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"Not A Single Word": Rare Mention Of Drugs In Haryana Assembly Triggers Row

Chandigarh. (Agency)

The drug menace found a strikingly limited mention in the Haryana Assembly on Thursday, even as the BJP is making "drug-free Punjab" a prominent plank of its political pitch in the neighbouring state. Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has been campaigning in Punjab, promising that a BJP government will end the drug menace if voted to power in 2027. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, too, launched a 100-week nationwide anti-drug campaign on August 2. Against this backdrop, the conspicuous absence of drugs from the Haryana government's main response during a discussion on law and order has given the Opposition a fresh line of attack. Raising the issue, INLD MLA and legislature party leader Aditya Devi Lal Chautala questioned why the Chief Minister did not address the drug problem while responding to the law-and-order debate. "The Chief Minister did not utter a single word about the rising menace of drugs. Does the issue of drugs not come under law and order?" Chautala asked.

"Let Me Tie The Rakhi On You": Supriya Sule Remembers Ajit Paw

New Delhi. (Agency)

It's Rakshabandhan and Supriya Sule wishes Ajit Pawar, her cousin and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister who died in a plane crash in January, "will appear from somewhere" and will "chat and laugh with your sisters". Seven months after the horrific tragedy, Supriya Sule says "even today, I can't bring myself to believe it". "Today is Raksha Bandhan... but this time, you're not with us, and this realisation is making my heart deeply restless. That horrific morning seven months ago and your sudden departure... even today, I can't bring myself to believe it," she posted on X in a heartfelt tribute to her "Dear Dada" Ajit Pawar. The Baramati MP reminisced about her childhood with Ajit Pawar, "growing up together, our fights" and the "love they shared". Later in life, Ajit Pawar split up the party, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), and also fielded his wife Sunetra Pawar against Sule in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Sunetra Pawar lost. "It was my mistake to field her against Supriya Sule," Ajit Pawar had said then, noting that society doesn't like rifts in families. NCP's another faction is now called Nationalist Congress Party - Sharadchandra Pawar (NCP-SP). "From childhood, growing up together, our fights, the love we shared for each other, and the pride we felt in one another - these were the foundation of our bond. Even now, it feels like you'll suddenly appear from somewhere, let me tie the rakhi on you, chat and laugh with your sisters, and immerse yourself back into the family," she said.

Not Gen Z, BJP faces a bigger worry ahead of Uttar Pradesh elections

New Delhi (Agency)

The latest Mood of the Nation (MOTN) survey predicts a tougher road ahead for the BJP in Uttar Pradesh, which goes to assembly polls next year. Experts said the bigger worry for the BJP may not be the Gen Z, but the generation that raised them. Here's why.

The bigger worry for the BJP in Uttar Pradesh may not be Gen Z, but the generation that raised them (referred to as Gen X), experts said, citing the latest India Today-CVoter Mood of the Nation (MOTN) survey. The August MOTN numbers have predicted a tougher road for the BJP in Uttar Pradesh, which goes to polls in about six months from now. The latest survey projects 41 of the state's 80 Lok Sabha seats for the INDIA bloc, compared with 38 for the BJP-led NDA, if elections were held today. It marks a big shift from the January 2026 MOTN poll, which projected 48 seats for the NDA and 31 for the INDIA bloc. Now, there is a big caveat. The numbers, which are for Lok Sabha polls, do not amount to a prediction for the 2027 Uttar Pradesh assembly elections. But the wider picture points to a political vulnerability for the BJP in a state that has been central to its electoral dominance over the last decade. It is no secret that Uttar Pradesh polls have always set the

tone for the next general elections. With 80 Lok Sabha seats, the state can make or break a national political narrative. This is exactly why the battle for UP next year will be one of the closely watched elections.

WHY BJP FACES A TOUGH



CHALLENGE IN UTTAR PRADESH?

You might attribute it to the recent Gen Z anger over unemployment and exam-related irregularities, but psephologist Yashwant Deshmukh suggested that the more consequential shift could be taking place among Gen X. The group includes people born between 1965 and 1980.

Of late, the upper castes, BJP's core vote base, have been upset with the party over the University Grants Commission (UGC) equity regulations aimed at preventing caste discrimination in educational institutions. While the regulations have been put on hold, the Centre has not withdrawn them, sparking unease among the upper castes. The issue has also sparked a massive protest by an outfit, Reservation Hatao Andolan, at Delhi's Jantar Mantar. The outfit has demanded that reservation be determined strictly by income levels rather than social or caste identities. Deshmukh said Gen X experienced the Mandal Commission upheaval in 1989, and the UGC issue was now bringing those memories back. "The main issue is UGC. People are talking about Gen Z, but the focus should actually shift to Gen X. Because it was Gen X which faced the Mandal Commission way back in 1989," he said during a panel discussion on. Deshmukh underlined that Gen X fear that their children could face similar consequences.

AMC Roads Committee Confronts Administration Over Naroda Patiya Flyover Delays

All eyes on whether AMC Commissioner Banchhanidhi Pani will take action

MAHANAGAR METRO

Ahmedabad. A sharp confrontation has emerged between the elected wing and the administrative body of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) over prolonged delays in the construction of the Naroda Patiya flyover. In a strongly worded letter to the Deputy Municipal Commissioner, AMC Roads and Buildings Committee Chairman Jainik Vakil demanded accountability regarding the slow progress, questioning the coordination between civic engineers, consulting agencies, and private contractors. The escalating controversy has drawn widespread attention, with civic observers closely watching AMC Commissioner Banchhanidhi Pani for decisive administrative action against potential corruption and systemic mismanagement. The ongoing construction at the critical eastern junction has caused severe disruptions for local residents and daily commuters. Road narrowing caused by the project has forced the suspension and rerouting of key BRTS and AMTS bus services traveling from Naroda to Patiya, leading to persistent traffic congestion and significant passenger hardship. In his official communication, Vakil raised critical procedural questions, challenging why a formal work order



was issued to the contractor before securing full site clearance and mapping vital underground utilities, including gas, drainage, and electricity networks. The letter specifically highlighted that the project has exceeded its scheduled deadline by 185 days, demanding an explanation of the exact methodology used to calculate this additional timeframe. Furthermore, Vakil sought clarification on whether any disciplinary or legal measures have been initiated against

the project consultant for identified design flaws. The committee chairman also placed the ₹50 lakh penalty imposed on the contractor under scrutiny, ordering a comprehensive report on the specific legal frameworks and tender provisions applied to determine that amount. The detailed inquiry has triggered an intense internal debate across the AMC administration regarding project oversight and accountability. As the controversy deepens, all eyes

are now firmly fixed on AMC Commissioner Banchhanidhi Pani to see whether he will initiate a much-needed administrative 'clean-up' within the allegedly corruption-ridden civic departments. Citizens and urban experts alike are demanding stringent accountability, arguing that imposing a mere financial penalty on the private contractor is insufficient to address the systemic negligence plaguing the city's infrastructure projects. If the municipal administration fails to take swift, transparent, and strict disciplinary action against the erring engineers and consulting agencies, it risks further alienating a public already exhausted by daily traffic bottlenecks and diverted transit routes. Ultimately, the Naroda Patiya flyover fiasco has become a crucial litmus test for the AMC's commitment to timely urban development. Resolving this bureaucratic standoff efficiently is essential not only to restore smooth traffic flow in the eastern zone but also to rebuild public trust in the civic body's ability to manage large-scale investments without falling prey to administrative apathy and vested interests. Would you like me to combine this with the previous text and format the entire piece as a formal press release?

Derek O'Brien, Abhishek Banerjee named in FIR after TMC signboard removal turns ugly

Kolkata,. (Agency)

Kolkata Police have registered an FIR against Trinamool Congress leaders Derek O'Brien, Abhishek Banerjee, Humayun Kabir, Baisanor Chattopadhyay and others following a confrontation during the removal of an unauthorised signboard from a building on Camac Street on Thursday afternoon. The incident took place at Camac Street, which houses the office of TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee. Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) personnel, accompanied by Kolkata Police, reached the building to remove a signboard carrying the words "All India Trinamool Congress." According to Kolkata Police, the KMC had submitted a written request seeking police assistance to carry out the removal of the unauthorised hoarding. Police claimed that the TMC leaders and their supporters formed an unlawful assembly and obstructed police personnel and KMC officials from performing their duties. The FIR was registered at Shakespear Sarani Police Station under Sections 191(2), 191(3), 190, 121(1), 74, 3(5) and 351(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Police have also said that personnel were assaulted during the confrontation. **NOTICE LACKED RELEVANT DETAILS: O'BRIEN** However, TMC leader Derek O'Brien rejected the allegations and accused the civic authorities and police of acting illegally.



In a first, Vijay ditches his CM chair, sits with ministers in Tamil Nadu Assembly

Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay moved from his designated chair and sat beside ministers in the Tamil Nadu Assembly. The unusual shift came amid a discussion on officials' presence in the House and broke with established seating practice.

Chennai (Agency)

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay broke with a long-standing Assembly convention on Thursday when he moved away from his designated chair and sat alongside ministers in the front row during the afternoon session of the state Assembly. Vijay's move drew attention as chief ministers traditionally occupy a separate chair positioned close to the Speaker's seat. Ministers sit separately in the front row alongside the Chief Minister, with their positions generally determined by seniority. **JUST NOW : Our Chief @TVKVijayHQ Arrived In Assembly !** The Leader of the Opposition and leaders of various legislature parties are seated according to

their numerical strength in the 234-member House, with members of their respective



parties seated behind them.! #CMVijay #TNSLA #TamilNaduAssembly #Vijay pic.twitter.com/LYHQKUuaWO— Bharathi Dasan (@MrBharathiDasan) August 27, 2026

During Thursday's afternoon proceedings, Vijay casually left his designated chair, located to the right of Speaker JCD Prabhakar, and took a seat between ministers KA Sengottaiyan, who is also the Leader of the House, and Aadhav Arjuna. CM Vijay is in some discussion with Minister K A S pic.twitter.com/CynRjQChQB— Actor Vijay FC (@ActorVijayFC) August 27, 2026 A source said it was unusual for a chief minister to move from the chair specifically designated for the post and sit in a seat meant for a minister. While ministers and legislators occasionally change seats for brief conversations with colleagues, the source said such a move by a chief minister was perhaps unprecedented.

The Lamp of Education: The Life Journey of Late Ratilal Bhai Solanki, an Ideal Teacher of Nilvada

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Education is not merely alphabetical knowledge; it is a powerful medium for building character and a bright future. A gemstone from Nilvada, a small village in the Babra taluka of Amreli district, Late Ratilal Bhai Solanki lived his life as a true testament to this philosophy. Born on February 24, 1945, and having departed for his heavenly abode on June 29, 2025, the life journey of this exceptional teacher remains an inspiring milestone in the field of education. A Simple Life of Values and Dedication Despite the limited resources of a small vil-



lage like Nilvada, Shri Ratilal Bhai never let his thoughts or ideals diminish. His heart was filled with boundless respect and devotion toward education. As an outstanding teacher, he shaped the future of countless students in the classroom. Moreover, he placed the highest priority on education within his own family. He firmly believed that true education is that which makes a human being self-reliant and cultured. The Golden Era of the Family Through Education: Four Children in Government Service The true achievement of Ratilal Bhai's life and the genuine impact of his values are beautifully reflected in his family. He was blessed with four children—two daughters and two sons. Free from any gender bias, he raised all four of them with high moral values and excellent education. It was a direct result of his rigorous hard work, guidance, and upbringing that today all four of his children are successfully employed in prestigious government positions: * One is serving as a College Professor, imparting higher education. * Another is shaping young minds as a High School Teacher. * The others are dedicated to nurturing early childhood as Primary School Teachers. As a father and a teacher, what could be a matter of greater pride than this? Through the power of education, he brought economic prosperity, social respect, and immense happiness to his entire family.

Crane runs over 65-year-old woman in Gurgaon

Noida.(Agency)

A 65-year-old woman died allegedly after a hydraulic crane ran over her near a Toyota showroom on Daulatabad Main Road on Wednesday afternoon. Ramesh Devi was walking home towards Rajendra Park when a crane allegedly hit her from behind around 2.40pm. According to a complaint filed by her son Rajendra, the crane was travelling from Dwarka Expressway side at high speed and was being driven rashly and negligently.

The vehicle's front wheel ran over her after the collision. The driver fled, leaving the crane at the spot, the complaint stated. With the help of passersby, Rajendra took his mother to Civil Hospital, Sector 10. She was later shifted to SPES Hospital near Beri Wala Bagh, where she died during treatment. Based on Rajendra's complaint, a case was registered at Rajendra Park police station under sections 281 (rash driving) and 106 (causing death by negligence) of BNS on Aug 26. In a separate accident, a 28-year-old man died after an unidentified vehicle allegedly hit him while he was crossing Sohna Road near ILD Trade Centre on Tuesday afternoon. Amit, a resident of Delhi, had come to a banquet in Gurgaon to learn photography and videography. According to a complaint filed by Amit's grandfather Shripati Pathak, Amit travelled by metro to Huda City Centre and then took an e-rickshaw to the venue. As he got off near ILD Trade Centre and began crossing the road towards Sohna, an unidentified vehicle hit him, Pathak alleged. Amit sustained injuries to both legs and was taken to Shri Sai Hospital, Badshahpur, where he received treatment and was discharged. His condition later deteriorated, and his family took him to Medanta Hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

Police received information from Medanta on Aug 25 that Amit had been brought dead. A team reached the hospital and collected the medico-legal report and other documents. Pathak submitted his written complaint the following day, alleging that Amit died from external and internal injuries sustained in the accident.

A case was registered at Sadar Gurgaon police station under sections 281 and 106 of BNS. Police are investigating the case and trying to identify the vehicle involved.

Revamp of Pushta road to complement Noida Expressway begins

Noida.(Agency)

Noida Authority and the irrigation department have started redeveloping the 11.2km Yamuna Pushta road stretching from Okhla Barrage to Sector 135. Built in 2014, the four-lane stretch sees spillover traffic from Noida Expressway but is currently filled with potholes and rough patches. Officials said that once redeveloped, the road will allow commuters to bypass the expressway, which is expected to see huge traffic volume as passenger footfall picks up at Noida International Airport in Jewar, to reach adjacent residential sectors. NHAI and Noida Authority are also planning an eight-lane elevated expressway over Pushta Road to decongest further the 25km expressway, which receives traffic from multiple entry points, including DND Flyway,

Chilla border and Kalindi Kunj. Traffic from adjoining residential and commercial areas also merges onto the corridor during office hours, often resulting in slow-moving traffic and longer commute times.

Once revamped, the four-lane Pushta Road is expected to serve adjacent sectors, including 94, 125-128, 132 and 135, as well as areas such as Asgharpur, Raipur, Nangla Nangli and Wajidpur villages. The 50km elevated expressway — spanning Sector 94 to Sector 23C under Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA), where it will meet the Faridabad-Jewar Greenfield Expressway — is expected to divert traffic for Noida International Airport and areas under YEIDA from Noida Expressway. SK Maheshwari, a resident of Jaypee Wish Town in Sector 128, said hundreds of people use Pushta

Road every day, but potholes, dust and roadside debris have made it difficult to travel on the road. "As data centres, multiple manufacturing units and



residential projects are coming up along the two expressways in the district, civic infrastructure needs to be developed. But the existing ones should be revamped first. It is time that Authority repairs Pushta Road to ease rush-hour tailbacks on the expressway," he said. Currently, earthwork, levelling and

widening of the existing carriageway of Pushta Road are underway. The project, estimated at Rs 34 crore, is expected to be completed within three months.

Officials said the redevelopment will include development of road shoulders, finishing of edges, installation of crash barriers, road markings, signage, painting and street lighting and electrical works wherever required.

"We have started the redevelopment of this road. The teams are working to level the road and then resurface it.

Crash barriers, painting and other works will also be carried out. The redevelopment will be completed in three months," Noida Authority general manager AK Arora said. Authority is also planning to upgrade the remaining 10-km stretch of Pushta Road towards Sector 150, the official said.

In Gurgaon, Creta driver runs over BBA student on morning walk

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 21-year-old second-year BBA student died after the driver of a Creta hit him from behind while he was on a morning walk with his elder brother near Gokulam society in Sohna on Wednesday morning. The driver fled from the spot, but the victim's brother, a lawyer, noted the vehicle's registration number. Police have registered a case and are looking for the driver.

Police said Cash Raghav and his brother Gaurav, residents of Defence Colony in Sector 4, had gone for a walk towards

Baluda village around 6 am on Wednesday. While returning home, a black Creta allegedly approached from behind at high speed and hit Cash near Gokulam Society, barely 1.3 km from his home. Gaurav told police he noted the vehicle's registration number (HR76H3514) before it fled. Cash sustained severe injuries. With the help of Rakesh, a resident of Harinagar, who was passing by, Gaurav arranged a vehicle and took his brother to a govt hospital in Sohna, but doctors declared him dead.

"Police should trace the driver and arrest

him at the earliest. He didn't even bother to check on my brother after hitting him," Gaurav said. Cash was pursuing a BBA at a private institute in the city.

Following the complaint, police registered a case under BNS sections 281 (rash driving), 106 (causing death due to negligence) and 125(A) (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety) at Sohna City police station. Police are also checking CCTV footage obtained from nearby areas to trace the Creta driver. Police said Gaurav's statement was recorded at the hospital mortuary, following which the case was registered.

