

Manoj Jarange resumes fast over Kunbi certificates' demand, warns of Mumbai march

Jalna. (Agency)

Activist Manoj Jarange on Sunday stood by his demand for Kunbi caste certificates for eligible Marathas and warned that he would march to Mumbai if the Maharashtra government did not act. His indefinite hunger strike over Maratha reservation-related demands entered its second day.

Jarange began his 11th indefinite fast on Saturday at his native Antarwali Sarati village in Jalna district, where thousands of community members have gathered in support. He has been seeking recognition of eligible Marathas as Kunbis, an agrarian community that gets reservation benefits in education and government jobs under the Other Backward Class category.

"The Maharashtra government should declare all Marathas as Kunbi," Jarange told reporters on the second day of his agitation. He said that if the government failed to accept the demands, he would march to Mumbai and intensify the protest. He also said a meeting of the Maratha community's core committee, led by him, would be held in Antarwali Sarati on September 12 to decide.

Wise words abroad, silence at home: Kapil Sibal takes swipe at RSS chief

New Delhi. (Agency)

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Sunday criticised RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat over his recent remarks in the US on India's unity in diversity, saying that "words don't matter" and that actions must speak.

Taking to X, Sibal described Bhagwat's remarks as a case of "wise words abroad, silence at home". "Bhagwat in New York: 'Diversity is a decoration of our innate unity. It has to be protected'. Wise words abroad, silence at home.

Words don't matter, actions must speak!" Sibal said. Sibal's remarks came a day after Bhagwat, addressing a gathering of more than 6,000 members of the Indian-American community and interfaith leaders at New York's Madison Square Garden, said unity in diversity was part of Bharat's DNA. Speaking at the 'Universal Oneness Celebration' organised by the American Hindus For Engagement and Dialogue (AHEAD) forum, Bhagwat said diversity should be "celebrated, respected and accepted", while emphasising the importance of maintaining a sense of oneness. Drawing a comparison between the US and India, Bhagwat said pluralism is often associated with America, while "unity in diversity" is associated with Bharat.

"For Bharat, this unity and diversity, both are in the DNA," he said, referring to Swami Vivekananda's message that every nation has a mission and a destiny to fulfil. Bhagwat said Bharat's role was to realise and help the world realise the concept of unity in diversity.

Make India drug-free, build stronger future for youth: PM in Mann ki Baat address

New Delhi (Agency)

In his Mann Ki Baat radio speech, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged citizens to support a drug-free India and highlighted the PM SVANidhi scheme. His remarks linked youth welfare with women's economic empowerment through a growing street vendor support programme.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday called on people to join hands to make India free of drug abuse and build a stronger future for the youth. In his monthly radio programme, 'Mann Ki Baat', he said the 'Drug-Free Youth for a Developed India' campaign is gathering momentum across the country. PM Modi also highlighted the PM SVANidhi Yojana for street vendors, saying it is helping lakhs of women expand their businesses, raise their incomes and secure a better future for their families. He said a large share of the scheme's beneficiaries are women and that this aspect of women's empowerment does not get the attention it deserves.

Speaking about the anti-drug campaign, the Prime Minister said, "Its goal is crystal clear - drug-free youth, drug-free India. Let us come together to build a drug-free India and a stronger future for our youth." The

government's 'Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan' is a flagship initiative launched on August 15, 2020 under the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction.

The campaign aims to prevent substance



abuse through awareness, community participation, treatment, rehabilitation, aftercare and social reintegration, while building a nationwide movement against drug abuse. Referring to the PM SVANidhi scheme, PM Modi said millions of mothers and sisters are gaining new strength through it. "Nearly

46 percent of the beneficiaries of the 'PM SVANidhi Scheme' are women. That means around 35 lakh women across the country are connecting with this scheme to advance their businesses," he said.

Launched in June 2020, the PM SVANidhi scheme was designed to help street vendors overcome financial difficulties and restart businesses hit during the Covid pandemic. Since its launch, the scheme has gone beyond financial assistance by giving street vendors a sense of identity and formal recognition for their contribution to the economy. Initially rolled out till December 31, 2024, it has now been extended till March 31, 2030.

