze: more sugarcane does not necessarily mean more sugar. As the crushing season progressed, the amount of sugar that

mills could extract from the crop fell short of expectations. Crop disease hurt sugar recovery, while early production estimates remained far more optimistic than the eventual output. Exports had already been permitted, the market began anticipating tighter supplies and the government was eventually forced to curb exports, crack down on stockholding and allow duty-free imports of raw sugar. The government's explanation has focused on a combination of lower-than-expected production, crop damage, rising festive demand, tightening global supplies and speculation and hoarding. It has rejected the argument that ethanol diversion was responsible for the latest price surge. But the events of the past several months point to a larger problem. India's sugar outlook changed as the season unfolded, and the numbers that initially suggested

comfortable supplies did not hold. **RECORD CANE, BUT LESS SUGAR**



The agriculture ministry's third advance estimate, released on May 27, projected sugarcane production at 5,000.63 lakh tonnes. But record sugarcane production does not necessarily mean a proportionate increase in sugar output. What matters is also the sugar recovery rate — the amount of sugar that can be extracted from a given quantity of cane. If the recovery rate is 10%, for

example, a mill would broadly obtain around 10 kg of sugar from 100 kg of sugarcane. This season, however, the national average recovery rate fell from around 9.70% to 8.91%. That seemingly small change matters enormously when applied to millions of tonnes of sugarcane. India had plenty of cane on paper, but the crop yielded less recoverable sugar than the headline production numbers suggested.

The government has attributed the production decline to Red Rot and Top Borer disease, along with waterlogging caused by excess rainfall. It may be noted that Red rot is a fungal disease that damages sugarcane from within, while top borer is an insect pest that attacks the plant's upper stem, with both reducing the cane's sugar content and yield. Sugar production for the 2025-26 season is now expected at around 306 lakh metric tonnes, down from an initial estimate of around 343

TIPRA Motha founder Pradyot Kishore apprehends defection in

Agartala.(Agency)

The ruling BJP's ally in the Tripura government, TIPRA Motha founder and royal scion Pradyot Kishore Debbarmam, indicated that a significant political decision may prompt defections from his party. Referring to the ongoing talks for a BJP-TIPRA Motha alliance in the upcoming Village Council elections in Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (ADC), he warned that some MLAs and MDCs could resign if his forthcoming decision is not embraced.

"There is a strong likelihood that my future decision will not be welcomed by everyone in my party. Some MLAs and MDCs may also choose to leave," Debbarmam stated during a livestream on social media.

He mentioned that the party might need to "part ways" if its demands for the Tiprasa community (tribal) are not fulfilled, emphasising that certain issues transcend politics and are crucial for the community's survival. Debbarmam called on the Prime Minister and the union Home Minister to acknowledge the demands of Motha, especially regarding the protection of land belonging to the Tiprasa community.

"We share a border with Bangladesh. The land of the Tiprasa community requires safeguarding," he remarked, expressing his belief that the government would ensure such protection, and highlighted the land rights held by other Sixth Schedule regions in the Northeast, asserting that Motha sought equal treatment.

Fresh violence in Manipur as two houses burnt; arms cache recovered

Imphal.(Agency)

Fresh violence was reported in Manipur's Senapati district on Monday, with two houses belonging to members of two communities burnt at separate locations, even as security forces recovered a sizeable cache of arms, ammunition and protective equipment in a separate operation in Imphal East. According to police, the two houses were burnt today at two different locations under Senapati Police Station and district.

The fresh incidents come amid heightened tensions between Kuki and Naga communities in parts of Senapati and adjoining areas. The district has witnessed increased security concerns in recent months, with civil organisations and community groups raising issues related to movement, security and alleged attacks. In a separate development on Monday, a joint team of CDO Imphal East and 28 Assam Rifles conducted a search operation at the foothills of Sinam Kom Village under Sagolmang Police Station, based on reliable intelligence corroborated by 4 Mahar (Borders). During the operation, security forces recovered a 7.62 mm SLR rifle with magazine, a 5.56 mm INSAS rifle with two magazines and a 9 mm pistol with magazine. They also recovered a Pompei gun, a country-made lethal gun and two single-barrel guns.

Odia diaspora meet in Varanasi seeks stronger connect with Odisha

Bhubaneswar.(Agency)

The Odia Diaspora Meet, organised as part of Odisha Parab 2026 in Varanasi, brought together members of the Odia community, cultural personalities, professionals, academics and entrepreneurs to deepen their cultural, social and economic connect with Odisha.

Odisha Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida attended the meet as the chief guest. Uttar Pradesh Labour and Employment Minister Anil Rajbhar, Odisha Odia Language, Literature and Culture Secretary Dr Bijay Ketan Upadhyaya, Padma Shri awardee Sribhas Chandra Supakar, Varanasi Odia Samaj president Prof Gopabandhu Mishra and FICCI UP Tourism Committee chairperson Prateek Hira were among the guests of honour.

The second day of Odisha Parab 2026 also featured Tourism Investor and Business-to-Government (B2G) interactions, bringing government representatives, investors and industry stakeholders together to explore potential collaborations and investment opportunities in Odisha's tourism sector.

A dedicated Tourism Roadshow showcased the State's diverse tourism offerings, spotlighting 15 master destinations, including Puri, Konark, Ratnagiri, Udayagiri, Lalitgiri, Hirakud, Chilika, Bhitarkanika and Similipal.

The roadshow also highlighted investment opportunities in eco-tourism, wildlife, adventure and experiential tourism, besides showcasing Odisha's potential in the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) segment.

J&K restarts probe into 1998 Wandhama massacre of 23 Kashmiri Pandits

J&K investigators are pursuing fresh leads, including the identification of terrorists and terror sympathisers, while revisiting evidence and suspects in several decades-old Kashmiri Pandit killings.