Illegal gates, road blockages in Palam Vihar demolished

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Unauthorised construction by a group housing colony in Sector 110A and around 12 illegal gates and walls blocking internal roads in C and D blocks of Palam Vihar were demolished after locals complained to the authorities that they could not access common areas. The district town planner (enforcement) Amit Madholia said they had received several alerts about encroachment in public spaces during a samadhan shivir and launched two demolition drives to clear the illegal construction. The first enforcement action was carried out at Mahindra Aura, a group housing colony in Sector 110A under the jurisdiction of Bajghera police station. As part of the drive, violations that were not part of the approved layout plan were identified at the site and subsequently razed, an official said. A second, more extensive demolition drive was carried out in C and D blocks of Palam Vihar, under the jurisdiction of Palam Vihar police

station. The department demolished 12 unauthorised gates and walls that had been erected over internal roads of a licensed residential colony. Madholia said the action was taken so that



blockages do not restrict emergency access and movement of vehicles. The action in Palam Vihar is significant as unauthorised gates and walls on internal roads can restrict access to common areas and create difficulties for residents, visitors and emergency

services. Officials said internal roads in licensed colonies cannot be appropriated or blocked through unauthorised structures. A Palam Vihar resident welcomed the removal of the obstructions, saying the internal roads should remain accessible to all residents and should not be blocked through privately erected gates or walls. However, some residents criticised the move. There was an altercation between officials and some residents of the area, which escalated into a heated exchange of words. They said the demolition took place without any prior notice or discussion. One of the residents who opposed the drive said, "These gates were put up for the security and convenience of residents. Now that they have been removed suddenly, we are concerned about our safety." Officials, however, maintained that the structures had been erected illegally over internal roads of the licensed colony and could not be allowed to obstruct common access. The department proceeded with the action despite the objections.

Revamp delayed, Ghaziabad railway station chokes under festive rush

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

The festive rush on account of Eid-e-Milad and Raksha Bandhan choked Ghaziabad railway station and the bus terminals, with footfall rising to almost double the daily average.

The crowding revived memories of the crush at New Delhi Railway Station on Feb 15 last year when a wave of pilgrims tried to board trains bound for Prayagraj for the Maha Kumbh festival, leaving at least 18 people dead. A subsequent inquiry found that the station held far more people than it was built to handle, a situation worsened by the continuous sale of unreserved tickets.

Since Wednesday, Ghaziabad railway station, which sees an average daily footfall of 50,000 passengers, has also recorded over one lakh passengers. The overcrowding has been compounded by the lack of a passenger retention and crowd-holding area at the station, even as its expansion plans have remained in the pipeline for years. Ram Vilas, who was trying to catch a train at the station on Thursday, told TOI, "There was such a rush that it was impossible to buy a ticket from the counter where people are falling on each other. I tried to get one but failed and I was left with no other option but

board the train without a ticket."

The station, spread across 1.5 lakh sqm, is one of 508 stations across the country being redeveloped under the central govt's Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. The revamp began in January 2023 with a completion timeline of 30 months, but over three years later, only around 40% of the work has been completed. Officials said that civil work related to the quarter building and station entry has started, but work on the concourse is yet to begin. According to the plan, the single-storey building will be converted into a three-storey complex equipped with foot overbridges, escalators, automatic ticket vending machines and multilevel parking. The redevelopment project, which is estimated to cost Rs 350 crore, is important for the timely decongestion of railway stations in Delhi. A 24-km skywalk will integrate the six existing platforms, and two foot overbridges with ramps will be constructed to provide hassle-free commuting. Multilevel parking and a dedicated lane within the station premises will come up for e-buses.



Additionally, a Signal Training school and 96 railway quarters will also come up here. At UPSRTC's Kaushambi bus depot, meanwhile, footfall in the last two days was recorded at around 2.5 lakh. The number of buses operating out of the terminal rose starkly from the average 800 to around 1,200 over the last two days. "This is mostly on account of the state govt announcing free bus service for women passengers which includes one attendant and commuters is availing the facility which led to an unprecedented increase in the footfall," said Kesari Nandan, regional manager, UPSRTC. "We are also already running additional

bus services on various routes which include western, eastern and central UP districts. "The free service can be availed from 6am on Thursday till midnight on Saturday. Puja Kumari, who was headed to Aligarh on Thursday, said, "I had a tough time just reaching the Kaushambi depot through the skywalk. The crowd was crushing and even after reaching bus depot there was little respite as there were no place to even sit. Waterlogging has also made matters worse. Everyone tried to get under shelter which was cramped for space." Modernisation of the three bus depots managed by UPSRTC — Old Bus Adda, Kaushambi and Sahibabad — was announced in 2022, with a deadline of 24 months. However, revamp work has only begun at Old Bus Adda, while Kaushambi and Sahibabad depots have seen no progress on the ground. An official attributed delays to issues arising from incorporating the transit-oriented development (TOD) policy at the two depots, which come under the rapid rail influence zone. The official said that GDA and NCRTC have not been able to reach a consensus over the FAR.

Andhra government declares Panchadarla hills a 'No Mining Zone'

VISAKHAPATNAM. (Agency)

The State government has declared the Panchadarla Pilgrimage Hills in Rambilli mandal of Anakapalli district a 'No Mining Zone', citing the religious, cultural, archaeological, ecological and hydrological significance of the hills.

It has also initiated the termination of a 10-year gravel quarry lease spread over 2.153 hectares in Survey No.1 of Panchadarla village.

The lease, held by Vijay Kumar Naidu Dasammani, granted in May this year, was originally valid until May 14, 2036. The decision assumes significance given the archaeological and environmental importance of the Panchadarla temple and its surroundings.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) documented 17 inscriptions at the Panchadarla temple in Dharapalem in the year 1899. The inscriptions have since been published in South Indian Inscriptions, Volume VI, providing historical records of the rulers, queens, religious endowments and construction activities associated with the temple and the region.

This place derives its name from five jets of water gushing from five fountains. One inscription records that a ruler built the Antaralamandapa of the temple and that his queen, Virama, constructed a tank known as Virasagara. Another inscription records the construction of a gopura at the Southern entrance of the temple by Sridhara-Rajamarendramahapatra on the banks of the Panchadhara.

Seven killed, 10 injured as private bus rams into auto in Andhra's Palnadu district

VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)

Seven people were killed and 10 others injured in a road accident when a private travel bus rammed an auto-rickshaw at Addaroad Centre near Chilakaluripet in Palnadu district in the wee hours of Thursday.

The accident occurred when the victims were returning to their native Veluru village after attending a birthday celebration at Kondamanjulu in Prakasam district. All travelling in the auto were hailing from Veluru, said the police.

According to police, the deceased were identified as Bontha Babu, Bontha Manemma, Sampurnamma, Lakshamma, Gangamma, Mariamma and Choutapalli Suvatha. The impact was reportedly severe, leaving seven occupants dead on spot and 10 others with serious injuries.

Four of the injured were said to be in critical condition. They were shifted to the Guntur Government General Hospital (GGH) for advanced treatment. Police and local residents launched rescue operations immediately after receiving information about the accident and shifted the injured to hospitals. A case has been registered and an investigation is underway. Police are examining the circumstances that led to the collision, including the speed of the private bus and possible negligence.

NLSIU cancels annual convocation amid student pushback over CJI Surya Kant's attendance

BENGALURU. (Agency)

National Law School of India University (NLSIU) on Thursday cancelled its 34th annual convocation, initially scheduled to be held on September 12. The development comes amid a pushback from students against the attendance of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant, who was slated to attend the convocation meant for the 2026 graduating batch of the university. A circular was issued by the NLSIU administration on Thursday morning to the graduating students, in which it cited "unavoidable circumstances" as the reason behind the cancellation.

"On August 3, 2026, the academic administration team had emailed the graduating students with advance notice of September 12, 2026, as the proposed date for the convocation. Despite our collective best efforts, due to unavoidable circumstances, we are unable to hold the 34th annual convocation," the circular read. This is the first time after the Covid-19 pandemic that the university has cancelled a convocation ceremony.

NLSIU to award law degrees 'in absentia' this year

Graduating students of the 2026 batch will be conferred their degrees 'in absentia' after due approvals by NLSIU's governing bodies. The students were left with the choice of receiving their certificates via courier or collecting them at the NLSIU campus.

'Institutionalised corruption' in Punjab: HC seeks state response, ED letters to DGP

The nature of allegations made are serious and would require a careful response from the respondents,' says Bench, issues notice of motion to Centre, ED, CBI

Chandigarh. (Agency)

The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Thursday sought to know from the Punjab government what action it proposed to take on allegations of "large-scale and institutionalised corruption" involving senior state officials, observing that the "nature of allegations made are serious" and would require a "careful response from the respondents".

A Division Bench of Acting Chief Justice Ashwani Kumar Mishra and Justice Rohit Kapoor also directed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to place before it the communications allegedly sent to the Punjab Director-General of Police (DGP) and sought the State's stand on the matter.

"Before we proceed to take cognizance of the grievance raised...it would be appropriate to call upon the counsel representing ED, to place before the court the communications sent to the DGP...as is alleged by the petitioner. If such

communication is sent, we would also like to know from the Advocate-General, Punjab, as to what stand/action is proposed to be taken by the State police and the State itself,"



the bench said while listing the matter for September 3.

The directions came on a petition filed by Advocate Nikhil Saraf alleging abuse of official position, criminal conspiracy and manipulation of governmental, tender and administrative processes. The petition alleges that senior Punjab officials were

involved in various scams, including "cash for transfers; cash for getting favourable policies; cash for tenders, and such other illegal activities".

The petitioner claimed that the ED had sent communications under Section 66(2) of the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, 2002, to the State authorities, but alleged that no action had followed despite the allegations of corruption in high public office.

Appearing for ED, Additional Solicitor General of India Satya Pal Jain, assisted by Senior Panel Counsel Lokesh Narang, told the court that three communications had been sent to the Punjab DGP on July 24, July 31 and August 7, 2026. The counsel said the communications were on similar lines to the allegations made in the petition.

"...the nature of allegations made are serious and would require a careful response from the respondents," the Bench observed and subsequently issued notice of motion, with counsel accepting notice for the State, the

Union of India, the ED and the CBI.

Advocate General, Punjab, however, questioned the maintainability of the writ petition and raised objections regarding the petitioner's credentials.

The plea seeks an independent investigation into vehicle procurements, alleged illegal gratification and related offences. The petitioner has contended that the existing investigating machinery is "institutionally connected to the persons against whom allegations are made", creating a potential conflict of interest. The petitioner has sought transfer of the investigation to an independent agency, preferably the CBI, along with a comprehensive probe into vehicle procurements during the relevant period. The petitioner further alleged that a detailed complaint submitted to the Punjab Vigilance Bureau on October 31, 2025, along with invoices, comparative analysis and supporting documents, had not led to registration of an FIR or a meaningful investigation.

Cops attacked, tear gas shells fired: Worker's death sparks violence in Gujarat Vadodara. (Agency)

A gathering of villagers demanding compensation for a factory worker's death in a village in Gujarat's Anand district escalated into violence, stone-pelting, and vandalism on Thursday, prompting the police to fire tear-gas shells and carry out a lathi-charge. Five people, including three policemen, were injured in the incident.

The clash in Kalamsar village in Khambhat taluka centred on the death of Ranjitsinh Natubhai Singha, who had joined Rohan Dyes and Intermediates Ltd 15 days ago. He died after an iron pole allegedly fell on him and another tribal worker, Shaktisinh, while they were working on Thursday. While Shaktisinh suffered minor injuries, Singha sustained serious injuries to his leg. He was first shifted to a hospital in Khambhat and later referred to a hospital in Karamsad, where he died late on Thursday.

As news of his death reached Kalamsar, villagers gathered and moved towards the factory, demanding justice and compensation for his wife and two children. **Anger mounts, 8 tear gas shells fired** The police, who stopped the crowd before it could proceed further, said that Singha's family and villagers initially demanded Rs 50 lakh from the company. As negotiations continued, anger at the site mounted. According to the police, some people began pelting stones. Deputy Superintendent of Police HB Vaghela said the situation rapidly spun out of control. "The people started pelting stones heavily and the situation escalated... the police released eight tear gas shells to disperse the mob. Three policemen suffered simple injuries," Vaghela said. Windows of police vehicles and private vehicles were damaged in the violence. The standoff ended after the company agreed to pay Rs 30 lakh in compensation, police officials said.

Police presence ramped up Additional police teams were rushed to Kalamsar from Khambhat and neighbouring areas. Personnel from the Local Crime Branch, Special Operations Group, Parole Furlough Squad and nearby police stations were deployed. Senior officers also reached the village late at night to bring the situation under control. "Tight security has been arranged in the village as well as at the company, and night patrolling was intensified," Vaghela said.

'Brothers weren't there for us': Abandoned by family, Marathwada women found sisterhood in each other

Mumbai. (Agency)

In parts of Maharashtra's Marathwada region, Raksha Bandhan can be a difficult festival for women who are widowed, abandoned or separated from their husbands. Considered "inauspicious" by some, these women have faced social restrictions around participating in festivities, including Raksha Bandhan. Since 2023, however, single women have been challenging this practice by tying rakhis to one another. This year, women across 40 villages in Beed, Dharashiv, Latur and Nanded are celebrating the festival together.

For them, rakhi is a symbol of relationships they have built with women who stand by them when families do not. The initiative was led by seven grassroots organisations — Samata Pratishthan, Committee of Resource Organisation (CORO), Lokprabodhan Sanstha, Swavalambi Social Welfare Foundation, Aadhar Samajik Sanstha, Gramin Vikas Sanstha and Vanchit Hakk

Andolan. It began with a handful of women questioning the need for such a celebration. Now, it's a network of 300 women. The group includes widows, separated, divorced and unmarried women. Some live



separately from their husbands — a situation locally described as paritakta. **'Why tie rakhi if your brother is not there for you?'**

For some women, the decision to celebrate Raksha Bandhan differently comes from years of feeling excluded from the festival itself.

The Nalagarh trail: How terror handlers turned Punjab's vulnerable youth into foot soldiers

An investigation into the January blast at Nalagarh police station reveals a layered network in which foreign-based handlers allegedly recruited drug-addicted youth and used them as foot soldiers for terror

Shimla. (Agency)

At that exact moment — 9:40 AM on January 1, 2026 — Nalagarh appeared on the radar of the country's counter terrorism grid. It was a Thursday and the residents of this languid town were busy with their familiar routines. Once a princely state set up by Chandel Rajputs, Nalagarh is now a major industrial hub and the gateway to Himachal Pradesh that lies closer to neighbouring Chandigarh than the capital Shimla.

Suddenly, a deafening explosion shattered the morning calm. Triggered by an improvised explosive device (IED), the blast was powerful enough to shatter the window panes of the police station and damage an under-construction Retired Army Personnel Association building some 45 metres away.

The explosion, later claimed by banned

Khalistani outfits such as Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) and Punjab Sovereignty Alliance (PSA) through an Instagram post, caused no casualties, officials say.



But in a state that rarely sees terrorist attacks, it did what it set out to do — send shockwaves across Himachal's security establishment. "It was not aimed at killing," one officer of the Punjab Police, who was part of the investigation, told The Indian

Express. "But it was intended to create fear, demonstrate the operational reach of the terror outfit and send a threatening message to the police establishment."

The attack was Himachal's second terror attack in two decades and the first time the state had seen a bomb blast. But the investigation that followed showed something even more alarming: it revealed how cross-border terror networks had changed tack, recruiting Punjab's drug-addicted youth to be foot soldiers for a strike engineered abroad.

This terror attack was also significant because it was a breach in the security in Baddi-Barotiwala-Nalagarh industrial corridor. On August 13, India's premier anti-terror agency, the National Investigation Agency (NIA), formally arrested three people, Mahavir Kumar alias Kaka, Ajay Mehra and Manpreet Singh alias Mani, in connection with the attack.

MPSC 7th rank holder Rutuja reveals paper leak plot to evade detection: 'Get 10 wrong'

Mumbai. (Agency)

Rutuja Patil, the 25-year-old who score 7th rank on the provisional merit list for the MPSC exam was instructed to give wrong answers for 10 question in the exam meant for drug inspectors held on March 22 this year. She was told by other accused that if she answered all 100 questions right, it would raise suspicion.

An official said that the Maharashtra Public Service Commission's drug inspector's exam had been conducted after a gap of nearly a decade due to which there was a lot of interest. The police have found that of the 294 questions that were leaked from the meta set from which the final question paper was to be finalised, 77 actually appeared in the question paper. "Apart from the 77 she answered right as she had prior access, she answered 14 more correctly and overall gave right answers to 91 questions and stood 7th," a source said. Explaining how the questions were leaked, an officer said that Vishveshwar Nakate, an Assistant Section

Officer from MPSC had the job of keeping the meta set under his care. Of the meta set, he typed out 300 questions on his laptop and printed it out.

This was handed over to Abhijit Lendve, Under Secretary of the Public Service Commission, in the parking lot of the Commission's office building before the examination. Lendve gave the question set received by him to wanted accused Gopal Marathe in the parking lot of the Commission's office building.

The question set in the possession of Gopal Marathe was given to Pravin Patil, who ran a coaching class, in the premises of the Commission's office before the examination.

This was later given to the Rutuja's father who handed it over to her. The girl sent it to her boyfriend Gaurav Patil on March 20, two days before the examination on March 22. An officer said, "She gave the paper to Gaurav as his brother too was appearing for

the same exam. However, his brother did not clear the exam. Gaurav claims that this was because he did give his brother the paper due to sibling rivalry." The police are however



taking this claim with a pinch of salt as they believe he wants to save his brother. "Another angle to this is that Rutuja had been asking him for part of the Rs Five lakhs her father had paid and he did not give the paper to his brother or pretended not to so that he

Police say 77 leaked questions appeared in paper; probe traces alleged leak from MPSC office to coaching class and finally to candidate

wouldn't have to pay," an officer said.

The officer said that they are checking if part of the reason why the couple parted ways was due to a fight over sharing the money paid to procure the paper. "We've also found that the girls family was not willing to get her married to Gaurav due to which she was staying away from him," the officer said.

An officer said that they are checking if Pravin Patil who runs a coaching class had in the past too used the same network to leak papers for other exams conducted by MPSC.

So far a total of six persons have been arrested while two others including Rutuja have been named as wanted accused in the case. "We will seek their custody during the course of the probe," the officer added. The six accused are in police custody till September 2.

A confluence of complaints on the western horizon

Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi recently made an observation which deserves attention beyond his country. He declared that Pakistan's governance system had effectively "collapsed" and could no longer adequately address the country's challenges. He subsequently clarified that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would complete his five-year term, without withdrawing his diagnosis of the system itself. Naqvi is no ordinary Cabinet minister. A former journalist and media entrepreneur, he became caretaker Chief Minister of Punjab before emerging as interior minister, chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board and president of the Asian Cricket Council. Even without a traditional electoral constituency or political dynasty behind him, his influence is considerable. Exceptionally close to Field Marshal Asim Munir, he is increasingly perceived as an important civilian face of Pakistan's military establishment.