PM Modi is currently on a state visit to Uzbekistan. The radio programme is usually recorded a few days in advance and broadcast on the last Sunday of every month. In his address, he underlined the need for a drug-free India and pointed to the role of the PM SVANidhi scheme in supporting women street vendors across the country.

Medical Negligence Allegations: Retired PSI Dies at Nikol's Ananta Hospital Amid Claims of Expired Medicines and Inflated Billing

A shocking case of alleged medical extortion surfaces in Ahmedabad, raising serious questions about patient safety and the unregulated greed of private healthcare facilities.

MAHANAGAR METRO

Ahmedabad. A severe case of alleged medical malpractice and financial exploitation has come to light at Ananta Hospital, a multispecialty facility located in the Nikol area of Ahmedabad. The incident, involving the death of a retired Police Sub-Inspector (PSI), has triggered widespread outrage and raised serious questions regarding patient care and hospital administration. Key Allegations Leveled Against Hospital According to the deceased officer's family, the hospital prioritized commercial gain over patient care, engaging in alleged malpractice: Administration of Expired Drugs: The family alleges that expired and substandard medications were administered to the patient during treatment. Unwarranted Ventilator Use: Claims have been made that the patient was placed on ventilator support without genuine medical necessity, allegedly to escalate ICU and daily hospitalization charges. Coercive



Paperwork: Relatives state they were subjected to emotional pressure and coerced into signing consent forms under duress. Exorbitant Billing: The hospital allegedly extorted lakhs of rupees under the guise of specialized critical care while failing to provide standard medical treatment. Outrage

Over Safety and Accountability The family has called the incident an act of criminal negligence driven by corporate greed, questioning the safety of regular citizens if the family of a former law enforcement officer could face such exploitation. "If a retired police officer with full awareness of the

law can be subjected to such extreme negligence and exploitation, one can only imagine the plight of common and economically vulnerable citizens visiting this hospital." Demand for Strict Action Following the retired PSI's death, locals and family members have demanded: Immediate registration of a First Information Report (FIR) against the treating doctors and administrative management. An independent inquiry by the state medical council and health department. Cancellation of the hospital's operational license. As the public outrage continues to escalate, all eyes are now on the local police and state health authorities to see how swiftly they respond to these grave allegations. This tragic incident has exposed the dark reality of potential exploitation within the private healthcare system, highlighting the urgent need for strict regulatory oversight and transparency, hoping their struggle will bring an end to such medical malpractices and prevent any further loss of innocent lives.

Want to become UP CM? Bring Asaduddin Owaisi: AIMIM to Akhilesh Yadav

Hyderabad. (Agency)

The All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) has taken a swipe at Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, saying he would need the support of AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi if he wants to become Uttar Pradesh chief minister. AIMIM leader Shadab Chauhan said Yadav's political strategy would remain incomplete without Owaisi and claimed that the "A" in the Samajwadi Party's PDA — referring to the party's formulation of "Pichhda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak" — should stand for Asaduddin Owaisi.

Chauhan made the remarks while advising Yadav on his political strategy and the prospects of the Opposition ahead of the next Uttar Pradesh Assembly election.

"If Akhilesh Yadav wants to become the chief minister, he will have to take the support of Asaduddin Owaisi," Chauhan said. He further claimed that Muslims had made up their minds that their votes should contribute to electing a leader who represents their interests.

AIMIM TAKES AIM AT AKHILESH'S PDA

Taking a direct dig at the Samajwadi Party's PDA strategy, Chauhan said Yadav could not hope to return to power unless the alliance's "A" also represented Asaduddin Owaisi. "Until there is 'A' for Asaduddin Owaisi in Akhilesh Yadav's PDA, he cannot even dream of coming to power," Chauhan said. The AIMIM leader's remarks come amid efforts by political parties in Uttar Pradesh to consolidate different social and electoral groups ahead of the next Assembly polls.