Jammu.(Agency)

The Jammu and Kashmir State Investigation Agency (SIA) has reopened the investigation into the 1998 Wandhama massacre, in which 23 Kashmiri Pandits were killed, as part of a wider push to pursue long-pending cases of targeted killings during the peak of militancy in the valley. The agency has also stepped up its probe into the killing of prominent Kashmiri Pandit leader Tika Lal Taploo and the assassination of Justice Neelkanth Ganjoo, according to sources. The development comes after the SIA recently reopened the cases of Kashmiri Pandit nurse Sarla Bhat and writer Sarwanand Koul Premi and his son Virender Koul. Sources said the SIA conducted raids at multiple locations in the Kashmir Valley a few days ago in connection with the Wandhama massacre and Taploo's killing. Investigators are now working to identify terrorists and those who helped them in the cases and establish their roles in the attacks.

23 KASHMIRI PANDITS KILLED IN WANDHAMA

Heavily armed terrorists entered the homes of

Kashmiri Pandit families in Wandhama village of Ganderbal district and killed 23 people, including nine women and four children on January 25, 1998. The killings took place on the eve of Republic Day and during the night of Shab-e-Qadr, one of the holiest nights of the Islamic holy month of Ramzan. The case remained unresolved for decades. The



renewed investigation is part of the SIA's broader effort to revisit militancy-era cases that had remained pending for years. The agency's focus on the case follows significant activity in other old Kashmiri Pandit murder cases. In

June, the agency filed a 737-page chargesheet in the 1990 murder of Sarla Bhat, naming jailed JKLF chief Yasin Malik as the mastermind.

In August, the agency conducted searches at nine locations in Jammu and Kashmir in connection with the killing of Kashmiri Pandit writer Sarwanand Koul Premi and his son Virender Koul.

TAPLOO, GANJOO CASES ALSO UNDERSCANNER

Tika Lal Taploo, a prominent lawyer and then Jammu and Kashmir BJP vice-president, was shot dead near his residence in Srinagar in September 1989. His killing was among the early targeted assassinations of prominent Kashmiri Pandits during the rise of militancy in the Valley. The SIA has also intensified its investigation into the killing of Justice Neelkanth Ganjoo, who had sentenced JKLF terrorist Maqbool Bhat to death.

Justice Ganjoo was shot dead by suspected JKLF terrorists at Hari Singh Street in Srinagar on November 4, 1989. His killing came after he had been targeted by militants, including an earlier attack on his residence.

DYFI activists in Kerala scale wall, enter DRM office over rail division split

Palakkad.(Agency)

Activists of the Democratic Youth Federation of India, the youth wing of the CPI(M), entered the compound of the Divisional Railway Manager's office in Palakkad on Monday during a protest against the bifurcation of the Palakkad Railway Division. They were also protesting against the shifting of stations, including Mangaluru, to the Mysuru division, police said.

The Railway Board's decision has triggered protests across Kerala. While the DYFI held its march on Monday, the Youth Congress has also announced a protest in Palakkad, and Congress MPs have said they will hold a hunger strike in front of the divisional railway office on Onam day.

According to police, the DYFI march reached

the gates of the DRM office at around 8 am. Police and Railway Protection Force personnel stopped the protesters at the



entrance, but some of them scaled the compound wall and reached the main entrance of the office building. Officials said more protesters later broke through the police blockade at the gate and entered the compound. DYFI activists, including women,

then staged a sit-in in front of the entrance and raised slogans against the proposed bifurcation. Additional police and RPF personnel were deployed to stop the protesters from entering the building, officials said. According to police, the DYFI march reached the gates of the DRM office at around 8 am. Police and Railway Protection Force personnel stopped the protesters at the entrance, but some of them scaled the compound wall and reached the main entrance of the office building. Officials said more protesters later broke through the police blockade at the gate and entered the compound. DYFI activists, including women, then staged a sit-in in front of the entrance and raised slogans against the proposed bifurcation. Additional police and RPF personnel were deployed to stop the protesters from entering the building, officials said.

UP Sweet Shop Worker Refuses To Taste His Own Sweets During Food Safety Raid

Uttar Pradesh.(Agency)

A video showing a sweet shop worker refusing to taste his own product has sparked a buzz on social media. The incident was reported in Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh, last week at Jai Bhawani Sweets. Food safety officials asked the worker to taste the sweets being sold at the shop after raiding the establishment following complaints of adulterated products and unhygienic conditions. There were also reports of the use of a banned form of silver leaf, an edible foil-like covering commonly added to sweets. One woman fell sick after eating sweet from the shop prompting food safety team's action.

In the video, one of the officials is seen giving sweet to the shopkeeper, identified as Anni Baba online, but he shows reluctance to taste it. The official



insists but the shopkeeper refuses to taste the sweet. Social media users were shocked by the shopkeeper's refusal. "And they feed that to locals, sentence them to 10 years," commented one user. "This is the perfect punishment, for

people selling stale/adulterated food. Make the owner and his family members to eat the adulterated food in its entirety," said another.

Others said his refusal proves the sweets were adulterated and wanted to know what action was taken after adulteration was found. On District Magistrate's instructions, officials confiscated food samples from the shop. SDM Karanveer Singh told reporters that strict action will be taken if investigation proves the shop owner guilty of selling inferior quality food. This incident is the latest in a string of such cases that have been reported from across the country ahead of the festival season. On Sunday, Uttar Pradesh Food Safety Administration seized and destroyed approximately 300 kg of paneer from a dairy in Garhi Chaukhandi, Noida.

Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board tightens fire safety norms for high-risk petroleum installations

Panchkula.(Agency)

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has introduced stringent fire and emergency response requirements for petroleum installations classified as "Extreme Risk", mandating specialised firefighting infrastructure and faster response times to prevent major incidents from escalating into catastrophic emergencies. The new provisions have been incorporated through the PNGRB (Technical Standards and Specifications, including Safety Standards for Petroleum Installations) Amendment Regulations, 2026, which were notified on August 17 and published in the Gazette of India on August 19. The regulations will come into force from the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

Under the new Fire & Emergency Response Augmentation (FERA) framework, priority will be given to petroleum installations with total storage exceeding 150 thousand kilolitres (TKL) of Class A and Class B petroleum products.

Transgender Police Trainee Found Hanging In Bathroom In Bihar

The victim, identified as Avanthika Sindhu, was a resident of West Champaran district. She was among a batch of 500 trainees sent from Patna Police Lines to Jamalpur for training.