His rise therefore merits attention in India.

The parliamentary term of governments in Pakistan is five years. Yet no elected Prime Minister has completed a full tenure. Governments have fallen through military intervention, dismissal, judicial disqualification, assassination, resignation and parliamentary manoeuvre, many times when they are around three years old.

×The third year, consequently, acquires an almost psychological significance, when economic dissatisfaction, political opposition and establishment calculations can begin converging. Shehbaz Sharif's government is entering this zone, although there is no evidence that it is about to fall. More interesting is whether Pakistan's familiar hybrid arrangement between civilian authority and military influence is evolving.

Naqvi could illustrate that evolution—a civilian without an independent political base, trusted by the establishment and operating across politics, security and diplomacy. Pakistan may not require another conventional military takeover; its hybrid system could simply acquire different civilian faces. Naqvi's importance extends beyond Islamabad. In June, he travelled to Tehran carrying a special communication from Munir for Iran's Supreme Leader and a message from Shehbaz Sharif. Pakistan's PM subsequently publicly acknowledged Naqvi's contribution to the diplomatic process involving Iran and the US.

Naqvi is also a Shia in a country where the community has historically faced considerable sectarian pressure. His identity should not be over-interpreted, but it adds an interesting dimension to his usefulness in engagement with Iran.

The larger point is that an interior minister has emerged as a strategic emissary on one of Pakistan's most sensitive external relationships. He, therefore, sits unusually close to both Pakistan's internal-security machinery and its external strategic establishment. That makes his warning about governance particularly noteworthy. Instead of predicting Pakistan's next political crisis, it may be more useful to ask whether the country is accumulating some of the conditions historically associated with sudden political mobilisation. The demographic evidence is striking. Pakistan is one of the world's youngest large nations. UNDP has estimated that 64 percent of its population is below 30. More recent World Bank data shows that 28.5 percent of Pakistanis aged 15-24 were neither in employment, education nor training in 2025. Numbers alone do not produce upheaval. Expectations matter. The Pakistani youth of 2026 is digitally connected to the world. He or she observes opportunity, prosperity, lifestyles and mobility elsewhere while confronting economic uncertainty, constrained employment, political confrontation and governance deficiencies at home. This creates an aspiration-governance gap.

Handle AI detection with caution

It could become another chokepoint through which information is authenticated and trusted

ARTIFICIAL intelligence (AI) has created a clear authorship problem. Articles, reviews and literary work can now be produced with little human involvement. It is therefore unsurprising that AI-writing detection programmes have become commonplace. The latest entrant in this field is Pangram Labs, which claims an accuracy of 99.98%. Pangram is notable because it analyses bodies of public writing and publishes conclusions on whether they are AI-generated. It investigated winners of the Commonwealth Short Story Prize and publicly reported that four of the ten recent regional winners showed strong signs of AI usage in their writing. Pangram also has a browser extension that scans text on feeds such as LinkedIn, Substack and Reddit and inserts labels such as "Human" or "AI" as users browse.

Pangram has its share of critics. The Wall Street Journal editor James Taranto called Pangram a "smear machine" after three editorial columns in his newspaper were labelled as AI-generated. American journalist Taylor Lorenz was accused on X of using AI to write an article for Vanity Fair. Lorenz denied the allegation, and Pangram CEO Max Spero investigated the result and concluded that the detector had made an error. Newspapers Today, much of the debate around AI detectors is about their accuracy and the reputational harm to writers. However, for countries that rely on externally developed digital systems, the implications go beyond individual reputation.

Consider this scenario: a respected figure publishes a serious strategic paper that challenges a widely accepted position. It is run through Pangram and tagged as 71% AI-generated. It triggers a social media storm and the writer is discredited. The arguments made in the paper are not even debated. A technical judgment about how a piece of writing may have been produced becomes a verdict about its intellectual credibility. This has deeper implications in an age where authenticity, credibility and belief are increasingly contested. It could be argued that AI detectors are neutral tools, devoid of any geopolitical significance or power. This would be an extremely simplistic way of thinking. We have been on this ground before. Search engines arrived as simple tools to find what already existed on the Internet. It took many years to realise that Google does not merely retrieve information.

It ranks, curates and contextualises it. A change in ranking logic can amplify one political framing and bury another, elevate one interpretation of a crisis, shape what billions encounter first, and therefore what they are most likely to believe. Social media was initially seen as a neutral connection to interact with friends. We now understand that these platforms shape perceptions, inflame emotions and could even divide societies. Social media has become an indispensable tool in information warfare between nations. In both cases, the consequences went far beyond viewing the technology as an unbiased conduit. AI detection carries a similar potential. It could become another chokepoint through which information is increasingly authenticated and trusted.



GeographicReferenceModern societies have gradually outsourced important parts of the information and knowledge environment to technological systems. Search engines, social media platforms, generative AI, and now AI-detection systems are part of an emerging epistemic infrastructure through which societies discover and authenticate knowledge. In this infrastructure, authentication may prove especially consequential because it acts directly on credibility.

A search result can be buried but still found with effort. Dominant narratives on social media can be countered, even if by a minority. However, an important piece of work classified as inauthentic can be discredited before its arguments are even engaged with, making

authentication a far more potent gatekeeper of credibility. In a post-truth environment, where trust is already fragile, and competing actors routinely seek to undermine the credibility of institutions and experts, authentication becomes a potential instrument of information control.

For India, this should be viewed as more than an academic integrity issue. We already operate in a vulnerable information environment due to our technological dependencies. India relies extensively on platforms, algorithms and AI systems that are foreign-owned and foreign-governed. These technologies already mediate what information is discovered, amplified and consumed. If externally developed authentication systems also begin determining what is considered genuine, another layer of dependence is added to the information environment.

There is another India-specific issue. Models trained largely on native English set the standard for what human writing should look like, and detectors treat departures from that standard as suspect. A 2023 Stanford study found that widely used detectors flagged genuine essays by non-native English writers as AI-generated more than 60% of the time. Peer-reviewed work this year has reported the same bias. Systematic misclassification of this kind could disproportionately discount Indian scholarship, deepening our reliance on foreign strategic thinking. This is why the issue goes beyond academic integrity into national security. Nations are already raising security concerns about who holds their data and who controls the networks they depend on. Authentication raises a further question: who decides what is accepted as genuinely

human-authored? In a contest increasingly fought over credibility and belief, the ability to certify the authenticity of competing ideas is a strategic capability. For India, which produces much of its intellectual and strategic work in English as a second language, the exposure is sharper. This does not mean India should reject foreign technologies or attempt to build indigenous substitutes for every detection system. The larger concern is not where Pangram was built, but the authority we choose to give systems like it. If judgments about whether Indian scholarship, journalism or strategic thought are genuinely human come to depend on opaque external systems, a seemingly narrow question of AI detection could become one of intellectual and strategic autonomy.

Beyond joblessness, government falling far short of own skilling goals

Skilling cannot be reduced to a certificate programme. It has to encompass the all-round development of hard and soft skills

A Niti Aayog report on skilling has got the country worked up by throwing up the alarming estimate of 8.7 crore Indians aged 15-29 who are neither employed, nor engaged in education or training. This is indeed worrying, as the group forms the core of the working-age population and accounts for almost a quarter of the youth in that age bracket. For a global comparison, about a fifth of those aged 15-24 are counted in a similar category. Although the Niti Aayog clarified on Tuesday that the number should not be read as a measure of joblessness, it may not be the most worrying finding in the report. That dubious distinction goes to India's skilling landscape. Sample this: only 8.25 percent of graduates work in roles matching their qualifications, while graduate unemployment stands at 13 percent. Every other informal worker misses out on skilling citing lack of awareness of the right programme. The jobs scarcity is underscored by the fact that between November 2024 and July 2025, the report states, as many as 1.86 crore applications were received for just 55,000 government posts.

It has shown that only one in 12 secondary and higher secondary institutions offers vocational subjects aligned



with the National Skills Qualification Framework, against the National Education Policy 2020 target of exposing half of all learners to vocational programmes by 2025. The government has launched several skilling programmes

and claims to have trained 7.6 crore individuals since 2014-15. However, by its own admission, awareness of these programmes remains abysmally low. Affordability remains another roadblock, heightened by a mix of direct costs, forgone income and limited access to high-quality options. The report offers roadmaps for imparting skills. The key reforms it recommends include universal employability and entrepreneurship skills from Grade 6 through Grade 12, greater public-private partnerships, standalone skilling programmes and enabling learning alongside earning. However, past experience shows that implementation gaps and institutional inefficiencies have been major impediments to achieving such goals, despite successive government efforts.

At a broader level, skilling cannot be reduced to a certificate programme. It has to encompass the all-round development of hard and soft skills. And this requires not just a buoyant economy that can create jobs, but also a robust education system capable of preparing young people for them.

Who is really paying for E20?

➤Pricing a fifth of the petrol pool in rupees is a genuine hedge. But a hedge is insurance, and insurance has a premium. E20's premium has never been priced, disclosed or fairly allocated. Maize farmers and motorists are not gaining. An independent audit is required

India crossed 20 percent ethanol blending in 2025, five years ahead of the deadline it had already advanced once. By April 2026, E20 was the default fuel at pumps nationwide. Measured against its own target, the ethanol-blended petrol programme can be seen as one of the most successfully executed industrial policies of the past decade. That is precisely why it now deserves harder scrutiny. The question is not only whether E20 damages engines or reduces mileage. It is who pays for the blend, who collects the rent, and whether the farmer—the programme's principal moral justification—is anywhere near the front of that queue. The government's ledger is impressive on its face. Since 2014-15, the ministry of petroleum and natural gas puts foreign exchange savings at over ₹1.97 lakh crore, crude substitution at 316 lakh metric tonnes, avoided CO2 emissions at 952 lakh metric tonnes and payments into the farm economy at ₹1.66 lakh crore. Nor is the energy-security argument merely rhetorical. When the West Asia conflict pushed crude up by 70-80 percent after February 2026, ethanol continued to arrive at a fixed, administered price of roughly ₹70 a litre while the Indian basket touched nearly \$135 a barrel. Domestic pump prices rose 7-8 percent. Oil marketing companies absorbed an average under-recovery of about ₹11 a litre—some ₹21,300 crore between March and June—and petrol that might have cost ₹125 was sold at around ₹95 in Delhi. A fifth of the petrol pool priced in rupees, immune to the dollar and to the Hormuz Strait, is a genuine hedge. Any honest critique must concede this. Advertisement×But a hedge is insurance, and insurance has a premium. The programme's central evasion is that this premium has never been priced, disclosed or fairly allocated. Begin with cost. In a written reply to the Lok

Sabha in July, the government disclosed that the weighted average ex-mill price of ethanol for the current supply year is ₹66.61 a litre, and that oil marketing companies' delivered cost, inclusive of GST and freight, hovered at ₹71.10-71.21. Maize-based ethanol, now the single largest feedstock, is procured at ₹71.86 ex-mill.

At any normal crude price, this is comfortably above the refinery cost of the petrol it displaces. Blending, in other words, is no longer a cost-reducing activity; it is a cost-plus one that happens to look cheap during a war. The consumer bears this twice over. Ethanol carries roughly a third less energy per litre than petrol. The petroleum ministry itself concedes a 3-5 percent fuel-economy loss. Niti Aayog's 2021 roadmap was more candid, projecting 6-7 percent for four-wheelers designed for unblended petrol and calibrated for E10, and 3-4 percent for comparable two-wheelers. Yet E20 is sold at exactly the price of the fuel it replaced.

A less energetic fuel sold at parity is a transfer, and it flows from the two-wheeler owner to the ethanol value chain. That transfer could be neutralised at a stroke, and Niti Aayog said as much in 2021 when it recommended that blended fuel be priced lower, or that tax relief compensate for lost efficiency. Neither happened. The excise exemptions extended in June 2026 to E22, E25, E27 and E30 are, by the government's own explanation, only a device to prevent double taxation—not a rebate to the driver. To this day, the ministry has published no per-litre cost stack for E20: not

the depot cost of petrol, not the blending cost, not the tax on each component. Without that disclosure, the claim that E20 is dearer to make cannot be tested, and the question of who pockets the difference cannot be answered. The distribution claim is weaker still. The ₹1.66 lakh crore is not paid to farmers; it is paid to distilleries



and mills, from whom it must travel down to the farmgate. Whether it does is an empirical question with an uncomfortable answer. Agriculture ministry data show that the average mandi price of maize stayed below the minimum support price in every single month from March 2025 to August 2026.

In August, maize averaged just over ₹2,008 a quintal against an MSP of ₹2,410—for a crop the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices sets at ₹1,544. This is the

crop farmers were urged to expand for ethanol; kharif acreage rose to about 9.5 million hectares. Demand did not follow, partly because the state undercut it: surplus Food Corporation of India rice was made available to distilleries at ₹2,320 a quintal, reportedly far below FCI's own acquisition cost, while maize import restrictions were eased. In ethanol supply year 2025-26, grain feedstock accounts for roughly 72 percent of allocation against 28 percent from sugarcane. Karnataka's distillers told the state government plainly that with output caps and thin margins they could not buy maize at MSP. Cane tells a parallel story. Fair and remunerative price was raised by ₹10 to ₹365 a quintal for 2026-27; maize MSP by ₹10. Of ₹1,12,740 crore in cane dues for 2025-26, about ₹99,961 crore had been paid by April 2026—leaving nearly ₹13,000 crore outstanding, with farmer bodies putting the arrears at ₹16,087 crore.

The draft Sugarcane (Control) Order, 2026 formally recognises ethanol as a mill output, counting 600 litres as one tonne of sugar, yet still anchors the grower's entitlement to sugar alone. The rent, predictably, settles where the administered price is fixed: at the distillery gate, cushioned by 5 percent GST, interest subvention and soft loans that pulses and oilseeds never received.

Then there is the resource account. Rice-based ethanol carries a water footprint estimated by the Food Secretary at about 10,790 litres per litre, maize 4,670 and sugarcane 3,630. Industry correctly notes that distilleries themselves consume only 3-4 litres; that is the point—the water is spent in the field, in Maharashtra, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh, where aquifers are already failing.

Mysore

Wayanad

Located between the Kannur and Kozhikode districts in Kerala, Wayanad is a sparkling green emerald sprawled across the slopes of the Western Ghats. The monsoons persevere here—the rainy season starts in June and lasts all the way till mid November—during which the already lush landscape takes on an even more vibrant shade of green, and everything is washed squeaky clean. The most enjoyable way to experience it is by checking into a jungle resort—even better if it has a treehouse. During the occasional dry spells in between, venture out and enjoy everything else the region has to offer. Wayanad ploughs tourists with some interesting prehistoric archaeological sites, tea plantations and thick

forests, and is home to some of the oldest (and most insulated) tribes in India.

Kumarakom

Part of the Kuttanad region, picturesque Kumarakom is an archipelago scattered on the eastern edge of the Vembanad Lake. This area's natural splendour and way of life were vividly described in Arundhati Roy's Man Booker Prize-winning, 'The God of Small Things'. Kumarakom has a string of luxury resorts including the Coconut Lagoon, Kumarakom Lake Resort and Vivanta by Taj - Kumarakom, located right on the backwaters and guests can rove about the canals on boating and fishing trips. The 14-acre Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary is an ornithologist's paradise and home to egrets, darters, herons, herons, waterfowls and kingfishers. The sanctuary also welcomes seasonal guests including the elusive Siberian stork, between the months of November and May.

Kochi

Ancient meets contemporary in Kochi, a lively city at just an hour's drive from Alleppey. Posh cafes sit right by the side of Chinese fishing nets that were installed here in 1350 AD; India's largest man-made island is a major attraction and so is the Paradesi Synagogue that was built in the year 1560. St Francis CSI Church once housed the

remains of Vasco da Gama and is also the oldest European church in India. Kochi also hosts the world famous Kochi-Muziris Biennale, an event that sees much of the city turning into an art exhibition ground. With its potpourri of history, culture, arts and the great Kerala cuisine, Kochi makes for a perfect short trip from Alleppey.

Coonoor

An erstwhile summer refuge to the British, Coonoor retains its colonial tinge to this day, with its club culture, well established boarding schools, sophisticated architecture and a distinct plantation lifestyle. Travellers love this tea town for its relatively quieter environs as compared to Ooty, and if you're drawn to the outdoors, here are our top picks for how you can fill your days.

Bandipur National Park

Bandipur National Park one of the most stunning National Parks in India. Situated between the picturesque Western Ghats next to the

Maharaja of Mysore. It's now home to elephants, gaurs, tigers, sloth bears, muggers, Indian rock pythons and Dholes. The park was established in 1974 as a tiger reserve under Project Tiger and has a good number of Tigers. Birds like the jungle fowl and green pigeon are also found here.

Ooty

The most famous hill station south of the Vindhyas, Ootacamund's resplendent tea plantations and red-roofed bungalows still carry echoes of its colonial past. Originally a densely forested area in the Nilgiri mountains, it was converted into a summer retreat for the British in the 19th century. The undeniable natural beauty of Ooty (as it's universally referred to) and its misty green trails continues to draw visitors every year. Ooty is pleasant all year round, but the summer months are the high season. If you want to avoid the crowds and don't mind a drizzle then head here between August and November, when the rains turn the hills a luxuriant green.