Judiciary acted proactively on digital arrest scams, didn't wait for Parliament: CJI

Speaking in London, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said the Supreme Court has moved swiftly against the digital arrest scam. He said courts must tackle emerging fraud while upholding due process and individual rights.

New Delhi (Agency)

Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant said on Saturday that the Indian judiciary has responded proactively to new forms of economic crime, including the digital arrest scam, instead of waiting for Parliament to step in. Speaking in London at the closing session of the 43rd International Symposium on Economic Crime, he said India's response to such offences has developed through laws, institutions and judicial principles working together.

He said the Supreme Court had recently taken note of the digital arrest scam, in which fraudsters pose as police officers, judicial officials or bureaucrats on video calls to cheat people. The court, he said, has



asked the Centre and the states to assess the scale of the problem and consider creating a separate offence with penalties linked to the harm caused. "In response, the court has directed the Union and the states to evaluate the extent of this problem and has called for the establishment of a distinct offence, with penalties proportionate to the harm inflicted," he said. "This exemplifies a broader pattern: an Indian judiciary that

proactively responds to emerging fraudulent schemes, rather than waiting for Parliament to address them," he added.

Kant said India's modern response to economic crime was best seen not as one law, but as "a layered architecture, built deliberately over successive decades", with legislation, institutions and judicial doctrine each doing separate work. He referred to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, and the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018. At the same time, he said these systems were not beyond criticism. "I must note that these are not infallible mechanisms. Numerous individuals have alleged misuse of the PMLA process by investigating authorities, including claims of arrests made without articulated reasons, and of custody extended beyond what the existing facts appear to justify.

4 thrash man after accident, held

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Four men were arrested on Friday for allegedly assaulting a man and threatening to kill him following a dispute over a road accident on Aug 16.

According to the complainant, Pradeep (30), his uncle's Scorpio had collided with an unknown truck near a petrol pump on Naurangpur Road on Aug 16. Later, when Pradeep and his friend took the damaged car for repair to a denting workshop in Sector 12, five to six men attacked and threatened to kill him. He sustained serious injuries in the assault and was taken to a nearby hospital. Pradeep approached the police on Aug 22 and registered an assault case at Sector 14 police station.



Police arrested the accused — Praveen (23), Karan (24) and Ajay (23), all residents of Bar Gujjar, Gurgaon, and Vinod (26), a resident of Sarai village in Nuh district — on Friday. The accused work as security guards and drivers with private companies, police said. The motorcycle allegedly used in the assault has also been seized.

“Police investigation revealed that the complainant and his associates had allegedly abused Praveen's father, who was driving the truck involved in the Aug 16 collision. Later, Praveen and his associates assaulted the complainant over the dispute,” police spokesperson Sandeep Turan said.

Hot & humid days ahead, rain unlikely before Sept 1

Noida.(Agency)

The city remained hot and humid on Saturday despite a slight dip in temperatures. Dry conditions are likely to continue for the next two days, followed by light rain at some places, including the city, from Sept 1.

While the maximum temperature recorded at Gurgaon KVK on Saturday was 35 degrees Celsius, it reached 36.1 degrees Celsius at NorthCap University, up from 35.4 degrees Celsius a day earlier.

The minimum temperature at Gurgaon KVK was recorded at 27.2 degrees Celsius, slightly lower than 27.6 degrees Celsius recorded on the previous day. At NorthCap University, the minimum temperature stood at 26.9 degrees Celsius, compared with 27.8 degrees Celsius a day earlier.

According to the IMD, the hot conditions are likely to be accompanied by some fleeting rainfall over the next few days. Light to moderate rainfall is likely at isolated places across Haryana till Aug 31, while rainfall may occur at a few places thereafter.

The weather department has forecast light to moderate rainfall on Sept 1 across several districts, including Chandigarh, Panchkula, Ambala, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Karnal, Gurgaon, Mewat, Palwal, Faridabad, Sonapat, Panipat and Jind. The forecast suggests that the possibility of showers over the next few days in the city could bring a temporary drop in temperatures.