Munger.(Agency)

A transgender woman constable undergoing police training in Bihar's Munger district was found hanging in a bathroom on Sunday, prompting an investigation into the circumstances surrounding her death. The constable, Avanthika Sindhu, had reportedly been unwell for the past few days and was alone in the barracks when the incident occurred. Sindhu was a resident of West Champaran district. She was among a batch of 500 trainees sent from Patna Police Lines to Jamalpur for training. The batch includes 16 transgender personnel.

The incident took place at the BSAP-9 camp in Jamalpur. According to colleagues, Avanthika had been unwell for the past few days and had not been taking part in training activities. On Sunday, the entire batch had gone to the training ground, while Avanthika remained in the barracks due to



her poor health. When fellow trainees returned in the evening and began looking for her, they found her hanging in the bathroom. She was immediately taken to a primary health centre, where she was

declared dead. Mithilesh Kumar, Commandant, BSAP Camp told the reporters, "It appears to be a case of suicide. The woman was found in the bathroom with a cloth towel tied around her neck."

Soon after receiving information about the incident, BSAP-9 Commandant Mithilesh Kumar, DSP Dr Arjun Kumar Gupta and Jamalpur Station House Officer Pankaj Kumar Paswan reached the camp and began an inquiry. Officials also questioned personnel staying in the barracks.

Police are probing the case from multiple angles, including the circumstances inside the camp and the constable's health condition. Investigators are also examining her personal life and external contacts to determine if any other factors may have contributed to her death. According to police sources, her mobile phone and personal contacts are also being subjected to technical examination to determine whether any pressure, dispute or other factor may have been involved. However, police said no conclusions can be drawn until the investigation is completed. The body has been sent for postmortem examination.

Odisha: Khordha heritage walk launched to promote preservation of historic sites

Bhubaneswar.(Agency)

The first Khordha Heritage Walk was organised at historic Gada Khordha, bringing together heritage enthusiasts and explorers from across Odisha to highlight the region's rich historical and cultural legacy.

The walk began at the Kunjabihari Temple, where participants learned about Khordha's historical significance and the establishment of the Khordha fort by Bhoi dynasty ruler Raja Ramachandra Deva. Writer and heritage enthusiast Prof Gopal Chandra Das spoke about the temple's history and its traditional association with Lord Jagannath. Built in the Pidha style, the temple features intricate sculptures, while marks believed to have been caused by bullets during the British campaign against Khordha remain visible.

The participants then visited Jagannath Lilakshetra, traditionally associated with Lord Jagannath's stay during journeys undertaken to protect the deity from external attacks. They also visited Govindajew Math, linked to the traditional account of Sakshigopal's journey from Kanchi to Odisha. The neglected remains of an old Odia-style structure at the site and the poor access, including a muddy and waterlogged pathway, drew attention to the need for conservation.

The heritage walkers subsequently explored the historic Khordha Fort and Rajabati complex. A museum is being developed at the fort ruins with government assistance, while restoration work is underway at Rani Pokhari. Participants were briefed on the fort's strategic importance and the role of nearby Barunei Hill during the British attack on Khordha.

NEWS BOX

Hong Kong's historic Women's Asia Cup leap: Taking on India and daring to dream bigger



New Delhi. (Agency)

For Hong Kong women's cricket, the 2026 Women's Asia Cup is more than another tournament. It is a chance to measure how far they have come since their first appearance in 2012, when they did not yet have T20I status. They secured their place in this year's tournament after reaching the semi-finals of the ACC Women's Premier Cup in Malaysia. Hong Kong finished eighth in 2012 after losing all three group matches, including a 142-run defeat to Pakistan after being bowled out for 15. The ICC granted T20I status to all its member nations from July 1, 2018, with Hong Kong playing their first WT20I in January 2019. Their return to the Asia Cup as a recognised T20I side brings a much bigger challenge. Hong Kong will face Thailand on August 28 before taking on India on September 3 and Pakistan on September 7 in Group A. For captain Natasha Miles, however, the focus is not on the stature of the opposition but on embracing the opportunity RELISH THE MOMENT' AGAINST ASIA'S BEST.

"We've spoken about it as a team: relish the moment," Miles tells India Today in an interview organised by Sony. "It's not often that we get the opportunity to play teams like India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and face the likes of Smriti (Mandhana) and Harmanpreet (Kaur), the big names on the international stage. So, it's about taking this opportunity in our stride, making the most of it, going out there, expressing ourselves and showing what Hong Kong has been doing over the last few years, and how we can compete at that level." Hong Kong have built a strong record in regional cricket, winning the Women's East Asia Cup in 2017 and 2022 before retaining the title in 2024. In the 2024 final against Japan, Miles and Mariko Hill put together an unbeaten opening stand as Hong Kong won by 10 wickets.

Gauff beats Pegula for 2nd Cincinnati Open title; France's Fils beats American Tiafoe in men's final



MASON. (Agency)

Coco Gauff defeated fellow American Jessica Pegula, 6-2, 6-4, to capture her second women's Cincinnati Open title on Sunday, and Arthur Fils of France defeated American Frances Tiafoe 6-3, 1-6, 6-0, in the men's final for his first Masters 1000 title. In Saturday's semifinals, Pegula beat defending champion Iga Swiatek and Gauff defeated Sara Bejlek to set up the first all-American women's final at the Cincinnati Open in 56 years.

The last time two American women played in the Cincinnati final was in 1970, when Rosie Casals beat Nancy Richey. Pegula's best finish in Cincinnati came in 2024, when she lost to Aryna Sabalenka in the final. Gauff, who won the 2023 title beating Karolina Muchova, stormed out to a 5-0 lead in the first set on Sunday before winning 6-2. Pegula battled back to within 5-4 in the second before Gauff closed out the win. Gauff won five of six break points. "I think it was a long journey, but I'm happy," Gauff said. "I think it's night and day, the player I was last year to now. I don't think that this is an indicator that I'm going to do well in New York. Just knowing the quality ones that I had this week, hopefully I can use that experience." "I thought she just played at a really high level and didn't really have many dips," Pegula said. "I didn't really think I played bad. The more you construct the point (against her), the worse it is because she almost likes to run. It was tough today. A dangerous, confident Coco is going to New York." The head-to-head series between Gauff and Pegula is now tied at five apiece. Sunday was their second meeting in a final, with Gauff winning at Wuhan last year.