Kozhikode

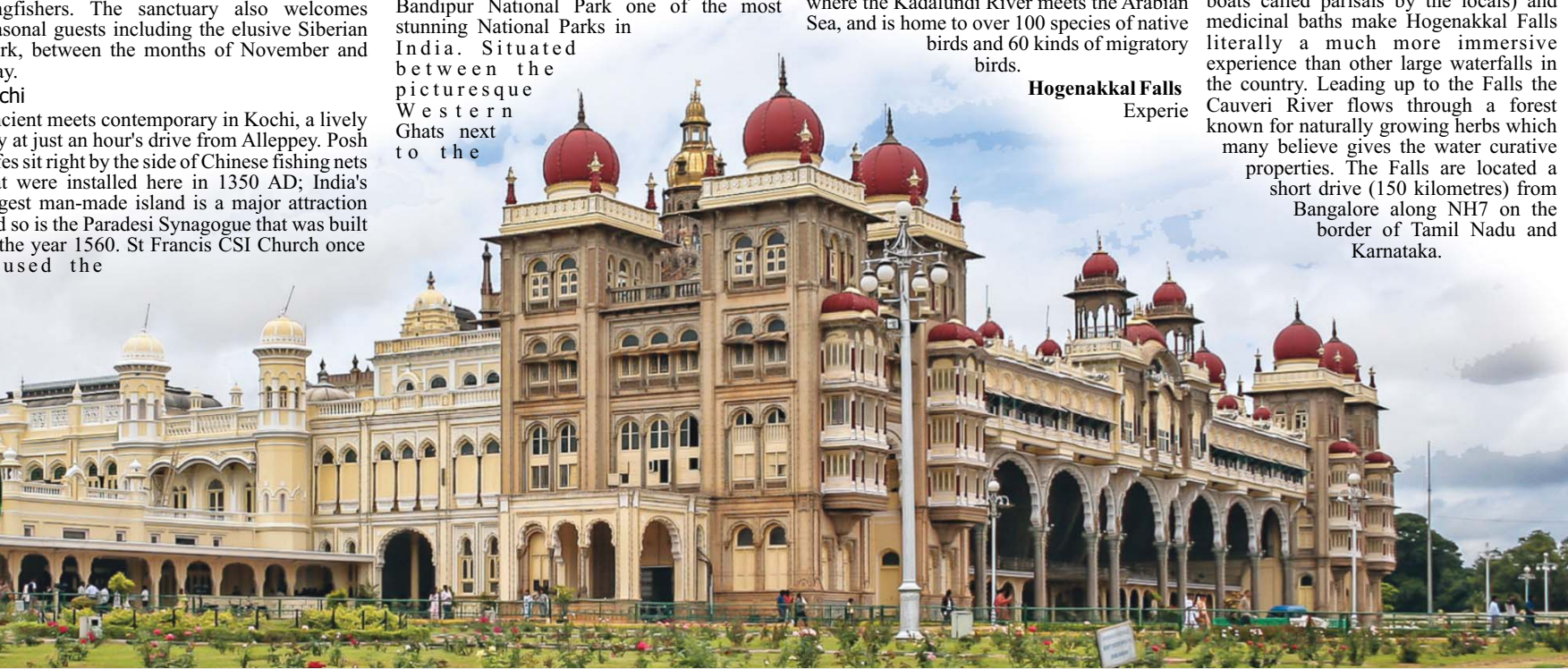
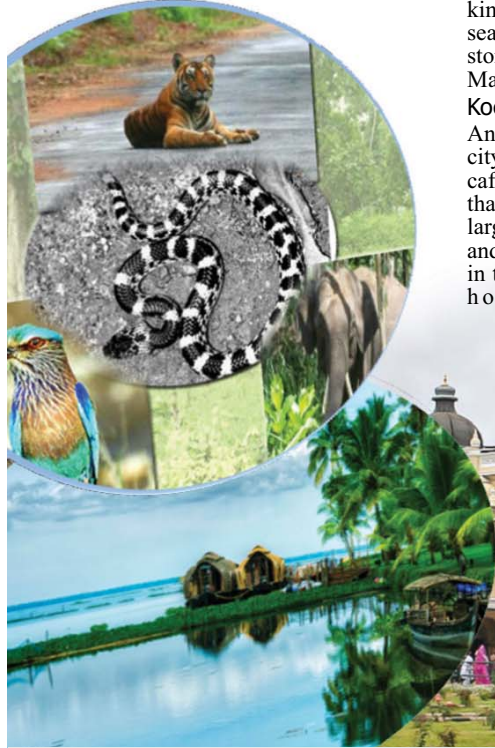
Less-known than the backwaters of central Kerala, the backwaters around Kozhikode are also not as touristy and consequently much less crowded. Houseboats can be hired at the pier near the Purakkattiri Bridge on the Ullery-Perambra road, 10 kilometres outside Kozhikode. The prettiest routes wind along the Canoly Canal, Kallai River and Elathur. An excursion to the scenic Kadalundi Bird Sanctuary, set amidst hillocks and by an estuary, is highly recommended. The sanctuary comprises of a group of small isles where the Kadalundi River meets the Arabian Sea, and is home to over 100 species of native birds and 60 kinds of migratory birds.

Hogenakkal Falls

Experie

near Mysore as stunning as the city itself, you will have plenty to choose from. While there is no comparing the wonderful Hogenakkal Falls that is just a drive of 4 hours away, Bandipur National Park too is quite alluring for nature lovers. Kerala aficionados can drive off to Kochi, Wayanad or the startlingly scenic Kumarakom. Ooty, Kozhikode and Coonoor are quite popular with anyone seeking a solitary getaway. Most of these places are quite accessible via road and make for a perfect trip to Mysore and around.

nces like coracle rides (round wickerwork boats called parisals by the locals) and medicinal baths make Hogenakkal Falls literally a much more immersive experience than other large waterfalls in the country. Leading up to the Falls the Cauveri River flows through a forest known for naturally growing herbs which many believe gives the water curative properties. The Falls are located a short drive (150 kilometres) from Bangalore along NH7 on the border of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.



With an unspoilt terrain and the mighty Himalayas forming a stunning backdrop, Dooars is a paradise for nature lovers. Many may not be aware of the fact that there are many places to visit in Dooars. Duar means door in Bengali and this region has been aptly named Dooars or Duars as it is the door to Bhutan and North East India. Veined by mighty rivers like Teesta, Torsa, Murti, Jaldhaka, Dyna and Sankosh, the region is blessed with dense forests and exotic wildlife. Nature lovers would have an unforgettable time in this region exploring its rich flora and fauna as well as beautiful landscape.

From the rippling rivulets of Jhalong and the picturesque valleys of Buxa with forests marked by walking trails to the riverbeds at Jaldapara and the lush greenery of Gorumara National Park, these places are a treat for the eyes. These parks, however, remain close during the monsoon season. Travellers coming to this stunning place around November-December can be a part of Raas Mela which is one of the ancient fairs held here. As per the Bengali calendar, the day of full moon (Purnima) in the month of Kartik marks the beginning of the fair. So plan your trip to this lesser-known gem to create memories that can be cherished for a lifetime.

Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary

Not too far from Gorumara National Park lies Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary, another hidden treasure of Dooars. A drive through some of the verdant tea gardens in the undulating plains of Dooars will take you to Chapramari. The area derives its name from two words—chapra (referring to a variety of fish found in north Bengal) and mari (meaning plenty). Covering an area of 9.6 sq km, the sanctuary boasts of a diverse range of flora and fauna that delights nature lovers.

Chapramari was declared a national reserve forest in 1895 and later, renamed as a wildlife reserve in 1939. After a few decades, in 1998, it was designated a wildlife sanctuary. The region is famous for its elephants that can be spotted easily. In addition, gaur is commonly found here. The sanctuary is also inhabited by Royal Bengal tiger, boars, deer, leopard, reptiles and various other animals. If you love birdwatching, do remember to carry a pair of binoculars to catch a glimpse of colourful birds like parrot, kingfisher and green pigeon, among many others. For accommodation, there are just a few options available in the area. Hence, whenever you visit Dooars, spend some time in this peaceful retreat in the foothills of the mighty Himalayas.

Buxa Tiger Reserve

A beautiful location in the lap of nature interspersed with the River Jayanti, mountains and dense forests—that's Buxa for you. The area is however more popular for Buxa Tiger Reserve, which is one of its kind in eastern Himalayas. Situated in Alipurduar, the reserve actually consists of the former Buxa Forest Division and a part of the Cooch

Top 5 places to visit in Dooars

Behar Forest Division. It was set up in the year 1983 and was given the status of a national park in 1992.

The reserve's rich biodiversity has been attracting tourists for years now and has become a popular escape for tired souls who love to relax in the lap of nature. The area, approximately 760 sq km, encompasses a mix of different types of forests—riverine, savannah, evergreen, sal and others. The topography and climate not only supports a rich variety of plant species but also animals. Visitors can spot mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fishes, such as tigers, civets, red jungle fowls, leopards, elephants, gaurs, porcupines, rhesus macaque, mahseer, tortoise and butterflies.

Buxa is also an absolute delight for birdwatchers. Birds like red stars, wagtails, fork-tails, ibisbill, great pied hornbills, and the trans-Himalayan migratory goosander can be spotted here. A number of migratory birds too make Buxa their temporary home, such as gargani teal, common teal, white-eyed pochard and the large whistling teal at the Narathali Lake. The black-necked crane, which is a rarity in India, can be spotted in Buxa during winters. Besides, visitors can also explore other attractions of the region, such as

Buxa Fort, Jayanti and Rajabhatkhawa. For accommodation, homestays and resorts are available in the region. Buxa Tiger Reserve, a peaceful retreat, is definitely a not-to-miss attraction during a visit to Dooars.

Rasikbil Bird Sanctuary

The area derives its name from a lake named Rasikbil in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal. The lake is surrounded by low water land or marshland, which provides appropriate dwelling atmosphere for birds. Rasikbil is one of the five such low water lands in the area, others being Neeldaba, Bochamari, Shankhadanga and Raichangmari. No wonder, the area attracts a lot of migratory birds year-round, besides being home to several other resident birds. So, if birdwatching is one of your favourite hobbies, then you would love your visit to the magnificent Rasikbil Bird Sanctuary. Do remember to carry a pair of binoculars so that you can easily spot some exquisite species of birds such as cormorants, ibis, parrots, owls and storks. You can also catch glimpses of water birds like lesser whistling teal, shoveler, wigeon duck, small blue kingfisher and gadwall. Apart from birdwatching, you can choose to indulge in other activities as well. Travellers often opt for boating in the lake and nature walk in the forests. They also visit the aviary and tortoise rescue

centre, deer park, python house, crocodile rehabilitation centre and leopard house in the vicinity. A day spent at such places provides an insight into the ways of animal rescue and rehabilitation. Rasikbil, a paradise of winged beauties, can be reached by road from Cooch Behar and Alipurduar.

Gorumara National Park

Situated along the banks of the River Murti and Raidak, Gorumara National Park is one of the most popular attractions in Dooars. The area of the park, which is around 80 sq km, encompasses grasslands and forests. Since 1895 it was a reserve forest but years later, it was given the status of a wildlife sanctuary in 1949. Furthermore, in 1994, the park was declared a national park which is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna. It is specially known for being home to the great Indian rhinoceros. Other prominent animals that can be spotted here are elephant, leopard, hornbill, king cobra, Indian python and gaur, to name a few. Travellers can choose between elephant safari and jeep safari to explore the park. They can even climb atop the watchtowers (Methla, Chukchuki, Chandrachur and Jatraprasad) to spot the inhabitants of the park with the help of binoculars.

One of the most popular tourist destinations in Dooars, Gorumara National Park attracts a lot of tourists round the year. The park's green forests, tall elephant grasses, streams and beautiful landscape provide shelter to several mammals, reptiles, birds and amphibians. Gorumara National Park is also a birders' paradise. If you are a birder, you will have a great time spotting and photographing birds like hornbill, woodpecker, ibis, drongo, minivet, and pheasants. The ruddy shelduck, also known as the Brahminy duck, migrates to the park during winters. Beautiful butterflies

can also be spotted in the jungle, along with night hunters like owls and nightjars.

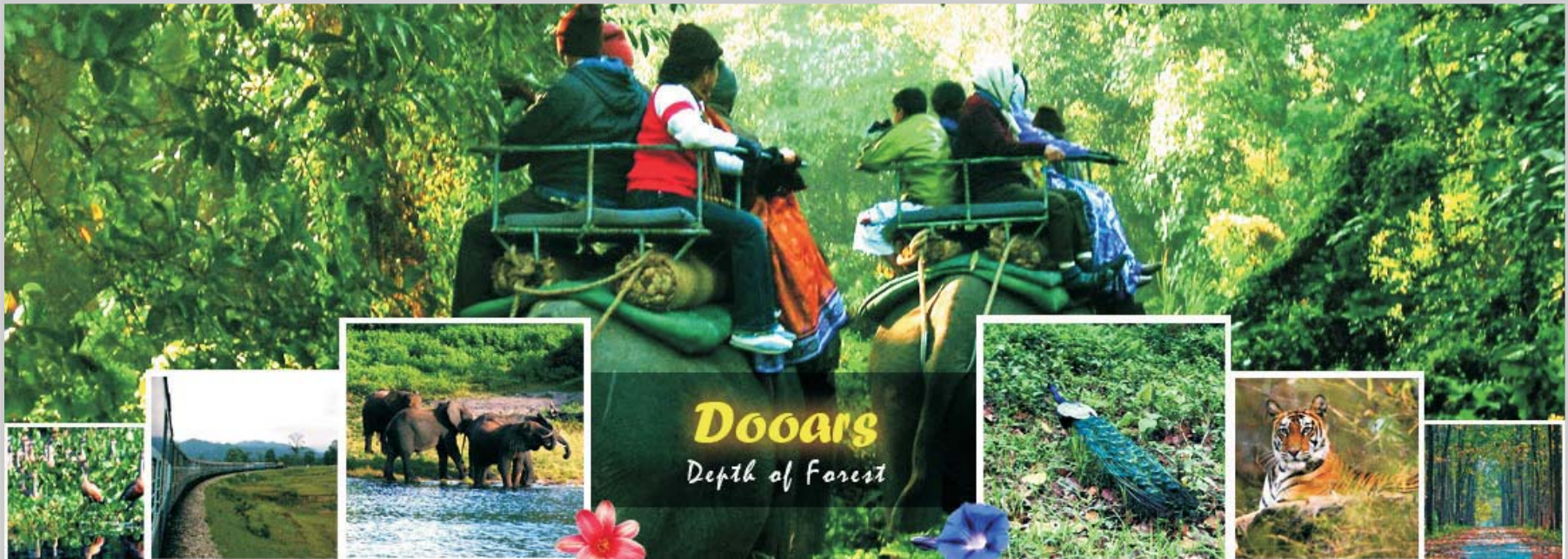
Preferably visit the park during winters as it is considered the best time for coming here. While you can choose from a number of forest rest houses at Gorumara for accommodation, Lataguri, the nearest town offers several accommodation facilities. The nearest railhead is New Jalpaiguri and the nearest airport is Bagdogra. Gorumara National Park can also be reached by road from Siliguri, which is around 72 km away.

Jaldapara National Park

Situated on the banks of the River Torsa, Jaldapara National Park is one of the popular places to visit in Dooars. Before 1800, when the place was inhabited by Toto and Mech tribes, it was known as Totopara. The sanctuary was established in 1941 with an aim to protect Asiatic one-horned rhinoceros, and was eventually declared a national park in the year 2012.

Spanning over an area of 216.5 sq km, the park boasts of verdant grassland with patches of riverine forest and belts of tall grass. At an altitude of 61 m in the foothills of Eastern Himalayas, this park is mainly savannah forest and is home to a rich variety of flora and fauna. Along with one-horned rhinoceros, various mammals, amphibians, reptiles and birds dwell here, such as elephant, leopard, Bengal florican, peacock, python, cobra and around eight species of fresh water turtles.

A fun way to witness the wilderness of Jaldapara National Park is by elephant safari. Another way to explore the flora and fauna of the region is to opt for jeep safari. For a close encounter, you can climb any of the many watchtowers in the park. There are various tourist lodges and guests houses available in the region for accommodation of tourists coming to visit Jaldapara National Park.



6 places that reveal Jaipur's exciting history

Most of Jaipur's attractions are clustered together, either located within the boundaries of the walled city built by Sawai Jai Singh II in the 18th-century, or around the former capital at Amber. These six attractions are essential for any visitor looking to get a sense of the city's history.

Albert Hall

Built in 1876 to commemorate the visit of the Prince of Wales, this colonial museum was modelled on London's Victoria and Albert Museum. The impressive building was designed by the British engineer Samuel Swinton Jacob in an Indo-Saracenic style, which drew upon elements of Mughal, Rajput and British architecture. It

exhibits a large collection of miniature paintings, royal portraits, Indian arts and crafts, sculptures, musical instruments, coins, carpets and arms and armour. The surrounding Ram Niwas Garden was laid out later as part of a famine relief project, and now encloses a zoo, an aviary, a greenhouse and a herbarium.

Jaigarh Fort

Located next to the Amber Fort, this well-preserved military fort was built in the 18th century and housed the royal treasury. Its highlight is the Jai Vana, one of the world's largest cannon on wheels. Made around 1720, it has an impressive firing range of around 30km. The fort also houses an armoury and museum, which display weapons, old photographs and maps, and royal objects. Since the fort is located on a hillock called Cheel ka Teela (hill of eagles), it is an ideal vantage point to take in stunning sights of the Amber Fort and the Maota Lake. Climb up the Diwa Burg watchtower for a bird's eye view of the sprawling plains around.

Jantar Mantar

This astronomical observatory, like its counterpart in New Delhi, was built by Jai Singh II in the 18th century. It is the largest and the best preserved of the five he built across the country. It contains 14 structures or astronomical instruments, each with a specific function: either to measure time, track solar and lunar eclipses and the movement of stars and planets. Its name is derived from jantar (meaning instrument) and mantar (meaning formula in context to calculation).



You can marvel over the striking architecture, but we also recommend taking a tourist guide to understand how the instruments are used.

Hawa Mahal

The city's most striking landmark is famous for its pink latticed windows and balconies which offer panoramic views of the city below. This 'Palace of Winds' as it is often called, was constructed in 1799 by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh, and used by the women in the royal family to observe the city's processions without being seen. Built with red and pink sandstone, the five-storey monument was designed by Lal Chand Ustad who drew upon several Mughal architectural elements. An important note for visitors: entry to the Hawa Mahal isn't from the façade but through a side road at the rear end of the monument.