So far this month, the city has recorded 216.8 mm of rain, having an excess of 21%, against the normal of 179.7 mm rainfall. Yamunanagar received the highest rainfall with 331.2 mm rain against the normal of 294.3 mm rainfall, having an excess of 13%.

Man dies after tree falls on his bike in Sector 102

Noida.(Agency)

A 22-year-old man died after a tree fell on his moving bike near Satya The Hive Mall in Sector 102 on Saturday morning.

An officer from Dhankot police post said it is not clear why the tree was uprooted and investigators are looking into the circumstances which caused it to fall.

Police said the deceased, Vinay, was wearing a helmet at the time of the accident. Despite that, he suffered injuries



to his face and head when the tree fell on his bike.

Passersby gathered in the area after the accident and tried to revive Vinay, who had become unconscious. They then informed police. Vinay was taken to a hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

His body was kept at SGT mortuary for autopsy and was handed over to his family after the post-mortem examination.

He was pursuing distance correspondence studies from a local institute. Traffic in the area was also disrupted for a short period because of the fallen tree. Movement of vehicles was restored soon after it was removed by the authorities concerned. An officer familiar with the case said inquiry proceedings had been initiated under Section 194 of BNSS.

First U-girder to lay Gurgaon metro tracks placed near Cyber Park

Gurgaon.(Agency)

The elevated structure of the Gurgaon Metro project began taking shape late on Friday night with the lifting and placement of its first 160-tonne U-girder near Cyber Park. The large precast girders will form the elevated structure on which the metro tracks will eventually be laid. More than 1,600 such U-girders are planned along the project. A girder is the horizontal load-bearing structure of an elevated viaduct, acting as the bridge-like span that directly connects the vertical pillars or piers and serves as the foundation on which tracks can be laid. A U-girder is preferred for rapid construction. Its base functions as the track slab while its integrated walls act as built-in derailment retainers, acoustic sound barriers and maintenance or evacuation walkways.

On Friday, the girder was placed between piers P2/26 and P2/27 and the state industry and commerce minister Rao Narbir Singh was present for the

occasion.

A Gurgaon Metro Rail Limited (GMRL) official said girder launching is one of the most challenging construction activities because the structures have to be precast, transported through the city and then precisely positioned between the piers using heavy-duty cranes. Each U-girder is around 28 m long, 5 m wide and weighs about 160 tonnes. It contains nearly 16 tonnes of steel and around 60 cubic metres of M-60 grade concrete. With two U-girders required for each span, GMRL plans to launch them in pairs at night.

Rao Narbir Singh said the first U-girder was an important step towards improving Gurgaon's connectivity. “Metro expansion is a priority for the Haryana govt and will provide residents with a faster and more reliable public transport option as the city continues to expand,” he said. The launch comes as Phase 1 of the

project has achieved around 32% progress in civil works, while the overall project has crossed 10% completion, a GMRL official said. It is significant amid concerns over delays in executing



the project. Earlier this week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked the state govt about the slow progress of the city's metro connectivity. He asked the Haryana chief secretary to take “ownership” of the project and ensure its speedy execution.

GMRL officials said the initial delay was partly linked to the time taken to establish the organisation. The project was cleared by the Union Cabinet in June 2023, while GMRL came into existence in Feb 2024. Key leadership positions remained vacant until Feb the next year. Although the Phase 1 construction contract was awarded in Aug last year, work began only in Nov.

The official said the progress of the metro has improved since GMRL became fully operational. Most of the required govt land has been cleared by the state, while a small forest-related clearance is expected to be resolved shortly.

The metro agency is also preparing to move ahead with Phase 2. Tender documents have been prepared, but queries were raised by the chief minister's office. “We are hopeful that the tender can be floated by Sept,” the official said. The official expressed confidence that Phase 1 would meet its targeted completion timeline of 2028.