India and Pakistan can high-five in hockey. Why can't cricket shake hands?

India-Pakistan hockey's high-fives have left fans divided, with some praising the sporting gesture while others question why cricket follows a different path. The contrasting approaches have reignited debate over rivalry, respect and patriotism.

Mackay. (Agency)

The India-Pakistan rivalry rarely escapes the shadow of politics, but a simple gesture at the Hockey World Cup has prompted many fans, including senior journalist Shekhar Gupta to question why the same sporting courtesy remains absent from cricket. Gupta praised the two hockey teams for exchanging high-fives before their World Cup clash and suggested the cricketing rivalry could take a cue from them. The moment came five days ago,

before India and Pakistan met in Amstelveen in a crucial World Cup encounter. Instead of the customary handshake, players from both sides exchanged quick high-fives before getting on with the match, an approach that was in line with the International Hockey Federation's protocol. Gupta shared a picture of the teams on X, calling it an example of "sporting high-5s" and asking people to think about the contrast. "This image from the ongoing hockey World Cup in Belgium and the Netherlands. The sporting high-5s. Think about it! India-Pakistan hockey rivalry is old as cricket and historically, way more competitive" Gupta wrote in his post.

He pointed out that India and Pakistan have a long and fiercely competitive hockey rivalry, yet players have continued to acknowledge each other on the field despite the tensions surrounding their countries. "They've played each other multiple times since Op

Sindoor, at all levels. Seniors, under-19, juniors. Shaking hands, exchanging high-fives, hugs, the occasional pat on the back while

argued that the hockey teams' conduct had not triggered the same outrage or questions about patriotism that have accompanied similar discussions around cricket.

A number of fans on social media have also drawn the same comparison, pointing to the contrasting approaches in hockey and cricket. "triotism" targets only cricket" he added.

THE IND VS PAK HANDSHAKE STORY

India's senior cricket teams have avoided customary handshakes with Pakistan in five international matches across men's and women's cricket since 2025. The practice began during the men's Asia Cup after the Pahalgam terror attack and amid Operation Sindoor. The men's team maintained the approach through their Asia Cup meetings before following it again during the 2026 T20 World Cup. India's women's team also adopted the same protocol during their T20 World Cup clash with Pakistan in June.



playing Nobody's outraged or called the Hockey India or the team's patriotism in question. Twitter 'paHis broader point was aimed at cricket, where India and Pakistan have maintained a no-handshake approach in recent international meetings. Gupta

Why have qualification at all? Rohan Bopanna slams Asian Games tennis selections

Rohan Bopanna has questioned India's revised Asian Games tennis selections, arguing that players who earned their rankings through international competition deserve their chance. The two-time gold medallist urged officials to let sporting performances decide.

Colombo. (Agency)

Indian tennis great and two-time Asian Games gold medallist Rohan Bopanna has questioned the changes made to India's tennis squad for the 2026 Asian Games. Bopanna believes players who earned their places through international performances should have been given the opportunity to compete in Japan. Five players who had qualified were affected by the changes after the selection process followed the Sports Ministry's rule restricting participation to players ranked among the top eight in Asia. Speaking in a statement posted on LinkedIn, Bopanna criticised the decision and questioned its wider impact on the players, their families and sponsors. "I'm a proud Indian. And today, I want to speak up for these tennis players who deserve better. They didn't ask for mercy. They asked for a chance.

"Dhamne, Adkar, Yamalapalli, Vaidehee, Thombare. Five players, including India's No. 1 and No. 2 in women's singles, who



earned their rankings the hard way. No shortcuts. No favors. They competed internationally, qualified, and proved where they stand," Bopanna said. Now a committee that never stood where they stood has decided their fate on paper, before a ball is struck. If outcomes are already decided, why have qualification at all? Why rankings?" The former world No.

1 doubles player also argued that the decision goes beyond the five athletes and could influence how parents and sponsors view the country's sporting system.

"This isn't just a call about five athletes. It's a message to every parent, every sponsor who backed them before the country did, who bet on merit and results, not on being pre-approved. Telling these players they're 'not medal prospects' tells every one of those parent & sponsors: your judgment doesn't matter here," he added.

BOPANNA QUESTIONS THE SELECTION PROCESS

Bopanna further stressed that sporting outcomes cannot always be determined by rankings or predictions made before athletes get onto the court. "Sport is the one arena where belief outruns prediction, where the written off rewrite the script. You don't build a sporting nation, or a sporting economy, by deciding in a boardroom who's allowed to compete.

UEFA chief Ceferin rules out FIFA presidency bid, says Infantino may face rival

New Delhi. (Agency)

UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin has ruled out challenging Gianni Infantino for the FIFA presidency, but believes the incumbent could face an opposition candidate when the election takes place next March. The development comes as football's global governing structure remains embroiled in a dispute over its future direction. Ceferin said he had no interest in succeeding Infantino, but suggested the FIFA president could either recognise that he has lost support or contest the election against a rival. He also argued that the controversy surrounding Infantino extends beyond the officials who will cast their votes. "There are two options," Ceferin told The Rest Is Politics: Leading podcast. "One option is that he



realises that he doesn't have the support, and that's not only a political support of the ones who vote, but the political support of football community, the political support of fans, the political support of the players, former players, coaches." And the second option that he goes to the elections in March, but in that case, I think he will have a candidate against him. I don't know yet who. "The Slovenian also dismissed the idea that UEFA's opposition to Infantino is driven

solely by Europe's biggest football nations. He pointed to smaller associations that, according to him, had also rejected FIFA's controversial commercial proposal.

INFANTINO MAKES CASE TO WORLD'S SMALLER ASSOCIATIONS

Infantino, meanwhile, has continued to position himself as an advocate for football associations outside the game's wealthiest nations. Speaking after meeting members of the Caribbean Football Union in the Dominican Republic, he said FIFA's priority should be reducing the financial gap between countries. "We want to grow football in every one of our 211 countries in the world," Infantino said.

"We need to find investments for all the others, opportunities for all the others.

Injured Rishabh Pant braves sharp blows, breaks roof in Colombo with huge six



Colombo. (Agency)

India wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant braved his wrist injury and came out to bat on Day 2 of the second Test against Sri Lanka. Pant did not take long to get into the thick of the action as Sri Lanka's fast bowlers once again peppered him with short balls.