Amber Fort

This hilltop fort complex lies on the dusty Aravalli hill range, 11 km outside Jaipur. It was the capital of the Rajputs for 700 years and the original residence of the royal family, before Jaipur was constructed. Built in a combination of Hindu and Islamic architectural elements, it encloses pretty palaces, imposing gates and several official buildings. These are decorated with wall murals, carvings, and mirror and glass work. Take a moment to admire the magnificent inlay work in the Sheesh Mahal or Hall of Mirrors. The fort truly comes alive in the evenings with a light and sound show, which narrates its history in Hindi and English.

City Palace

Located in the old part of the city, the City Palace encloses several palaces, courtyards and gardens. These have been built over the last two centuries, and are a blend of the Rajput and Mughal architectural styles. The royal family continues to live in a part of the palace, and this impressive complex still exudes a regal aura.

Your first major stop inside will be the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, which has a good collection of royal costumes, weapons, miniature paintings, manuscripts and sculptures. Other highlights include the Diwan-i-Am or the Hall of Public Audience, where durbars (royal courts) were held, and which still has painted walls and ceiling, marble pillars and glass chandeliers. Another hall, the Diwan-i-Khas, was used during ceremonies, and exhibits the largest silver water containers in the world.

5 interesting excursions to take in

Kodaikanal

One of Tamil Nadu's most picturesque hill stations, Kodaikanal is located at an altitude of 7,200 ft in the Palani hills in the Western Ghats. Comprising of densely wooded jungles, cascading hill slopes, circuitous rivers and green rolling valleys, it is a favourite amidst tourists visiting the country's south. Though a trip to Kodaikanal is all about revelling in nature, here are a few things to take in during your time there.

Kukkal Caves

This is one of the most interesting excursions from Kodaikanal. Located at a distance of about 40 km from the city, the journey will take you through thickly forested areas abounding with orchids and shoal trees. The Kukkal caves are amongst the oldest carved caves in the region. Situated at an altitude of 1500 m, they offer the most breathtaking views of the Manjampath valley down below. The caves themselves form a rock shelter with an overhang of stalactites and stalagmites rising from the base.

Subrahmanya temple

Also referred to as the Karthikeya temple and the Palani temple, this place of worship is a major draw for tourists. Located about 65 km ahead of Kodaikanal, it is dedicated to Lord Subramanian. One of south India's most famous

temples, the Subrahmanya temple is perched at an altitude of 135 m, and is approached by 659 steps, or alternatively by using the winch facility. The festivals of Tai Pusam (January) and Panguni Uttaram (April) are carried out on the premises with great pomp and show.

Bryant Park

Named, conceptualised and landscaped after the British officer Glenn Bryant back in 1980, Bryant Park is a botanical garden located to the east of the Kodaikanal Lake. The park holds an annual flower and vegetable show in May, which is the best time to visit. In addition, there is a glasshouse on the garden grounds, which houses a wide

variety of beautiful blooming flowers and ferns.

Pillar Rocks

One of Kodaikanal's most famous attractions, these three mammoth rock pillars stand shoulder-to-shoulder, looming 400-ft-high in the sky. Affording a bird's eye view of the surrounding vista, these granite structures are located at a distance of about eight km from the lake tower, and encompass little hidden nooks and crannies within them, which are great to explore. The chambers between the pillars are referred to as the devil's kitchen, and there's a beautiful public garden just adjacent that offers a great view of the structure.



25 seconds, 12 bullets: Haryanvi singer Ankit Baliyan's killing caught on CCTV

CCTV footage shows

Haryanvi singer and

Youtuber Ankit

Baliyan being

followed and shot

dead outside a gym

in UP's Shamli. The

Gogi gang has

claimed

responsibility for the

killing.

Delhi. (Agency)

CCTV footage has surfaced showing the moments before Haryanvi singer and YouTuber Ankit Baliyan was shot dead outside a gym in Uttar Pradesh's Shamli. The footage shows Baliyan, 35, stepping out of the gym around 6:45 pm on Wednesday with a kit bag in his hand. He walks toward his car. Four men, the suspected shooters, follow him. One of the assailants, dressed in black, can be seen holding a gun. The attackers open fire as Baliyan approaches his vehicle. The shooting sends commuters and pedestrians into a panic. People peer out from nearby shops but quickly duck back inside as the firing continues. Police sources said 12 rounds were fired in all. The shooters also fired into the air, apparently to spread terror. The attackers used .30- and .32-caliber pistols, police sources said. The weapons are

considered sophisticated firearms. Baliyan's post-mortem examination will establish how many bullets struck him and the exact nature of his injuries. The singer was critically injured in the attack and was taken to a community health center, where he was declared dead, police said. The murder took place about 15 kilometres from the Haryana border. Police suspect the shooters may have come to Shamli from Haryana. Baliyan, a resident of Banti Kheda village in Shamli, had made a name for himself in the Haryanvi music industry. His YouTube channel had more than 3.68 lakh subscribers. His songs often featured guns, fights and SUVs. Many of his lyrics revolved around violence, defiance and rivalry. Several of his songs had drawn millions of views.

His final Instagram post was uploaded about two hours before his death on Wednesday. In the video, Baliyan is seen sitting in his car



and singing a Haryanvi song that includes the line, "Murder maar de sadak ke upar (murder on the road)", an eerie foreshadowing of how he meets his end.

Baliyan was also known for his song Bhari

Court Mein Goli Maareng Meri Jaan whose title translates to "We'll shoot you in court, my love."

The notorious Gogi gang has claimed responsibility for the killing. In a social media post, the gang alleged that Baliyan was in contact with its rivals and had composed a song about an incident involving the gang. A post from the Instagram account of Bholu Shahpuria, who is reportedly associated with the gang, said, "This is just the beginning, everyone's turn will come."

The post also threatened the Uttar Pradesh Police and warned of more incidents similar to Baliyan's killing.

Police have registered a murder case against four unidentified assailants based on a complaint filed by Baliyan's father. Several police teams have been formed to identify and arrest the attackers, officials said.

Delhi PWD Minister reviews waterlogging in NDMC areas, warns officials

Delhi. (Agency)

Delhi Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh on Thursday reviewed recent waterlogging incidents in the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) area and directed officials to fix responsibility if such incidents recur due to negligence.

A meeting was held at the NDMC Conference Hall with chief engineers and heads of concerned departments. Singh reviewed vulnerable and waterlogging-prone locations, focusing on preparedness for heavy rainfall and uninterrupted civic services.



Taking to X, Singh said strict directions had been issued to take action against officials concerned if waterlogging occurred again. He said officials found responsible for negligence or lack of preparedness would face action.

Singh directed senior engineering officers to personally inspect major drainage and sewerage networks, pumping stations, dewatering points and other critical infrastructure to identify gaps. Officials and field staff were asked to remain present on the ground during rainfall for quick response.

NDMC was also directed to prepare location-specific action plans and permanent solutions for vulnerable points, besides exploring rainwater harvesting pits, and other measures.

Centre takes over Delhi Race Club after demolitions

Delhi. (Agency)

Demolition work at the Delhi Race Club began on Thursday, shortly after the Centre took possession of its 53-acre premises, marking a dramatic end to horse racing activities at the century-old institution. The Centre took possession of the club on Lok Kalyan Marg after the Patiala House Court on Tuesday dismissed its plea seeking an interim stay on the August 11 eviction order passed by an estate officer under the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act.

Bulldozers demolished several historic structures, including the stables, bookmakers' ring, winning post, photofinish camera and saddling enclosure, a club official said. "It was a deeply disturbing sight for anyone associated with the club and racing," a source said.

The club had more than 250 horses. Around 200 have been taken back by their owners, while about 50 remain at the premises. The club has been given time until September 14 to relocate the remaining horses.

Renovated in the 1940s, the stables were designed to protect horses from the national capital's harsh summer while ensuring ventilation.

The legal dispute began in March when the Land and Development Office directed the club to vacate the government land, citing public purposes.

The club's main appeal is scheduled for final disposal on September 26.

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi on Thursday removed encroachments from heritage monument sites in Zamrudpur village, South Delhi, in a joint drive conducted with police assistance. Over 60 MCD staff demolished unauthorised structures, including walls, a godown and cattle-rearing structures, and removed three iron gates obstructing access.

Delhi logs 166 new H1N1 cases, govt reviews readiness

A dedicated flu clinic has been made operational at the hospital, along with isolated beds for influenza patients requiring care, officials said.

Delhi. (Agency)

Delhi reported 166 fresh H1N1 cases in the last 24 hours on Thursday, taking the cumulative tally to 2,612, according to Delhi government data. The national capital had reported 138 new cases a day earlier, government data revealed.

The total number of Influenza-A cases has also risen to 3,300 from 3,177 recorded on Wednesday, data showed.

Health Minister Pankaj Kumar



including isolation facilities, emergency services, testing infrastructure, availability of medicines and deployment of medical staff.

Raksha Bandhan rush triggers traffic gridlock in Delhi

Delhi. (Agency)

Major traffic snarls were reported across several parts of the national capital on Thursday evening ahead of Raksha Bandhan, leaving commuters stuck in long queues and causing severe inconvenience.

Traffic was particularly affected in ITO, Sarai Kale Khan, Mayur Vihar, Kashmere Gate, Laxmi Nagar, Hari Nagar and Kondli, with several major arterial roads witnessing bumper-to-bumper traffic.

Shabana Bano, a Mayur Vihar resident, said it took her around 40 minutes to cover the seven-kilometre distance from her office to home, a journey that normally takes about 15 minutes. "The traffic situation from ITO to Mayur Vihar was pathetic," she

said, adding that the stretch towards the Delhi-Meerut Expressway was heavily congested.



Traffic towards Noida via Akshardham was also affected. "The Akshardham route to Noida was blocked and it took half an hour just to cross the Akshardham flyover. The Laxmi Nagar route was also showing additional

travel time," Bano said.

The Delhi Police issued an advisory stating that increased pedestrian and vehicular movement was expected around Anand Vihar ISBT, Road No. 56, NH-9 and Vikas Marg in view of Raksha Bandhan festival on Thursday and Friday. Commuters were advised to avoid these stretches wherever possible, plan their journeys in advance and follow diversion signs and directions issued by traffic personnel. The Delhi-Meerut Expressway was particularly congested, with commuters describing their journeys as a nightmare. Mukesh Kumar, a Noida resident, said the expressway beyond Akshardham towards Meerut was almost completely choked. "Staying on the road for around two-and-a-half hours was a nightmare.

IIT-Delhi lists measures to reduce academic stress

Delhi. (Agency)

Facing heightened scrutiny over student well-being, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi issued a detailed statement asserting that student welfare remains at the heart of its academic ecosystem, with several measures in place to reduce stress, strengthen mental-health support and improve grievance redressal.

The institute pointed to its 2025 curriculum overhaul as a key intervention. "First-semester credit loads have been reduced, life-skills courses

introduced and first-year departmental classes capped at 30-60 students. Weekend examinations have been minimised and, from 2024-25, the minimum CGPA requirement for the BTech degree was scrapped," IIT Delhi said in its statement.

The institute said students have access to round-the-clock mental-health support, including counsellors and psychiatrists, with experts from AIIMS and VIMHANS involved. External mental-health treatment is fully reimbursed, while an emergency response protocol and Academic Unit Wellness Committees are intended to provide additional layers of support.

Indian Institute of Technology Delhi also highlighted its expanding mentorship network. The 'UG Buddy Programme' has been extended to postgraduate and international students, while faculty-student interaction is facilitated through semester-wise meetings, office hours, project guidance and Class Committee feedback. On academic difficulties, the institute said that its Academic Progress Group has provided evening tutoring and credit-backlog support since 2023. The statement also outlined a multi-tier grievance mechanism, including the ERP portal, Board for Student Welfare, SC/ST and OBC cells, hostel wardens, the Internal Complaints Committee and confidential counselling channels. On inclusion, the Institute said its Office of Diversity and Inclusion has been operational since 2022, along with the induction and sensitisation initiatives addressing caste, gender, language, region and ethnicity. IIT Delhi said it would continue to strengthen its support systems, asserting that student well-being remains an "absolute priority".

New Delhi: Nepal tragedy gets social media balm

Help to reunite families pours in from DU students, Nepalese association offers assistance

Delhi. (Agency)

A day after over 100 people died and hundreds went missing as a wall of ice, mud and rock collapsed into a Himalayan river at the Nepal-China border near Tibet early on Wednesday, people in Delhi and across the world took to social media to seek help in tracing their missing relatives and friends.

Delhi University's Nepalese Students' Association, which has several members with roots in regions severely hit by the floods, remains on alert. The body has been trying to contact students and their families affected by the catastrophe and has also appealed to Delhi residents to come forward if they need any assistance.

Lavanya, president of the students' body in Delhi, said "We have been on alert since last evening. We have tried to

contact almost all students associated with our group, but most of them are from west Nepal, and their families have not been affected. We are spreading the word. We have asked the students if any of their families are affected or if anyone needs assistance."

For students living thousands of kilometres away from their families, the uncertainty has been particularly difficult. One DU student said her parents were safe outside the affected area, but her uncle, aunt and cousins living in a flood-hit region could not be contacted.

"It is a difficult situation for all of us to handle while we are staying so far off," she expressed. Across social media platforms, several "lost and found" pages have emerged, with families posting photographs, names and last-known locations of missing people in the

hope that someone on the ground could provide information about their whereabouts. An X user going by the name Radhika Sharma tweeted that her



parents, US citizens Ramesh and Neelam Sharma, had been missing since the floods struck.

An urgent appeal by another man on X sought information about his children, who had travelled to the Rasuwa area. The post read, "Urgent notice—my son

Prahwal Thapa and daughter Pranisha Thapa went to Rasuwa area.

The family is extremely worried about their condition. If you have seen them, met them or have any information about their whereabouts, please immediately contact us."

In another case, a Kolkata woman who had travelled alone on a Mansarovar yatra has gone missing, leaving her son hoping for her safe return.

Meanwhile, the Delhi-based Hemkunt Foundation has offered to send relief material to Nepal and urged the government to allow it to travel to the affected areas.

25 back from Mansarovar

The Delhi government is currently gathering information about city residents who travelled to flash flood-affected areas in Nepal and beyond. A group of 25 individuals who visited Mansarovar before the natural.

Rupee declines 10 paise to 95.55 against US dollar in early trade

MUMBAI. (Agency)

The rupee fell 10 paise to 95.55 against the US dollar in early trade on Friday, weighed by FII outflows and sustained disruptions in global crude oil supplies. However, a marginally weaker greenback and a fall in global crude oil prices to levels below USD 90/barrel prevented a sharper decline in the local unit, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 95.54 against the greenback before slipping further to 95.55, down 10 paise from its previous close. The rupee pared initial gains and settled for the day lower by 1 paise at 95.45 against the US dollar on Thursday. "The rupee is expected to be in a narrow range of 95.40 to 95.60 (on Friday) with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) protecting the upper end, while the lower end is bought by oil importers, month-end demand and importers," Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said. Forex traders further said market participants will closely monitor US Fed Chair Kevin Warsh's speech at the Jackson Hole Symposium. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 99.14, lower by 0.01 per cent. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading lower by 0.48 per cent at USD at 89.27 per barrel in futures trade. On the domestic market front, Sensex rose 245.56 points to 77,191.80 in early trade while the Nifty was up 54.20 points to 24,147.50. Foreign institutional investors offloaded equities worth Rs 298.26 crore on a net basis on Thursday, according to exchange data.

Noel Tata, Shapoorji Pallonji discuss share swap for Tata Sons stake sale

New Delhi. (Agency)

Tata Group is in talks with its biggest minority shareholder on proposals to unlock liquidity, including a potential swap of shares of its listed entities, as the Shapoorji Pallonji Group seeks funds to repay costly debt, according to people familiar. Representatives of Noel Tata, the Tata family patriarch, are exploring the possibility where SP Group receives shares of companies such as Tata Power Co. in exchange for some or all of its 18.4% in the privately-held Tata Sons Pvt., the people said, asking not to be identified because the discussions are private. Two other options have also been presented: a direct buyout of the construction giant's stake by Tata Sons, financed by overseas banks, or a sale to an external investor, preferably a global one, the people added. Any breakthrough on this long-running tussle between the Tatas and the SP Group will prove to be a windfall for investors in the latter's debt, which include the likes of Cerberus Capital Management LP, Davidson Kempner Capital Management and Farallon Capital Management. For the Tatas, a resolution may ease some of the intense regulatory spotlight it has come under in the past few years after the central bank's rules revived pressure on its holding company to list on the exchanges. Noel is the chairman of Tata Trusts, a group of charities that own 66% in Tata Sons. Natarajan Chandrasekaran's announcement this month that he'll step down as Tata Sons chairman in February has put Noel in the driver's seat to drive a settlement. Noel also has familial connections: he is married to Aloo Mistry, the sister of SP Group Chairman Shapoor Mistry.

E20 won't be replaced by E10, BPCL says amid debate over older cars

New Delhi. (Agency)

Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL), India's second largest fuel retailer, on Thursday said there is no decision to replace E20 petrol with E10, clarifying that the current debate is over whether older vehicles should have access to a lower-ethanol blend and how an additional grade of petrol could be supplied across India's vast fuel-distribution network. In a media call post the company's annual shareholder meeting, BPCL Chairman and Managing Director Sanjay Khanna, however, said he saw no operational or logistical challenge in switching from E20 petrol to E10 if the government decides to change the ethanol-blending policy. "I never said that E20 will be changed to E10," he said, adding that it was being debated in some circles whether older vehicles should have an option of lower-ethanol blend fuel. "That doesn't mean E20 will be out and E10 will be in," he said. His comments come amid a wider policy discussion over whether owners of older vehicles should have access to E10 petrol, which contains 10 per cent ethanol, alongside E20, which contains 20 per cent ethanol. India has progressively increased ethanol blending in petrol as part of efforts to reduce crude oil imports, lower emissions and support domestic ethanol production. Khanna stressed that no decision has been finalised on changing the current fuel-blending regime. "Nothing has been finalised," he said. "But to answer your question, what if it happens or what are the changes required? I will say nothing because already we established E20.

MAHANAGAR METRO

Rs 22,000 cr claims, Rs 6.25 cr payout: Who backed Subhash Chandra's pay plan and

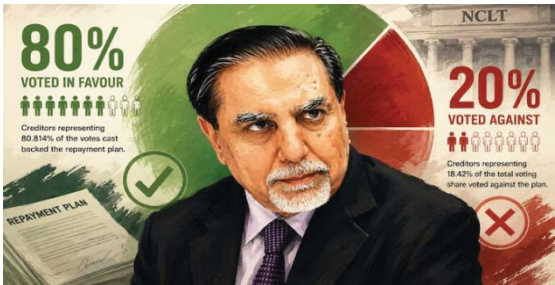
The NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal) order shows that creditors representing 80.814% of the votes cast backed Chandra's plan, while others, including HDFC Bank and LIC Housing Finance, voted against it. Some creditors chose not to vote.

Kolkata. (Agency)

A Rs 22,000-crore mountain of claims has been settled down to a Rs 6.25-crore payout for Essel Group and Zee founder Subhash Chandra, with a majority of his creditors voting to go ahead with the proposed repayment plan. The numbers

raise an obvious question: who agreed to take such a steep haircut, and why? The NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal) order accepting the repayment plan shows that creditors representing 80.814% of the votes cast backed Chandra's plan, while others, including HDFC Bank and LIC Housing Finance, voted against it. Some creditors chose not to vote. The voting share of each creditor corresponds to its share of the total claims admitted against Chandra in the insolvency proceedings. In other words, a creditor with a 10% voting share represented 10% of the total claims/debt considered for the vote. The Rs 6.25-crore payment is Chandra's proposed personal contribution under the plan. The roughly

Rs 22,006.57 crore figure represents claims admitted against him in insolvency proceedings that arose largely



from personal guarantees he had given for loans taken by companies associated with the Essel Group. The voting details are contained in the National Company Law Tribunal's (NCLT) 144-page order pronounced on August 25, 2026, in the insolvency proceedings involving Chandra. The order reproduces the voting

record for Item B3, which was the approval of the Repayment Plan.

The voting window closed on November 1, 2024, and the plan received 80.814% approval based on the votes cast. But there is an important distinction behind that 80.814% figure: 77.48% of the total voting share voted in favour, 18.42% voted against and creditors representing 4.10% did not vote. Since the 4.10% abstention is excluded when calculating the votes cast, the favourable vote works out to 80.814%.

WHO VOTED IN FAVOUR?

Ten creditors or entities voted in favour of Chandra's repayment plan. World Crest Advisors had the largest voting share at 28.49%, followed by Lemonade Capital Advisors LLP at 16.85%. Catalyst Trusteeship (CINDA FPI) accounted for 11.85%, while Corpcall Capital Advisors LLP had 10.30%.

Stock markets rebound in early trade after two days of losses on buying in IT firms

MUMBAI. (Agency)

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded in early trade on Friday after two days of losses, helped by buying in blue-chip IT stocks and a rally in global markets. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 245.56 points to 77,191.80 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty was up 54.20 points to 24,147.50. Among the 30 Sensex firms, Tata Consultancy Services, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, HCL Tech, Titan, and Power Grid were among the major winners. UltraTech Cement, ICICI Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, and State Bank of India were the laggards. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 0.56 per cent

lower at USD 89.20 per barrel. In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi traded lower, while Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index Hong Kong's Hang Seng index quoted higher. US markets ended higher on Thursday. "Global cues are more supportive than they have been at any point this week. US markets closed firmly higher, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average gaining 0.20 per cent, the S&P 500 rising 0.72 per cent and the Nasdaq advancing 1.57 per cent," Hariselman Radhakrishnan, Founder & CEO of HST Wealth, a Research Analyst firm, said. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 298.26

crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. "Sentiment in technology and semiconductor stocks, however, was clearly lifted by Nvidia's blowout quarterly results, which triggered a broad rally across AI-linked names in the US, helping the Nasdaq end about 1.5 per cent higher," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth-tech firm, said. Attention now turns to Fed Chair Kevin Warsh's first Jackson Hole keynote, the week's most closely watched macro event, he added. Falling for the second day on Thursday, the Sensex dropped 539.35 points, or 0.70 per cent, to settle at the day's low of 76,933.59 on the monthly derivatives-expiry day.

TVS Motor charts next growth track, names Peyman Kargar as new CEO

New Delhi. (Agency)

TVS Motor Company, a leading global manufacturer of two- and three-wheelers, on Friday announced the appointment of Peyman Kargar as director and chief executive officer, effective January 27, 2027. Peyman will succeed K N Radhakrishnan, who will continue in his role until then to ensure a seamless transition.



Following the transition, Radhakrishnan will serve as non-executive director up to the date of the ensuing AGM scheduled in July 2027. He has been a tremendous leader and played a pivotal role in the growth of TVS Motor Company. It is understood that Kargar will

operate from Bangalore from January. The leadership transition comes as TVS Motor Company builds on strong business performance and continues to consolidate its position in India and expand its global presence. In FY2025-26, the company achieved a record performance, selling 5.9 million vehicles globally and delivering 30 per cent revenue growth. Kargar currently serves as president, international business. He brings more than three decades of global automotive leadership experience across Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East, having held senior leadership positions with some of the automotive industry's most recognised global brands. His experience spans the full value chain, from product development and research and development to manufacturing, quality, sales and marketing, giving him significant insight into the factors that drive long-term success in the mobility industry. Under his leadership, international business has become an increasingly important contributor to TVS Motor Company's global expansion. Today, the business contributes 29 per cent of the company's sales volume and is growing at 33 per cent. In his new role, he will lead the company as it focuses on further growing its business in India and globally through product innovation, premiumisation and expansion into developed markets.

Companies are giving AI more control. Is cybersecurity ready for it?

TOKYO. (Agency)

Companies are moving beyond using artificial intelligence simply to generate content or answer questions. AI systems are increasingly being connected to enterprise identities, internal data, APIs, databases and other applications, while AI agents are being given the ability to retrieve information, make decisions, call tools and take actions. That is creating a new challenge for cybersecurity teams. As AI becomes more deeply embedded in enterprise systems, securing the underlying infrastructure may no longer be enough. Companies also need to understand how their AI systems behave, what they can access and what actions they are taking. "As AI becomes connected to enterprise identities, data and tools, securing the infrastructure around it is no longer enough. Security teams also need to understand how AI systems behave, what they access and what actions they take. AISDR is our approach to bringing that visibility and response capability into cyber defense," said Hakimuddin Wadlawala, Founder, Aquila I. The shift is particularly important as businesses move towards more autonomous, agentic AI systems that can interact with enterprise applications and data with limited human intervention. AI IS CREATING A NEW CYBERSECURITY ATTACK SURFACE Traditional software testing and cybersecurity systems are generally designed to identify known vulnerabilities, unauthorised access or clearly malicious activity. AI systems introduce another layer of complexity because their behaviour can change depending on the data, instructions, tools and systems they interact with. An AI agent, for example, may use a valid identity and legitimate credentials to access a database. On its own, that activity may not appear suspicious. But if the same identity suddenly gains additional privileges, accesses an unfamiliar resource and makes an unusual sequence of tool calls, the combination could indicate that something is wrong. This means security teams need to look beyond individual events and understand the context surrounding AI behaviour. "As AI systems become more autonomous, the question is not simply whether an action is technically permitted. Security teams need to understand whether the action is consistent with the system's expected behaviour and intent," said Wadlawala. The risks can include identity misuse, excessive access, sensitive-data exposure, manipulation of tools or MCP integrations and what Wadlawala describes as goal or intent drift. AGENTIC AI MAKES THE SECURITY CHALLENGE MORE COMPLEX The growing use of agentic AI could make this problem even more difficult.

Tempsens IPO listing: Stock doubles, delivers 111% gain in biggest debut of 2026

Tempsens Instruments listed at Rs 634 against an issue price of Rs 300 after its IPO was subscribed 184.22 times. The 111.3% debut gain made it the biggest IPO listing pop on Indian exchanges in 2026.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Shares of Tempsens Instruments (India) more than doubled in their stock market debut, delivering a 111.3% listing gain and making it the best IPO listing performance on Indian exchanges so far in 2026. The thermal engineering and specialised cable maker listed at Rs 634 per share, compared with its IPO issue price of Rs 300. The strong debut came after investors had shown overwhelming interest in the Rs 650 crore public issue, which was subscribed 184.22 times by

the end of the bidding period. The listing gain also took Tempsens past Bharat Coking Coal's 95.7% debut gain in January, making it the biggest IPO listing gainer of the year so far.

Tempsens may not be a household name, but its products are used across industries where accurately measuring and controlling temperature is critical. Incorporated in 1990, the company designs and manufactures temperature sensing solutions, electrical heating solutions and specialised cables. Its products include contact and non-contact temperature sensors used across industries such as steel, power, chemicals, oil and gas, glass and pharmaceuticals. According to a Religare Broking IPO note, Tempsens had around 10.5% market share in India's temperature sensor segment as of March 31, 2026. Between FY24 and FY26, it served more than 1,000 unique

customers and exported its products to more than 80 countries, including the UAE, Germany and Poland. The company is also trying to expand beyond its established product lines by investing



in research and development, technology partnerships and new products across process heating, conductor solutions and infrared technology. WHY DID INVESTORS BET SO HEAVILY ON TEMPSENS IPO?

The Rs 650 crore Tempsens IPO comprised a Rs 95 crore fresh issue and a Rs 555 crore offer for sale. The issue was priced in the range of Rs 285 to Rs 300 per share. Demand was particularly strong from institutional and non-institutional investors. The issue was subscribed 61 times in the retail category, 302.88 times by qualified institutional buyers excluding the anchor portion, and 314.44 times by non-institutional investors. The IPO was fully subscribed within hours of opening, with demand continuing to build through the three-day bidding period.

The strong response reflects investor interest in a company that combines industrial manufacturing with a growing export business and exposure to sectors such as automation, manufacturing and infrastructure.

Bengaluru citizens form human chain against move to allow infrastructure projects in parks

BENGALURU.(Agency)

More than 200 citizens, resident groups, environmental organisations and civil society groups formed a human chain at Lal Bagh Botanical Gardens on Thursday and urged the state government to roll back its decision to amend the Karnataka Government Parks (Preservation) Act, 1975, which would allow portions of parks and gardens to be used for concrete-heavy infrastructure projects.

In a letter submitted to Chief Minister, the groups demanded protection for Bengaluru's existing parks and green spaces.

Kathyayini Chamaraj, Executive Trustee at CIVIC, said, "The Government Parks (Preservation) Act, 1975, is for 'preserving' parks. You cannot bring an amendment to alienate 5% of the parks, which goes against the very objective of the parent Act."

Sandeep Anirudhan, Founder at Conscious Communities, called the move another nail in Bengaluru's coffin. He said, "A healthy urban area requires at least 30% green cover, whereas Bengaluru's green cover has dropped to nearly 2-3%, which is unacceptable. Bengaluru had nearly 70% green cover just five decades ago."

10 newborns dead in a single day at Malda Medical College; probe launched

Kolkata.(Agency)

The Malda Medical College and Hospital (MMCH) has reported 60 infant deaths in August till Monday, with 10 newborns dying on a single day on August 24. The deaths have prompted the health officials to launch inspections across various hospitals and nursing homes in the district. A report has also been sought from the MMCH on the infant mortality cases.

The MMCH authorities claim that among the 10 newborns who died, eight were born in other hospitals or nursing homes in the district and were brought to the government medical college in a critical condition. Two other babies who died were born at the MMCH.

"Of the 10 children, only two were born at Malda Medical College. The rest were referred here from outside in a critical condition," MMCH superintendent Prosenjit Bar told the media.

Similarly, of the total 60 infant deaths reported at the hospital till Monday, 44 were born in other hospitals and nursing homes and later referred to the MMCH due to various health complications, as per sources in the state health department. The remaining 16 infants died after being delivered at the medical college itself. Hospital officials stated that some infants suffered from respiratory distress, while others were affected by jaundice or heart problems.

An investigation into the infant deaths has been launched, and the health department has asked for a comprehensive report from the MMCH, which has submitted a preliminary report to the administration.

6-month plot, 3 states, iCloud use: CBI joins dots on Adhikari aide killing

Kolkata.(Agency)

The killing in May of Chandranath Rath, personal assistant to Suvendu Adhikari, days before he took charge as West Bengal Chief Minister, was the culmination of an alleged conspiracy hatched over six months. The CBI uncovered the plot using digital evidence, including a photo on iCloud, and by joining the dots between CCTV footage, road tolls and multiple phones, including one at the bottom of the Hooghly river, The Indian Express has learnt.

The CBI filed a chargesheet before the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate's court in Barasat on August 7. The probe, it is learnt, states that the man who allegedly pulled the strings was Sagar Sonkar, Rath's 29-year-old assistant.

Rath was shot inside his vehicle in Madhyamgram in Kolkata around 10 pm on May 6. His associate Buddhadeb Bera was injured in the attack.

The chargesheet names 12 people, of whom all but Krishna Kumar Singh (from Bihar) have been apprehended. The arrested include Sagar and his brother Saheb Sonkar (both from Kolkata); Uttar Pradesh residents Vikash Mishra, Vinay Rai, Sanjay Rai, Gyanendra Singh, Raj Kumar Singh, Golu Singh and Naveen Kumar Singh; and Bihar's Mayank Raj Mishra and Vicky Maurya. Sagar and Saheb, 20, were arrested on July 31, more than two months after the CBI held 11 people, including four alleged sharpshooters. The parents of the two brothers told The Indian Express earlier that they did not believe the police charges, as the two worked closely with not just Rath but also Adhikari, in his personal.

Madhya Pradesh couple kept under digital arrest for 97 days

The fraudsters kept the couple on prolonged video calls and monitored their movements.

BHOPAL.(Agency)

In what police believe to be one of the longest cases of "digital arrest", a Bhopal couple lived in fear for 97 days, believing their lives were about to be destroyed by a criminal case they knew nothing about.

Cyber fraudsters impersonating Delhi Police officers, CID investigators and even a Supreme Court judge kept a retired finance executive and his wife from Bhopal's Kolar area under constant video surveillance, monitored their movements and eventually extorted Rs 22 lakh from them.

Retired private company employee Narsimha Rao, around 70, and his wife Suvarna Lakshmi, 65, who formerly ran a private school, were first targeted while staying at their ancestral home in Andhra Pradesh. Their ordeal continued after they returned to Bhopal and even during their nearly 1,100-km journey between the two states. On May 19, Suvarna received a call and the caller introduced himself as an officer from

Delhi's Daryaganj police station. He told her that crores of rupees had been transacted through an account allegedly opened in her name in connection with a money-laundering and bank-fraud case involving Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal.



The couple was warned not to disclose the proceedings. Later, a woman identifying herself as "Nisha Patel", posing as a CID sleuth, questioned them about their bank accounts before connecting them to another person posing as a Supreme Court judge.

The fraudsters kept the couple on prolonged

video calls and monitored their movements. On June 9, they sent them what purported to be a property seizure order and demanded Rs 22 lakh.

On June 12, after returning to Bhopal, the couple raised the money by pledging jewellery with Capri Gold and transferred it to an account specified by the fraudsters. The payment did not end the ordeal.

According to reports, the couple even informed their son and daughter about the investigation while they were under "digital arrest". Instead of immediately suspecting fraud, the children reportedly advised their parents to cooperate with the supposed authorities, believing that transferring the money to the Enforcement Directorate would not cause permanent

harm.

The deception was exposed only after their daughter shared the purported court order with a lawyer friend, who identified it as fake. The couple finally approached the police and lodged a complaint at Kolar police station on August 23.

CWC calls Telangana, Maharashtra officials meet to discuss Tummidihatti barrage on September 1

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 11 seeking a meeting with Maharashtra on the proposed barrage.

HYDERABAD.(Agency)

The Central Water Commission (CWC) will convene a meeting with Maharashtra and Telangana officials on September 1 to discuss the Tummidihatti barrage.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 11 seeking a meeting with Maharashtra on the proposed barrage. He urged the prime minister to facilitate talks with the Maharashtra government to enable construction of the barrage and utilisation of Godavari waters for Telangana's future irrigation and drinking water needs.

Following the request, the CWC decided to convene a joint meeting. "A meeting under the

chairmanship of Chairman, CWC, to deliberate upon the technical and inter-state



issues concerning the construction of the Tummidihatti barrage on Pranahita River has been proposed by the Government of Telangana. The meeting will be held in Delhi

on September 1 at 11 am," Neeraj Kumar Sharma, director (Project Appraisal, South), said in a letter.

AP-Telangana water panel to meet on September 7

Meanwhile, the CWC will convene the second meeting of the committee constituted to resolve water-related issues between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana on September 7 in Delhi.

The committee, constituted under the CWC chairman in January 2026, was tasked with examining key issues concerning water management between the two States and submitting a report to the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation within three months.

30 years in the Himalayas: Veteran mountaineer missing after Nepal flash floods

Mumbai.(Agency)

For Dr Milind P Chitley, medicine was a profession but mountaineering was a calling. After completing his MBBS and beginning his career as a doctor, his growing love for the mountains and adventure eventually led him to leave medical practice and devote himself to mountaineering, a passion that would see him build an adventure company and spend more than three decades leading expeditions.

On Thursday, the veteran mountaineer was among the Indians reported missing after flash floods in Nepal. Chitley, his wife Janhavi and several members of a group of around 40 pilgrims travelling through his Mumbai-based adventure company Hills and Trails for the

Kailash-Mansarovar pilgrimage could not be contacted.

The group included two prominent Mumbai doctors, Andheri-based gynaecologist Dr Gayatri Deshpande



and her husband Dr Anand Deshpande, who headed the haematology department at Hinduja Hospital. Several senior citizens, including 68-year-old Sunil S Subhedar and 64-year-old Chetna Gupta, are also among those

reported missing. Chitley, who is in his 60s, completed his MBBS from Grant Medical College in 1983. But his fascination with adventure sports drew him away from conventional medical practice. In 1997, he co-founded Hills and Trails turning his decades-long experience in mountaineering into a venture that has since taken hundreds of people on treks, expeditions and pilgrimage journeys across the Himalayas, Ladakh and the Western Ghats.