Pant took several blows during his stay at the crease, with the India physio rushing in to check on him on occasions. The batter, however, was not going to let the injury stop him from taking on the Sri Lankan attack. Batting against Lahiru Kumara Pant produced a trademark response. A lofty six through the leg side.

PANT'S MASSIVE SIX BREAKS SOLAR PANEL

The massive hit came in the 90th over of India's innings. Kumara came around the wicket and dug the ball in short, but Pant moved inside the line and got underneath it perfectly. He then swung hard and sent the ball flying towards fine leg. The shot travelled an estimated 95 metres before landing on the roof of the SSC Stadium in Colombo. It was not just another six, though, as the ball ended up shattering one of the solar panels installed on the roof. Pant had already shown plenty of courage simply by walking out to bat.

He had been forced to retire out on Day 1 after facing just 15 balls following a blow to his wrist. The India team management later confirmed that the wicketkeeper-batter was fit to bat if required. With India losing the wicket of Saransh Jain on Day 2 morning, Pant made his way to the middle and was immediately tested by the Sri Lankan pacers.

The short-ball barrae was relentless, with the bowlers repeatedly targeting Pant's body. He took several blows and needed treatment from the India physio during his stay at the crease. But Pant continued to take the attack on. His six off Kumara was the perfect example. Rather than trying to avoid the short ball because of his injury, Pant moved inside the line and unleashed a powerful shot that sent the ball onto the roof.

India will fight and reply: Yashasvi Jaiswal breaks silence on Asitha Fernando clash

Yashasvi Jaiswal has responded to the heated exchange with Asitha Fernando in Colombo, urging people not to judge the incident without knowing what was said. The India opener said the team will fight back when pushed.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Yashasvi Jaiswal has broken his silence on his heated exchange with Asitha Fernando during the first session of the Colombo Test. The India opener responded after Cricbuzz questioned on Instagram whether he had "crossed the line" during the confrontation. The incident followed Jaiswal's dismissal for 45 on Day 1 of the second Test at the

Sinhalese Sports Club. Responding to the post, Jaiswal said the full context of what was said on the field was not known before making a judgement.

SL vs IND, 2nd Test Day 2: UPDATES

"If you don't know what he said then please don't make your judgment if anyone cross the line we need to let them know this India will fight and reply," Jaiswal commented. The exchange took place after Fernando produced a delivery that moved back sharply to breach Jaiswal's defence. The Sri Lankan pacer then gave the batter a send-off, prompting Jaiswal to turn around while walking back and confront him before Sri Lanka captain Dhananjaya de Silva stepped in to separate the two.

The episode could attract the attention of match referee Andy Pycroft, with the ICC Code of Conduct containing provisions relating to physical contact between players

during an international match. **COULD YASHASVI JAISWAL FACE ICC SANCTION?**



India batting coach Sitanshu Kotak acknowledged that the exchange appeared to have gone beyond a purely verbal confrontation, while suggesting emotions may have taken over. "I think they must have said something to him and it might have

happened in the heat of the moment. Obviously, Jaiswal, I don't think he should have been so close to Fernando, but that happens when you are in the heat of the moment," Kotak said after the day's play. Sri Lanka fast bowling coach Ryan van Niekerk did not speculate on a potential punishment and instead left the matter with the match officials. "The verbals are probably an overflow of emotion. I'll leave that to the match referee to deal with," he said.

Article 2.12 of the ICC Code of Conduct deals with inappropriate physical contact with another player during an international match. If Jaiswal is found guilty of a Level 1 breach, the possible punishment can range from an official reprimand to a fine of up to 50 per cent of the match fee, along with one or two demerit points.



Kareena Kapoor

‘Not Pregnant’, Close Ally Dismisses Report That Actress Is Expecting Third Baby

Kareena Kapoor is not pregnant, confirms the actress’ close ally. A video of the actress is going viral, with social media users speculating that the actress is expecting her third child with Saif Ali Khan. However, a source close to the actress has now confirmed that there is no truth to these rumours. The video shows Kareena Kapoor in her gym wear, coming out of a building as her team tries to cover her with an umbrella. During her exit from the building and entry into the car, in a blink-and-miss appearance, a section of people noticed what looked like a baby bump. Reacting to this viral clip, a source told HT, “Kareena is not pregnant. This is not true.”

Kareena Kapoor recently went on a holiday with her family to celebrate the 55th birthday of her husband and actor, Saif Ali Khan. Following the trip, she even shared a series of pictures on Instagram, and it was her bikini shot that took our breath away. Saif and Kareena got married on October 16, 2012, in a private ceremony in Mumbai. The couple are parents to two sons, Taimur Ali Khan and Jehangir Ali Khan, and Kareena often shares glimpses of their family holidays and special moments on social media.

When Kareena Told Saif Not To Have More Kids

In an earlier interview, Kareena Kapoor Khan opened up about her family plans and revealed that she had told Saif Ali Khan that they should not have any more children. “Saif has had a child every decade—in his twenties, thirties, forties and now in his fifties. I’ve told him, in your sixties, that’s not happening. I think only a man as broad-minded as Saif could be a father of four children at very different stages. He gives his time to them all. And now, with Jeh, we are trying to balance it out. We’ve made a pact that when he’s shooting for a film, I will try not to work on one at the same time [and vice versa],” Kareena said while speaking to Vogue.

Kareena Kapoor On The Work Front

Kareena Kapoor will next be seen in Daayra. The film is described as a gritty exploration of crime, punishment and justice, with an intense focus on societal realities. The movie marks Meghna Gulzar’s next project after her 2023 film Sam Bahadur. While announcing the movie, the director posted a couple of pictures on Instagram, captured alongside the lead stars. “When the lines of Law and Justice cross. Thrilled to embark on DAAYRA with Kareena Kapoor Khan and Prithviraj Sukumaran. A much-anticipated journey with Jungle Pictures and my co-writers Yash Keswani and Sima Agarwal,” she wrote.