His own mountaineering record is extensive. He has walked more than 3,000 Himalayan trails and expeditions and climbed to more than 23,000 feet on Mount Kangchenjunga. He was part of the organising committee of the 1997 Everest Expedition and served as the climbing doctor.

Take-off, tragedy 20 minutes later: Two killed as training aircraft crashes in Kanpur

Lucknow.(Agency)

A trainee pilot and a flying instructor were killed when their twin-engine training aircraft crashed in a field near the banks of the Ganga in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, on Thursday afternoon, police said. A three-member team from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is set to probe whether a technical or human error caused the accident, officials said.

According to Vipin Tada, Additional Commissioner of Police (Law and Order), Kanpur, the deceased have been identified as Sachin Bhatia, a flying instructor from Gujarat, and trainee Abhishek Pujari from Karnataka. Tada said the aircraft was operated by Garg Aviation, based at Kanpur Cantonment. The aircraft took off at around 11.30 am and crashed about 20 minutes later in a field in Natthapurva village, he said.

AAIB to probe crash

The Ministry of Civil Aviation said the probe agency, AAIB, will investigate the crash and a team of three officials from the DGCA will be visiting the crash site for necessary regulatory oversight and coordination.

The ministry said the aircraft, bearing registration VT-NBV, met with an accident approximately five nautical miles from Kanpur Civil Airport near Ganga Barrage.

10 from Odisha traced in Nepal, safe; Odia NRI couple still missing

Prithish Panda, the nodal officer appointed by the state government to assist people from Odisha stranded in Nepal.

BHUBANESWAR.(Agency)

As the government stepped up efforts to locate people from Odisha in disaster-hit Nepal, 10 from the state have been traced, while an Odia NRI couple is still missing. Kulsum Nigar of Baripada in Mayurbhanj district, who had been to Nepal with a trekking team and gone missing since Tuesday, has contacted her family and informed them about being safe. However, Sandeep Mohapatra and Sidharthi Kumari, the couple from Khurda who have settled in Melbourne in Australia, continue to be untraceable. Prithish Panda, the nodal officer appointed by the state government to assist people from Odisha stranded in Nepal, said the couple's last GPS location was traced near the immigration counter at Timure, in the Nepal-Tibet border which suffered the worst devastation. The tour guide accompanying the couple is also untraceable.

The location is also where 77 members of

the Isha Foundation, who were on Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage, have been reported missing.

Panda said their family in Odisha informed the state authorities about their disappearance, following which the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) was alerted for swift follow-up. "There is no news so far. We are trying to establish contact with them but have failed," he said. The couple had travelled to Nepal on August 22 and was reportedly scheduled to proceed to Kailash Mansarovar. Their family last spoke to them around 8 pm on August 25. Meanwhile, the 21-year-old Kulsum has informed her family that she is safe along with members of her trekking team. Her father Sheikh Salamat Ullah said she had left Baripada for Kolkata by bus on August 21. From Kolkata, she travelled to Raxaul in Bihar by the Mithila Express with her friend

Deepika Ekka from Bhubaneswar. The duo then joined a 12-member group travelling to Pokhara in Nepal. Kulsum had set out for



trekking around 11 am on Tuesday and had since gone incommunicado. Her elder sister, Tarannum Nigar, told TNIE that the trekking group is currently safe at

Dorpathan. Due to poor telephone connectivity, Kulsum managed to contact her family briefly and inform them about her safety. The group is expected to move to a location with better network connectivity on Friday, she said.

Panda said Deepika had accompanied Kulsum from Bhubaneswar but officials were yet to ascertain whether she is also from Odisha.

He also said that six students from Bhubaneswar who travelled to Nepal to participate in a football match are in Pokhara along with their coach. Efforts are being made to facilitate their return, he added. A three-member group from Puri that was in Nepal has also been accounted for.

"We also received a call from Rakesh Kumar Panda of Puri district. The MEA informed us that they have safely crossed into India through the Raxaul.

NEWS BOX

Rishabh Pant continues to perform below expectations: Ashwin frustrated with India star



New Delhi. (Agency)

Rishabh Pant's numbers from India's Sri Lanka tour may suggest a productive two-Test series, but former India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin believes the wicketkeeper-batter still has plenty to improve. Ashwin has questioned Pant's decision-making and urged him to put the demands of the match ahead of his reputation as an ultra-aggressive player.

Pant scored 168 runs across the two Tests, including two half-centuries, but his shot selection remained a talking point. Speaking on his YouTube channel Ash Ki Baat, Ashwin said Pant's performances had not yet met the standards he expects from an established Test player.SL vs IND 2nd Test Day 5: Highlights

"My expectation from Rishabh Pant hasn't been fulfilled till now. I am very sorry. Sonal Dinusha had his strike rate up there. But the difference is high-risk options. When you have the game in your hand, these are all statements, 'That's how Rishabh plays.' It is about what your team needs," Ashwin said.The former India spinner was particularly critical of the argument that Pant should be allowed to play without being questioned because of his unique style and impact. Ashwin believes Test cricket demands a sharper reading of the match situation, especially when the stakes are high."Rishabh played a class knock in Sydney and Brisbane, but you couldn't have won that match without Washington Sundar and Shardul Thakur. It takes 11 cricketers to build a Test and win it in the last session of the game, but it takes only one moment of foolishness to lose a Test," he added.Ashwin's broader argument is that Pant's talent is not in question, but the way he applies it can determine whether he becomes consistently decisive in all conditions.

What did Imran Khan's sons say in the Sky Sports interview that ticked Pakistan off?



New Delhi. (Agency)

The Pakistan Cricket Board reportedly threatened to pull its players off the field at Lord's if Sky Sports aired an interview with Imran Khan's sons. But what exactly in the interview had the PCB so worried?

The 18-minute interview, conducted by former England captain and broadcaster Mike Atherton, was not your usual cricket conversation. Recorded inside the Lord's Pavilion, the interview featured Imran Khan's sons, Sulaiman and Kasim, speaking at length about the condition of their father, the former Pakistan captain and prime minister who has been in prison since August 2023.The PCB, according to Cricinfo, contacted Sky Sports before the lunch break to protest the segment and threatened that Pakistan's players would not return to the field if it was aired. Sky subsequently delayed the interview before eventually broadcasting it during lunch. By the time the interview ended, Pakistan's players were preparing to return for the second session at 2.40pm.

The PCB's objection was understood to be centred on the political nature of the interview. But having heard what the two brothers had to say, there was one particularly explosive section that may explain why the board was so desperate to stop it from reaching viewers.THEY'RE BLATANTLY TRYING TO KILL HIM'

Asked why he and his brother had become more vocal about their father's imprisonment, Sulaiman explained that the family initially believed Imran's time in prison would be relatively short. That changed as the years passed.

Sulaiman spoke about the assassination attempts against his father, including the 2022 attack in which Imran was shot in the leg, before describing the growing sense of helplessness within the family. And then came the most serious allegation of the entire interview..

FC Barcelona cancel Spain World Cup tribute amid Catalan flag controversy

Barcelona cancelled a planned tribute to their Spain World Cup winners before the Athletic Club match. The decision came amid a row over Estelada flags and Joan Laporta's defence of supporters' freedom of expression.

New Delhi. (Agency)

FC Barcelona cancelled a planned tribute for their Spain World Cup winners before Thursday's LaLiga home opener amid a dispute over the display of Catalan independence flags. Instead of celebrating the eight world champions, the evening at Camp Nou unfolded against the backdrop of a pro-independence flag campaign. The ceremony had been scheduled before the home meeting with Athletic Club. Speaking ahead of the match, Barcelona

president Joan Laporta said the club had decided against holding it because the atmosphere surrounding the fixture was not suitable. The ceremony to honour the world champions will not take place. It will not take place because it is not being held in the most appropriate context. The Royal Spanish Football Federation understands the decision," Laporta said.

"Football should be used to unite, not to create certain confrontations. The Estelada represents the mindset of many Bara supporters and Catalans. It is part of freedom of expression."The decision followed an incident before Barcelona's previous league game at Elche, where a fan had an Estelada flag confiscated by police and was later involved in a confrontation with officers. The club condemned what it considered excessive use of force and said the flag itself should not be treated as an incitement to hatred or violence.

WHY BARCELONA SCRAPPED THE TRIBUTE

The Estelada, a flag associated with Catalan independence, became the dominant visual at Camp Nou instead. A local organisation distributed around 10,000 of the flags ahead of the Athletic Club match, with supporters



raising them during Barcelona's anthem. Larger flags and banners were also displayed inside the stadium, while thousands reportedly joined a march around the ground.Laporta said Barcelona was not directly organising the display but defended supporters' right to use the symbol.

"We condemn and reject the

disproportionate action of the national police officers who assaulted Bara fans for carrying the Estelada before the Elche game," he said. "We demand that this action, once the facts have been confirmed,

be met with the appropriate punishment and sanctions."The cancellation was particularly noticeable because other Spanish clubs had honoured members of the country's World Cup-winning squad during their opening home matches. Some of those ceremonies also featured Spain coach Luis de la Fuente and the World Cup trophy.Barcelona had eight players from the victorious squad, more than any other club. Joan Garca, Eric Garca, Pedri, Pau Cubars, Gavi, Rodri, Dani Olmo and Lamine Yamal

were all originally due to be recognised. BARCELONA WIN AGAIN, NOW TURN TORAYO

Despite the unusual backdrop, Barcelona continued their strong start to the new LaLiga season with a 2-0 victory over Athletic Club at Camp Nou.

Diamond League: Duplantis proves he is human, but multiple world records broken in Zurich

Armand Duplantis won the Zurich Diamond League pole vault despite failing to clear a 6.32m world record attempt.

Emmanouil Karalis pushed the Swedish star all the way, setting a new Greek record with a 6.20m clearance.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Sweden's Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis proved that he is human after all. Attempting a world record height of 6.32 metres at the Zurich Diamond League on Thursday, August 27, Duplantis failed to clear the bar.However, that did not stop one of the greatest athletes of all time from winning the competition, as he jumped 6.25 metres to take the Diamond League title. Duplantis was pushed hard by his Greek rival Emmanouil Karalis, who broke his personal best as well as the Greek national record by clearing 6.20 metres.For once, though, the story was not simply about Duplantis winning again. Karalis made sure of that.

The Greek pole vaulter produced the performance of his life to stay with Duplantis deep into the competition. After

both men cleared 6.10m, Norway's Sondre Guttormsen was eliminated after failing three times at the next height, leaving the



two rivals alone at the top.And then the contest really came alive. Duplantis cleared 6.15m with his first attempt, setting a new meeting record. Karalis, however, decided to skip the height

altogether.He went straight for 6.20m. And cleared it.It was a stunning moment for Karalis, who added 3cm to his previous personal best and set a new Greek national record in the process. For an athlete who has spent much of his career operating in Duplantis' enormous shadow, this was a chance to show just how close he could get tDuplantis,

though, had an answer.After an injury-plagued summer in which he had struggled to consistently reproduce his best form, the Swede looked completely unbothered by Karalis' challenge. He cleared 6.25m at the first attempt, reclaiming control of the competition.o the seemingly untouchable Swede.

Meet Sonal Dinusha, India's Colombo tormenter who once couldn't afford a bat



New Delhi. (Agency)

Sonal Dinusha emerged as Sri Lanka's biggest revelation in the two-Test series against India, turning years of hard work into a breakthrough performance on the international stage. His journey began with a remarkable family sacrifice, with his first cricket bat bought by his sister after she borrowed money for it.

Dinusha finished the series with 420 runs at an average of 140, but his biggest contribution came in Colombo. Sri Lanka were forced to follow on after being bowled out for 290 and conceding a 213-run first-innings lead, yet Dinusha stayed unbeaten on 133 from 264 balls in the second innings to help the hosts reach 429/9 and secure a draw.SL vs IND 2nd Test Day 5: Highlights

Speaking to PTI, Dinusha's trusted coach, Ashan Priyanjan, recalled the difficult circumstances surrounding his early cricketing years and the sacrifices made by his family.

"His sister borrowed some money and bought a bat for him, his first cricket bat. The family did not have much money and whatever it has earned now is because of Dinusha. It's their only income," Priyanjan said.

"He is very attached to his father, mother and siblings. I think he is attached to cricket in the same way."Dinusha's marathon effort in Colombo was backed by extensive preparation. Before the Test, he called Priyanjan to discuss India's spin attack, after which he worked specifically on his sweep and reverse sweep against left-arm and off-spin at the Colombo Cricket Club.

THE BAT THAT STARTED IT ALL

Dinusha's route into cricket was not straightforward.

Praggnanandhaa scripts history as first Indian to win Grand Chess Tour

New Delhi. (Agency)

TR Praggnanandhaa scripted history on Thursday by becoming the first Indian to win the Grand Chess Tour. The Chennai Grandmaster produced a stunning comeback against defending champion Fabiano Caruana in the final to cap a remarkable run in 2026.Praggnanandhaa went into the final day six points behind Caruana after the Classical games, trailing 3-9. Speaking after completing the comeback in Saint Louis, the Indian admitted he had not expected to have much of a chance at the start of the day."Honestly, I didn't think I had much of a chance today. A six-point deficit is a lot. You basically need to do what I did," Praggnanandhaa said with a laugh."It's difficult. It's not every day you can get one win against Fabi, but to get two that was crucial in the Rapid. Mainly, what changed

from last year is my Rapid and Blitz game. It's much better now, I think, and that's a massive improvement in this format."

The Indian turned the contest around by



winning both Rapid games to move 11-9 ahead. Caruana responded by taking the second Blitz game after the first ended in a draw, bringing the score level at 12-12, but

Praggnanandhaa immediately restored his advantage by winning the third Blitz game.Needing only a draw in the final encounter, he secured the required result through a threefold repetition despite having a winning position. Across the six games between the two finalists, Praggnanandhaa won three, drew two and lost onePRAGGNANANDHAA'S REMARKABLE 2026 CAMPAIGN

The Grand Chess Tour title adds another landmark to a year in which Praggnanandhaa has repeatedly delivered against elite opposition. He had endured a disappointing second appearance at the 2026 Candidates earlier in the year, but responded by winning Norway Chess, where he defeated Magnus Carlsen twice. He followed that with a title-winning campaign at the Saint Louis Rapid and Blitz before sharing first place in the Sinquefeld Cup.

Not a club match: Ex-India star slams Gill's India after Sonal Dinusha's resistance

New Delhi. (Agency)

Former India batter Mohammad Kaif has questioned Shubman Gill's India for failing to find a consistent way past Sonal Dinusha in the second Test against Sri Lanka. Kaif believes the visitors had enough support and information around them to identify and attack the Sri Lankan batter's clear weakness.Dinusha scored an unbeaten 133 in Colombo to help Sri Lanka hold India to a draw after following on. Speaking during a discussion on Sony Sports, Kaif said the responsibility went beyond Gill and rested with India's bowling group and coaching staff as a whole.

SL vs IND 2nd Test Day 5: Highlights

"Every batter has a shortcoming somewhere. You need to find where the shortcoming is. I am not talking about Gill. I am talking about the entire bowling unit and

even the coaching staff. Everyone sits together and discusses that he scored a hundred in Galle, and where we can trap him when he comes now," Kaif said.Tactically, I agree that they attacked less, the field was opened up yesterday, and the drive ball wasn't bowled. Saransh Jain had dismissed him with that after his hundred. Mohammed Siraj had bowled a full ball, and he left it because he doesn't like playing the drive. He doesn't like playing shots there," he added.

Kaif felt India's resources made their inability to exploit that weakness even more puzzling.

Dinusha had already shown against India in the first innings that a fuller line could create an opportunity, with debutant off-spinner Saransh Jain dismissing him for 103."You

are talking about India. It's not a club match that you got late. A video analyst is sitting, a



stats person is sitting, and six or seven coaches are sitting," he added.

KAIF QUESTIONS INDIA'S PLAN vs DINUSHA

The former India batter also pointed to the limited experience India's younger bowlers

have of operating deep into Test matches, particularly on pitches that change as the game progresses."Our modern young bowlers play very rarely on such a pitch. They don't play on the fifth day. A Test match doesn't go that long. So they also don't know how to tackle it, and we have not seen this batter," Kaif said.

However, he felt Dinusha should no longer have been an unknown quantity by the time India entered the second Test."They haven't seen him at all. So there was a slight surprise package as well. The mistake happened in the second Test match. I can agree that you hadn't seen him in the first Test match," Kaif observed.



Deepika Padukone

Spirit Exit Explained: 10% Profit Share, 8-Hour Workday And Fallout With Sandeep Reddy Vanga

Deepika Padukone's exit from Sandeep Reddy Vanga's *Spirit* has refused to die down more than a year after it first made headlines. What started as a routine casting update in April 2025 has turned into one of Bollywood's longest-running off-screen controversies, with fresh claims resurfacing in August 2026 about money, working hours and a script leak.

What Is Spirit And Who Was Originally Cast

Spirit is a pan-India action drama directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga, the filmmaker behind *Kabir Singh* and *Animal*, produced jointly by Bhushan Kumar's T-Series and Vanga's own Bhadrakali Pictures. It stars Prabhas as an IPS officer and also features Vivek Oberoi and Prakash Raj. Deepika Padukone was originally attached to play the female lead opposite Prabhas. The film is currently scheduled for a March 2027 release, with Triptii Dimri now playing the part instead.

Soon after, Vanga posted a cryptic, strongly worded message on X without naming Deepika directly. He wrote about placing "100% faith" in an actor once he narrates a story, called it an "unsaid NDA", and accused someone of leaking his story. "When I narrate a story to an actor, I place 100% faith. There is an unsaid NDA (Non Disclosure Agreement) between us. But by doing this, You've 'DISCLOSED' the person that you are.... Putting down a Younger actor and ousting my story? Is this what your feminism stands for? As a filmmaker, I put years of hard work behind my craft & for me, filmmaking is everything. You didn't get it. You won't get it. You will never get it. Aisa karo.... Agli baar poori kahani bolna... kyunki mujhe jarra bhi farak nahi padtha. #dirtyPRgames. I like this kahawath very much खुदक में बिल्ली खंवा जोचे!" he wrote on X. Around the same time, Triptii Dimri, who had earlier worked with Vanga on *Animal*, was announced as the new female lead.