Bhagyashri Borse NOT Opposite Aditya Roy Kapur In Milap Zaveri’s Next, T-Series Clarifies



Reports had recently suggested that Bhagyashri Borse would star as the female lead opposite Aditya Roy Kapur in Milap Zaveri’s upcoming film. The casting buzz, however, has now been addressed by the makers, with T-Series clarifying that the actor is not part of the project.

A T-Series spokesperson said in a statement, “The reports of Bhagyashri Borse being a part of T-Series and Milap Zaveri’s upcoming project with Aditya Roy Kapur are untrue. The production house will officially announce the actress soon.”

The production house has kept all the details regarding the film under wrap as of now. They are yet to reveal who has been cast opposite Aditya.

Milap Zaveri had earlier described his upcoming collaboration with Aditya Roy Kapur as an ‘intense and violent’ love story. Speaking to PTI in July, the filmmaker said romance has become an important part of his storytelling. “I feel maybe I’ve found my forte with romance. Earlier, Marjaavaan succeeded in a big way; Ek Deewane Ki Deewaniyat was a blockbuster,” he said. He added, “So, romance is a key integral part of my stories, and I think going forward it will remain along with action. So, romance, action, dialogue baazi, these are things I like to do as a director-writer and till audiences like my films, I’ll try to keep doing them.” Zaveri did not share any further details about the project at the time.

Meanwhile, Bhagyashri has several projects in the South lined up. She will next be seen alongside Sivakarthykeyan in the Tamil film Seyon, which is being produced by Kamal Haasan.



Arjun Kapoor Loses Cool Over Fan For Recording Him Without Permission



Arjun Kapoor, who is known for his fun nature, was seen losing his cool over a fan for recording him without his knowledge. The video, which is now going viral, shows Arjun Kapoor sitting in his car when he was spotted by a fan who is known for clicking pictures of and spotting Bollywood stars. The video has the fan asking Arjun if he could click a picture with him, to which the actor obliged. However, Arjun lost his cool when he noticed that the fan was already recording him.

The video has Arjun Kapoor sitting in his car and sporting a casual look. The actor looked smart with a sharp beard and styled hair. He paired a white T-shirt with a blue unzipped jacket and accessorised the entire look with a stylish dog tag. In the now-viral clip, after noticing that the fan was trying to record a video of him, Arjun rolled up the windows while saying, “Video kyu bana raha hai? Photo le na,” as he rolled up the window of his car.

Why Is Arjun Kapoor In The News?

Arjun Kapoor made headlines after rumours of his relationship with Sahiba Bali, nearly two years after his breakup with Malaika Arora, surfaced on social media. Speculation surrounding Arjun and Sahiba first surfaced after they attended the India vs England third ODI at Lord’s on July 19. Photos and videos from the stadium showed the two watching the match together, prompting social media users to wonder if there was more than friendship between them. As discussions gathered pace online, Sahiba addressed the chatter in her own way without directly commenting on the rumours.

Arjun Kapoor Confirmed He Is Single

The renewed speculation comes nearly two years after Arjun confirmed that he was single.

The actor was previously in a long-term relationship with Malaika Arora. The couple made their relationship public in 2018 and remained together for several years before reportedly parting ways in 2024.

During promotions for Singham Again later that year, Arjun put rumours about his relationship status to rest. Responding to fans who asked about Malaika during a public event, he smiled and said, “Nahi nahi, abhi single hoon, relax karo.” Professionally, Arjun was last seen in Mere Husband Ki Biwi, alongside Bhumi Pednekar and Rakul Preet Singh. While the actor is yet to announce his next project, his latest social media banter with Sahiba Bali has once again become a talking point, keeping both fans and gossip mills busy, even if the two continue to insist, at least indirectly, that not everything on the internet should be believed.



Mini Mathur

Says Her Father Initially Had Concerns About Kabir Khan: ‘Papa, He Is A Muslim’

Mini Mathur has spoken about marrying filmmaker Kabir Khan at a time when interfaith marriages were not necessarily an easy conversation in every household. The former MTV VJ revealed that despite coming from a conservative Mathur family, she faced no opposition from her parents. More than two decades later, Mini and Kabir have also chosen not to assign a religion to their children, Sairah and Vivaan.

In a conversation with Hauterrfly, Mini discussed marriage, surnames and how the couple decided to raise their children without formally identifying them with either parent’s faith.

Mini Mathur Did Not Change Her Name After Marriage

Mini married Kabir before her MTV years, when he was still making documentaries. She recalled that some people were surprised to discover she was already married after she won the VJ hunt.

“I was told by certain people saying, ‘We didn’t know you were married’,” she said.

Marriage, however, did not prompt Mini to change her identity on official documents. She said, “I never wanted my husband’s name in my passport. I didn’t change my name.” She followed a similar principle

while deciding her children’s names. “My kids shouldn’t have either of the parents’ names. I said if they are writing Khan, then they should write Mathur as well,” Mini explained.

According to her, neither the BMC nor the passport authorities objected when she



registered her children’s names.

‘I Knew That I Had To Get Married To Kabir’

Mini also recalled how her relationship with Kabir was received at home. Describing herself as a “conservative Mathur” girl, she said she had grown up being told that marriages generally happened within the same caste. Her father, whom she described as both conservative and loving, had allowed her to pursue television. Mini said this made her particularly conscious of her choices and public image.

NEWS BOX

Trump forgot India's no-questions request at G7, says envoy Sergio Gor

WORLD.(Agency)

US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor has revealed that India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had requested a "no-questions" media format ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with US President Donald Trump at the G7 summit. Speaking at the Economic Times World Leaders Forum in New Delhi, Gor said the Indian side wanted journalists to be present to record the leaders' opening remarks but not ask questions. Trump had initially agreed to the arrangement. However, after Modi and Trump finished their opening statements, Trump appeared to forget the agreement and turned towards the cameras, asking, "Any questions?" What was planned as a brief media interaction subsequently turned into an extended 45-minute press session, Gor recalled. Gor's account offers a glimpse into the behind-the-scenes preparations for high-level India-US meetings and Trump's tendency to depart from pre-agreed media protocols. Modi met Trump on June 17 on the sidelines of the G7 summit in eastern France, shortly after three Indian mariners were killed when a commercial vessel came under attack by the US Navy in the Strait of Hormuz. During the meeting, Modi raised concerns over the safety of Indian seafarers operating in the conflict-affected region. The Indian government has yet to officially respond to Gor's remarks regarding New Delhi's request for a no-questions format.

Planes, helicopters, crews: How Europe is scrambling to contain a record wildfire season

World.(Agency)

Wildfires are stretching firefighting capacity across Europe, forcing countries to move aircraft, helicopters and crews across borders as several blazes burn at the same time. Serbia is using both Russian and EU assistance, while crews in Ankara brought a large wooded-area fire under control early Monday after an eight-hour operation. By August 19, fires had burned 619,298 hectares across the EU, more than twice the 2006-2025 average of 280,045 hectares for the same point in the year, according to the EU's Joint Research Centre. The European Commission has described this summer's operation as the bloc's largest-ever wildfire response, with 777 firefighters from 14 countries pre-positioned in high-risk areas alongside 22 firefighting planes and five helicopters. Serbia adds EU support after Russian deployment.

Serbian authorities said on Sunday that the fire at Deliblatska Pescara, a protected nature reserve where blazes had burned for weeks, had been localised and extinguished, with crews continuing to guard against flare-ups. The fire on Mt Stolovi near Kraljevo was reported under control by Sunday, after inaccessible terrain had complicated firefighting operations. Serbia had initially sought Moscow's help after its interior ministry said no firefighting aircraft "of this capacity" was available through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. A Russian Emergency Ministry IL-76P firefighting aircraft arrived in Nis on August 19 and began operating over Deliblatska Pescara the next day. At that point, Serbia had not activated the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, although the bloc said it was ready to provide assistance suited to conditions on the ground. Belgrade subsequently activated the mechanism, bringing EU aircraft and ground crews into an operation that already included Russian support. The EU sent four rescue EU Black Hawk helicopters to Serbia — two from the Czech Republic and one each from Slovakia and Romania. A 69-member Romanian firefighting and rescue team with 15 vehicles also joined the response, while teams from Romania, Slovakia and the Czech Republic were involved in firefighting operations by Sunday.

Human-caused Hawk Fire near Reno forces 90,000 to flee as winds worsen

Reno.(Agency)

A fast-moving wildfire in north-west Reno, Nevada, has destroyed several structures, injured at least six people and prompted authorities to urge around 90,000 people to leave affected areas. Officials said on Sunday that the Hawk Fire was caused by humans and remained uncontained, with changing winds expected to make conditions more dangerous. The fire began on Saturday and rapidly spread across 53 square kilometres in the Peavine Peak area of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, where homes and businesses sit along rugged foothills near the Nevada side of the California state line. Washoe County Sheriff Darin Balaam said the blaze moved exceptionally fast on Saturday night, jumping over fire trucks and making it hard

for responders to reach hotspots while residents were trying to escape. Describing the situation, Balaam said, "It was extremely confusing," as shifting winds pushed the flames in different directions. Officials said several structures had been destroyed and the injured included three civilians and three first responders. They did not give further details on how the fire started, saying the matter was under investigation. Authorities ordered about 42,000 residents to evacuate as the "GO NOW" zone expanded to the edge of the University of Nevada at Reno. Another 45,000 people were in the adjoining evacuation warning zone. Officials urged all of them to leave and be prepared to stay away for several days as strengthening winds were expected to make the fire even more unpredictable. "Please get out if you can right now," the sheriff said.

Ukraine backers gather as war escalates, air defence runs low

UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham will be in Kyiv for his first international trip since entering 10 Downing Street, and several other leaders are expected to join remotely.

KYIV.(Agency)

Ukraine on Monday hosts a meeting of its key European backers to press for critical air-defence supplies and more pressure on Moscow, with Russian attacks killing more civilians than at any time since the first months of the invasion.

The meeting of the Coalition of the Willing will be jointly chaired by the leaders of Britain, France and Germany. UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham will be in Kyiv for his first international trip

since entering 10 Downing Street, and several other leaders are expected to join remotely. EU Council President Antonio Costa is also due in Kyiv for the talks, which come amid the latest, deadly escalation of the war. Russia has been pounding Kyiv with ballistic missiles in recent weeks, ripping open apartment blocks and killing dozens of citizens in the capital. The escalating Russian strikes have pushed civilian deaths to their highest levels since the first months of Russia's 2022 invasion. After almost every attack -- which sees tens of thousands hunker in the Kyiv metro system and many more in basements and other shelters across the city -- Zelensky has issued public pleas for more air-defence support.

UK, French support

Ukraine celebrates independence day on Monday, which also marks exactly four-and-a-half years since Russia invaded on February 24, 2022. "Russia should be in no



doubt of our resolve," Burnham said in a statement before his arrival in Kyiv. "We will not back down until there is a just and lasting peace." Diplomacy on ending the conflict -- Europe's largest since World War II -- is effectively frozen. Russia is demanding hardline territorial and political concessions that Kyiv has rejected as a capitulation that would only enable another Russian attack. Burnham is

set to announce that the British government is authorising defence firm MBDA to release classified information needed to help Ukraine and France set up local production of the long-range SCALP missile. And on Saturday, French President Emmanuel Macron pledged Paris would deliver new interceptor missiles. "It is crucial to provide Ukraine with all the necessary means to defend its skies and thwart this aggression," Macron wrote on X. The ballistic missiles Russia has been firing in their dozens are incredibly fast and travel with a high-arching trajectory, making them difficult to stop. Kyiv's home-grown weapons cannot shoot them down, meaning Ukraine is reliant on advanced systems -- chiefly, US Patriot interceptors -- to protect its skies. But amid shortfalls globally since the US launched its war on Iran, Ukraine has been left exposed.

Police investigate after five bodies found in rural area outside Portland, Oregon

FOREST GROVE.(Agency)

The bodies of five people were found on a rural property outside Portland and authorities said Sunday it was being investigated as a quintuple homicide. The Washington County Sheriff's Office said authorities initially responded early Saturday to reports of a vehicle fire at a property in Forest Grove, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) west of downtown Portland. Responders then found the remains of five people and "several domestic animals." Detectives do not believe it was a random act of violence, authorities said, without sharing much detail. No arrests have been made and no one was in custody.

They did not disclose the ages or genders of the people found, how they died or what possible connections they might have with one another. The type of animals found dead also was not specified.