The Spirit Row Resurfaces: August 2026

Back in 2025, News18 exclusively reported the real reason that led the makers of *Spirit* to drop and replace Deepika Padukone with Triptii Dimri. "There seems to be a deliberate attempt to control the narrative," a source close to the development revealed to us, adding, "The actress' perception team is struggling to come to terms with her replacement and is conveniently spinning her exit as a 'work-life balance' decision. But the reality is quite different."



Arjun Kapoor Breaks Down Mid-Speech At Anshula's Wedding, Remembers Mom Mona Shourie



Arjun Kapoor's sister Anshula Kapoor married Rohan Thakkar in July, and the entire Kapoor clan, including Boney Kapoor, Janhvi Kapoor, Khushi and others were present for the celebration. For Arjun and Anshula, however, their late mother Mona Shourie's absence was deeply felt. A month after her wedding, Anshula has now shared an unseen video from the wedding reception that shows Arjun giving a speech on stage. He struggled to hold back tears as he remembered their mother, imagining how she would have danced and enjoyed every single moment of Anshula's wedding.

Arjun Kapoor's Emotional Speech At Sister Anshula's Wedding

In the video, Arjun took a moment to talk about his mother Mona Shourie and how much she would have enjoyed being part of Anshula and Rohan's wedding celebrations. As he recalled her presence, he became visibly emotional and struggled to hold back tears.

"I want to take this moment to speak about our mom. Because she would have loved every single moment over these last few days. She would have loved every ritual..." Arjun said before his voice breaks. He went on to imagine how she would have been involved in every little detail of the celebrations. Arjun said she would have made sure everything was done exactly the way Rohan's family wanted, while also dancing, celebrating and personally looking after every guest who had gathered for the occasion. He then got emotional while speaking about the rain outside, saying, "I know she is here with us tonight because itni jo baarish ho rahi hai na bahar, woh unke khushi ke aansu hain." Calling the rain her blessings, Arjun added, "Woh unka aashirwad hai, and she is blessing both of you."

Kriti Sanon Raksha Bandhan Ad Controversy: CJP's Abhijeet Dipke Compares India's Debate With China's Robots



Abhijeet Dipke, founder and convenor of the Cockroach Janta Party, has reacted to the controversy surrounding Kriti Sanon's Raksha Bandhan advertisement, drawing a comparison between India's debate over women's clothing and China's advances in robotics. His post came as the jewellery campaign faced backlash over Kriti's outfit and its portrayal of the festival.

What Did Abhijeet Dipke Say About The Kriti Sanon Row?

Dipke wrote on X, "While India is still debating what clothes our women should wear, China has built a robot that runs faster than humans." The post went viral online, with users sharing it in the middle of the ongoing debate around Kriti Sanon's GIVA advertisement.

Dipke is the founder and convenor of the satirical Cockroach Janta Party, which grew out of a youth-led protest movement earlier this year.

Why Did Kriti Sanon's Raksha Bandhan Ad Become A Controversy?

The controversy began around Kriti Sanon's Raksha Bandhan ad campaign with GIVA. In the 36-second advertisement, the actor is seen in an Indo-Western outfit featuring a bralette-style blouse, a cape and a draped skirt while celebrating Raksha Bandhan with her brother and pet dog.

A section of social media users questioned whether the outfit was appropriate for a campaign centred on a traditional festival. The scene in which Sanon ties a rakhi to her dog also became part of the debate.

Actor-politician Kangana Ranaut added to the backlash, questioning the choice of outfit and asking why Kriti Snon would tie a rakhi to her brother while wearing what she described as a bikini or undergarment.

Kriti Sanon Reacts To The Backlash

After initially staying quiet, Kriti addressed the controversy on her Instagram account. She wrote, "When will we stop telling women what to wear." She also said, "Culture & Traditions are in her heart, not in her neckline!... Also, when will we stop telling women what to wear?? Ethnic fashion has evolved over the years, but still a woman's respect for her culture is measured with just her clothes," she said in a note shared on her Instagram Stories.



Rakul Preet Singh

On What Drew Her To Surpanakha In Ramayana: 'She Was The Most Beautiful Woman Of Lanka'

Rakul Preet Singh says her role as Surpanakha in *Ramayana: Part 1* gave her the chance to explore a side of Ravana's sister that she had never come across before. The actress, who is awaiting the release of the epic film, found the character interesting because of the layers written into her story.

Rather than looking at Surpanakha only through her familiar image as an antagonist, Rakul says that she was drawn to the possibility of understanding her as a more layered character. She said the role allowed her to approach Surpanakha from an actor's perspective and explore different sides of her personality.

Talking about her part in the film, the actress said, "Every few years, you see a different interpretation and presentation of these characters, while keeping the essence rooted in the original text. As an actor, you only look at a character from that lens, that it's a character that has layers, that has the possibility and ability to shine through the film. She was apparently the most beautiful woman of Lanka. She had an ego, but then she was layered. As an actor, it's fun to explore those layers".

The script also introduced Rakul to parts of Surpanakha's life that she was not previously familiar with. For the actress, that made the character more interesting because the story does not focus only on the well-known incident involving Lakshman. She further mentioned, "There was a lot about her that I

didn't know. When I read the script, there was a lot about her life before and after that incident where her nose is chopped off by Lakshman". Rakul also pointed to the parts of Surpanakha's journey that take place before and after that incident. The actress said the script explores how Surpanakha meets Ram and what happens in her life beyond the episode that is most



commonly associated with her character.

"What happens in Surpanakha's life and how does she meet, stumble upon Ram-there's a lot which I didn't know, which for me was new when I read the script, and which is why I liked it", she added.

Ramayana: Part 1 features Ranbir Kapoor as Ram, Sai Pallavi, Ravie Dubey, Yash and Sunny Deol alongside Rakul. The film is set to arrive in cinemas on November 6, 2026, bringing this interpretation of the epic to the big screen.

NEWS BOX

‘A second life’: Nepal flood survivors recount terrifying escape, loss, devastation

KATHMANDU.(Agency)

For Raju Budhathoki, a customs agent in Nepal's Rasuwa district, Wednesday morning began like any other day but soon turned into a desperate fight for survival as the ground shook and raging floodwaters swept away homes before his eyes.

Budhathoki was resting in his room in Timure when, around 8:45 am (local time), the hillside began shaking violently, according to a report by The Kathmandu Post. Believing an earthquake had struck, he ran outside and towards a nearby police post, only to find policemen themselves fleeing the area.As he scrambled over a wire fence, he injured his hand but kept running. Looking back, he saw houses in the Timure market being swept away one after another by the floodwaters.

He eventually reached a forest about 500 metres uphill, where he took shelter and survived.

“From the forest, when I looked down at Timure, I never imagined I would get a second chance at life like this. Now everything feels like a terrible dream,” the newspaper quoted him as saying from his hospital bed in Trishuli.Budhathoki was among the survivors of the catastrophic Bhote Koshi flash flood and landslides that devastated the Nepal-Tibet border area in Rasuwagadhi and several settlements downstream.Police and rescue teams had recovered hundreds of bodies by Thursday night, while hundreds more remained missing.Another customs agent, Prakash Gautam, also described a terrifying escape from Timure.Gautam told The Kathmandu Post that a loud rumbling sound was followed within moments by darkness engulfing the market and a black cloud covering the sky.

Death toll in Nepal floods rises to 469 as search, rescue operations continue

world .(Agency)

The death toll from flash floods triggered by an ice-rock avalanche near the Nepal-Tibet border rose to 469 in Nepal on Friday, as rescue teams continued search operations for a third consecutive day.

Nepal Police said the bodies had been recovered from eight districts, with the highest number reported from Chitwan (178), followed by Nawalparasi East (110), Gorkha (44), Nuwakot (37), Dhading (33), Tanahu (28), Nawalparasi West (27) and Rasuwa (12).

At least 1,545 people have so far been rescued from affected areas, including those who were stranded by the floods. Of them, 84 are undergoing treatment at hospitals in Kathmandu.The search and rescue operation involves 7,451 security personnel, including 2,391 Nepal Army personnel, Nepal Police said.The disaster struck on Wednesday after an ice-rock avalanche, triggered by a glacial collapse near the Nepal-Tibet border, sent a massive torrent of water, mud and debris downstream. Towns and villages were inundated, while homes, vehicles, roads and bridges were swept away and hydropower infrastructure damaged.Nepal authorities have reported 910 people missing, with rescuers searching river corridors choked with mud and debris. Families have also gathered at hospitals as efforts continue to trace those unaccounted for.

On the Tibet side, 558 people have been reported missing, taking the total number of missing persons in Nepal and Tibet to 1,468.Helicopters have been used to reach isolated areas and evacuate survivors, while ground teams continue searching riverbanks and downstream settlements, The Kathmandu Post newspaper reported.Meanwhile, the Nepal government has decided to halt all examinations from August 29 given the situation that developed following the devastating natural disaster.All educational institutions have been instructed to reschedule the postponed exams at an appropriate time, said Education Minister and government spokesperson Sashmit Pokharel.

China halts rescue at Tibet disaster epicentre over flood risk

BEIJING.(Agency)

China paused a rescue operation on Friday citing the high risk of renewed flooding in Tibet, where hundreds remain missing two days after a deadly mudslide, state media



said.A lake formed by immense piles of debris after a mudslide hit the China-Nepal border has begun overflowing towards the area that rescue teams were headed, state broadcaster CCTV said."All rescue teams have been ordered to stand by in place and wait for further instructions," it

said.Emergency teams which had earlier accessed the area "have been ordered to withdraw one kilometre (0.6 miles)", the broadcaster added.The lake formed after a wall of mud and debris hit the border hub of Gyirong in Tibet on Wednesday, with hundreds reported missing.CCTV said water levels at the lake were expected to rise over the next three days due to continued rainfall, peaking around September 1.This increases "the risk of a breach that could send floodwaters downstream and potentially cause further damage in areas including Gyirong Port and elsewhere downstream", state news agency Xinhua reported late Thursday.Emergency engineering teams were closely monitoring the situation,said CCTV.

CCTV said that 499 Chinese nationals and 555 foreigners had been transported out of the disaster zone as of Friday.

Rescue workers are using drone-based 3D modelling and thermal imaging detection, as well as manual searches, to locate those still missing,said CCTV.

Separately in Tibet, China had earlier Friday paused its rescue operation at the hardest-hit area of Gyirong over the risk of renewed flooding.

KATHMANDU.(Agency)

Nepal ordered rescuers searching for survivors of deadly floods to get to safety as it reported a debris dam had burst in Tibet on Friday, bringing risks of new torrents.Emergency teams have recovered 472 bodies after a tsunami-like wall of water and mud crashed down on Wednesday, burying homes, smashing bridges and sweeping away vehicles in both Nepal and Tibet.More than 1,400 people are missing, including trekkers in the Himalayas and scores of Hindu

pilgrims to Tibet's sacred snow-capped Mount Kailash.The US Geological Survey said the disaster -- the deadliest for Nepal since a 2015 earthquake -- was caused by a glacial collapse that triggered

a vast flow of icy debris.The deluge of ice and mud also caused huge pools of water to form, with one of these formations bursting on Friday in Tibet in a new threat to emergency workers scouring the region for survivors.Nepali police urged all rescuers to "immediately move to a safe location", saying it had received information that "a water dam has burst again on the Tibetan side".Separately in Tibet, China had earlier Friday paused its rescue operation at the hardest-hit area of Gyirong over the risk of renewed flooding.State broadcaster CCTV reported that a lake formed by immense piles of debris has begun overflowing towards the area that rescue teams were headed."So all rescue teams have been ordered to stand by in place and wait for

further instructions," it said, adding that emergency teams which had earlier accessed the area "have been ordered to withdraw one kilometre".At a meetng chaired by Chinese President Xi Jinping



on Friday, leaders underlined "many hidden dangers of glaciers, ice lakes and geological disasters in the surrounding area" and warned that "rescue is facing great difficulties," Xinhua reported.

Tunnel rescue operation

Emergency teams had been racing to

retrieve survivors from affected zones, where the widespread devastation mean food and water supplies were running out. The Nepali military had meanwhile located people trapped in the tunnel of

Trishuli 3A hydropower project, where they are working to find a way in to retrieve the survivors."Two helicopters have been dispatched but it is challenging because it is tough to even locate the entry points of the tunnel," army spokesman Raja Ram Basnet told AFP.Some 350 workers and residents have been brought to safety from the site, he added, but efforts were ongoing to extract more than 100 people trapped in the same area.Workers rescued from other dam projects along the Trishuli valley described a disaster that unfolded with terrifying speed.

Worker Buddha Tamang said he survived only because he was inside a tunnel at the dam where he worked when the flood struck -- but he had managed to get out and reach help.

Nepal sets up temporary storage as bodies recovered downstream overwhelm morgues

KATHMANDU.(Agency)

Bodies of people swept away by the devastating Bhote Koshi floods in Nepal are being recovered far downstream, overwhelming morgues and prompting authorities to set up temporary facilities to store and



identify the remains, according to a media report.

Bodies recovered from Rasuwa and Nuwakot have been found as far downstream as Chitwan, Tanahun, Nawalparasi, Gorkha and other districts, with morgues in several areas running out of space, The Kathmandu Post reported.The Bhote Koshi flash floods struck Nepal on Wednesday, sweeping through Rasuwa and other districts before surging downstream along the Trishuli and Narayani river systems, causing widespread loss of life and damage to settlements, roads, bridges and hydropower infrastructure.

In Chitwan, where the number of recovered bodies has exceeded hospital capacity, authorities are preparing a temporary body storage centre in Bharatpur, the report said.An unused building of the Industrial Enterprise Development Institute on Vidhyut Road in Bharatpur Metropolitan City-10 will be converted into the facility, following a decision taken at a meeting chaired by Chitwan Chief District Officer Ganesh Aryal on Thursday, it said.Early Thursday, 137 bodies were recovered along the Chitwan stretch of the Trishuli and Narayani rivers, between Phishling and Golaghat, with recoveries continuing.The growing number of recovered bodies has also prompted families of missing people to travel to Chitwan from Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Gorkha and other districts in search of their relatives. Morgues at hospitals in Chitwan can collectively accommodate between 30 and 50 bodies, Aryal said, adding that the temporary facility is expected to have space for around 250 bodies.If that capacity is also exceeded, authorities have decided to use the electric crematorium at Devghat as an additional option, according to the report.Bharatpur Metropolitan City will repair and equip the temporary facility. Authorities plan to control the temperature inside the rooms, install air conditioners and use dry ice to slow decomposition.

Norway’s King Harald V dies at 89 and his son becomes King Haakon VIII**➔The popular king modernized the royal house but refused to follow in the footsteps of other aging monarchs who have abdicated in recent times.**

STAVANGER, Norway.(Agency)

King Harald V of Norway, who went into exile in the United States as a child during the Nazi occupation of his homeland and refused a string of European noblewomen to marry his school sweetheart, died Friday. He was 89.The palace said he died at the National Hospital in Oslo at 6:35 a.m.Harald was Europe’s oldest monarch. The popular king modernized the royal house but refused to follow in the footsteps of other aging monarchs who have abdicated in recent times. His son

automatically became King Haakon VIII.Like other royal houses in Europe, the Norwegian monarchs serve a largely symbolic role, enjoying celebrity status while real



power in the democracy of 5.5 million rests with an elected parliament. Harald was crowned after his British-born father, King Olav V, died in January 1991, and reigned during an oil-and-gas-driven economic boom in his country. Royal family fled Norway during World War IIHarald was born in

1937 in Asker, near Oslo, becoming the first Norwegian prince to be born in the country since King Olav IV in 1370. In the following centuries, Norway didn't have a king of its own until Harald's grandfather, Haakon VII, was elected king following the 1905 dissolution of the union between Sweden and Norway.Harald was 3 years old when the Nazis occupied Norway at the start of World War II. To avoid capture, his mother fled with him and his sisters, Ragnhild and Astrid, first to Sweden and then by boat to the U.S., while Harald's father and grandfather went into exile in Britain with Norway's government.Haakon's refusal to go along with German demands garnered respect among his people.During their time in the U.S., the Norwegian royals were often guests at the White House.

Ratko Mladic, ex-Bosnian Serb warlord who oversaw atrocities, dies as a prisoner at 84**He commanded his troops to “scorch the brains” of the Bosnian Muslims and boasted of being a “Serbian God.”**

BELGRADE, Serbia.(Agency)

Ratko Mladic, the bullish Bosnian Serb general whose forces besieged the Bosnian capital for several years in the 1990s and carried out the worst massacre in Europe since World War II, died Thursday while serving a life sentence for his crimes, U.N. officials said. He was 84.

Mladic died at a hospital in The Hague, Netherlands, U.N. court officials said. A Mladic relative who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the situation confirmed

the reports and said Mladic’s son, Darko Mladic, was on his way to the Dutch city. The U.N. tribunal for war crimes committed during the wars in the former Yugoslavia in



the 1990s sentenced Mladic to life in prison in 2017 in what was considered a key step toward bringing justice to the victims. He had been in custody since 2011 after many years on the run.The ruthless, blue-eyed former communist officer-turned nationalist warlord was one of the most notorious figures of the conflict that left more than 100,000 people dead and over 1 million homeless. He commanded his troops to

“scorch the brains” of the Bosnian Muslims and boasted of being a “Serbian God.” When the ethnic war in Bosnia and Herzegovina started in 1992, Mladic became the commander of the Bosnian Serb troops and took control of large swaths of the country to form a Serb mini-state.

Serbs under Mladic’s control laid siege to the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo, and other cities and villages, established concentration camps for detained non-Serb civilians and enemy soldiers, and systematically killed prisoners.In Sarajevo, Serb troops kept the city isolated while killing civilians with snipers and heavy artillery. In 1995, Mladic’s troops slaughtered more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica — the first case of genocide in Europe since WWII.

But Mladic and his admirers have never repented. He was seen by many as a patriot fighting for the first pan-Serbian state. Defiant, Mladic acted bullishly during his trial and yelled at the judges when sentenced to life in prison.