At a news conference Sunday afternoon, Detective Shannon Wilde with the sheriff's office said they were still working to determine who the victims were. Any time you have one person deceased, let alone five, that's a logistical challenge," Wilde said, noting the complexity of the investigation and the large crime scene. When asked by reporters about the amount of time that passed between authorities first discovering the dead bodies and releasing

information the following afternoon, Wilde said authorities were trying to identify the victims and notify their next of kin before holding a news conference while also working on a "very active investigation with a lot of moving pieces." Authorities wanted to ensure they released accurate information in a responsible way, she said.

Sheriff Caprice Massey urged anyone who is familiar with the property or the people who live there to share any information they may have.

"I will say that in my 22 years here, I have not been a part of or witnessed a scene quite this complex involving this type of an investigation," she said.

New Zealand moves to ban social media for under-16s



WELLINGTON.(Agency)

New Zealand's government will introduce legislation on Monday banning under 16s from using social media, joining a number of countries seeking to keep youngsters off sites such as Instagram and TikTok.

New Zealand has been investigating a social media ban for over a year, after neighbouring Australia implemented its world-first legislation in December. Under the Online Safety Bill, firms like Meta could be fined up to 10 percent of their global revenue if they fail to comply. "We simply cannot accept the harm being done to a generation of New Zealand children," Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said. In announcing the Online Safety Bill, Luxon said "one in three children aged between 13 and 17 are now spending at least five hours on social media a day".

"Social media is exposing them to harmful content, addictive technology and pressures they are not equipped to deal with, and it's affecting their family life, mental health, sleep, and education," he said. Luxon specifically called out platforms Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat and Facebook, saying they would be required to take "reasonable steps to check users are over the age of 16". They would have to use "existing account information, facial age estimation, digital ID services and formal ID" to verify age. Platforms would also be required to assess the risks they pose as well as report on how those dangers are being reduced, and penalties would be introduced for companies that fail to comply. Education Minister Erica Stanford said the Bill "places legal obligations on platforms". No penalties are proposed for children, their parents or caregivers," Stanford said. It's unclear whether the bill will pass, as both National Party's coalition partners -- the libertarian ACT party and NZ First -- have said they oppose it. In a statement, the populist NZ First said they could not support the law given the "colossal failure" of the legislation in Australia, while ACT said they believed the law "won't work", and teenagers would easily get around the ban. Australia last year banned under 16s from the likes of Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, in a crackdown designed to protect children from online bullying and "predatory algorithms."

Just 150 days ago, Balen Shah became the PM of Nepal, riding on a wave of Gen Z protests. But governance lapses, diplomatic missteps, mounting crises and his growing distance from Parliament and his own party have dimmed the shine of the youth

London.(Agency)

It has been 150 days since Balendra 'Balen' Shah took office as Nepal's prime minister on March 27. He looked like a man who had finally broken Nepal's political cycle dominated by the old guard. That image, though, seemingly did not survive even the first 150 days of his rule. A former underground rapper, structural engineer and Kathmandu mayor, he rode a Gen Z-Wave, the

world's first such revolution, that toppled a sitting government. In the March election, he defeated four-time Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on the veteran's own Jhapa turf and helped his Rastriya Swatantra Party



(RSP) secure a majority. Young voters who had seemingly never connected with the revolving-door politics of the last 17 years saw in him accountability, energy, and also a break from the old guard.

By July, however, the same generation that carried him into office was back on the streets of Kathmandu, demanding his resignation. The biggest warning

sign, however, is not on the streets but inside the institutions Shah now leads. His growing distance from Parliament and even his own party has raised questions about how he governs, and whether the political alliance that brought him to power is beginning to fray. The speed of the reversal makes for quite a story. In five months, Balen's popularity has been eroded by a series of crises that overlap. In April, Shah enforced strict customs rules on goods brought from Indian markets before backtracking. Shah ordered strict enforcement of customs duties on goods bought across the open border with India. Anything above a low threshold was taxed, hitting the everyday purchases of ordinary Nepalis who depend on Indian markets for medicines, groceries and household items. The move triggered immediate public anger. Facing protests, the government quickly reversed course. Then, in May came a self-inflicted border controversy involving India.

US announces 'economic D-Day' against Iran as Tehran vows sanctions will fail

World.(Agency)

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has announced plans for what he described as the "single greatest financial offensive ever marshalled against an adversary", as the Trump administration prepares to impose sweeping new sanctions on Iran.

In a post on X, Bessent said US President Donald Trump had dismantled Iran's military capabilities, destroyed nearly 100 percent of its military factories and "buried its nuclear program". He said the United States was now entering the "endgame" in its confrontation with Tehran. "At dawn begins an economic D-Day," Bessent said, warning that Washington would use every available agency, authority and measure to sever the economic lifelines sustaining the Iranian regime. Bessent accused Tehran of using security guarantees as a form of extortion and said the Trump administration had ended an era in which Iranian retaliation was considered certain while US enforcement was viewed as negotiable.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the Trump administration will unveil sweeping new sanctions on Iran on Monday. The move sharpens the US-Iran confrontation as disruption in the Strait of Hormuz adds pressure on oil markets.

**BESSENT WARNS OF TOUGHEST SANCTIONS**

Bessent is scheduled to hold a press conference at 2 pm EDT on Monday, where he is expected to outline the new measures. He has previously warned that Washington could impose the "toughest sanctions in

history" on Iran. Trump has also warned countries against providing "any type of lifeline to Iran", signalling that Washington could target nations and entities that continue economic ties with Tehran. Bessent has specifically urged China to cooperate with Washington. China remains a major buyer of Iranian oil, purchasing more than 80 percent of Iran's shipped oil, according to 2025 data from analytics firm Kpler. IRAN DISMISSES US SANCTIONS THREAT Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi rejected the threat of fresh US sanctions, describing the expected measures as evidence of Washington's desperation. In a video posted on Telegram, Araqchi said the United States had shifted from military operations to what he described as "the same old plans". "The fact that they have moved on from military operations ... to bring up the same old plans shows that they are desperate," he said. Araqchi called on Washington to engage with Tehran respectfully and pursue what he described as a solution based on "justice and honour."