UP-Rera links quarterly reports to relief for delayed projects, CREDAI opposes

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

CREDAI and UP-Rera are at loggerheads over conditions imposed by the real estate regulator on a four-month extension granted to delayed housing projects because of disruptions caused by the West Asia conflict.

The dispute stems from a July 31 advisory issued by the ministry of housing and urban affairs (MoHUA), asking the real estate regulatory authorities to grant a four-month extension to thousands of delayed projects affected by supply-chain

disruptions. The relief applies to projects whose completion dates fell on or after Feb 28. In its Aug 25 order, however, UP-Rera said only developers who had filed their annual reports and quarterly progress reports (QPRs) would be eligible for the extension. The order restricts eligibility to projects whose relevant completion date falls between Feb 28, 2026, and Oct 31, 2026. It also states that the sanctioned map/layout/building plan as on Feb 28 must be validated, and project-wise scrutiny by the technical division must be conducted, with a separate request after

curing pending compliances.

CREDAI has objected to the additional conditions, pointing to Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Haryana, where regulators have granted the extension without similar restrictions.

In its letter to the UP-Rera secretary, CREDAI said that all ongoing projects should have received a uniform four-month extension, in line with the July 31 advisory. It said that the regulatory body has introduced conditions that would exclude a majority of the projects. “The central govt has treated.

Man held for six-year-old's rape-murder, killed in police encounter

Noida.(Agency)

A man arrested on suspicion of raping and strangling a six-year-old girl in Greater Noida's Ecotech 3 was killed in a police encounter hours later, police said. The accused, a 32-year-old neighbour, was held after the child's body was found stuffed in a sack and dumped near bushes by a pond. Police alleged he had strangled her and stabbed her with a knife.

According to police, the girl was playing outside her house on Friday evening when the accused offered to buy her a chocolate and took her to his house nearby. Her father, a confectioner, was at his shop at the time, while her mother and three siblings were at home. When the girl, the youngest of four siblings and a Class 1 student at a govt school, disappeared, her mother and relatives searched the surrounding area before informing police.

Police formed five teams to trace the child and began examining CCTV footage from houses, lanes and roads around the village. One recording showed the girl playing alone in a lane when the accused allegedly called her over, then walked away with her. The clip showed the child pausing, turning back and exchanging words with him before following him.

Another recording showed him entering a house with the girl behind him, with no one else visible. Later footage showed him leaving the house carrying a sack on his shoulder, walking past a car, pedestrians and an auto-rickshaw.

As the child was not visible in that footage, the family suspected some mischief, and they, along with neighbours, went to the accused's house, where he was found sleeping, police said. Villagers caught him and allegedly assaulted him before handing him over to the cops. Central Noida DCP Shailendra Singh said the accused was identified and taken into custody after CCTV footage and other evidence linked him to the crime. During interrogation, he allegedly told police that he had dumped the child's body near a pond.

Noida airport falls well short of 1L fliers in first full month of ops, braces for slow takeoff

Noida .(Agency)

Zurich AG has prepared itself for slower-than-expected growth at Noida International Airport. Multiple factors like the last-minute pullout by one of the three launch airlines, airlines going through a rough patch because of oil prices, Delhi's IGI Airport operating way below its existing capacity, its own connectivity problems have meant its air traffic in the first two months of operations is much lower than Zurich Airport International AG is the primary developer and concessionaire of Noida airport, which began domestic passenger operations on June 15.

In its outlook for NIA, Zurich AG has said: “Slower ramp up expected due to challenging geopolitical environment with near-time performance remaining subject to elevated uncertainty. Route network will continue to expand with

international services expected to follow. Strong confidence in the long-term growth potential and attractive fundamentals of the Indian aviation market.”

It said NIA saw 104 flights and 25,000



passengers in June. This rose to 1,044 flights and 77,000 passengers in July. The airport's HY 16 EBITDA (core financial earning) loss is estimated at about \$3 million.

IndiGo is the biggest operator by a

distance at Noida airport, with Akasa having a few flights. Air India Express, which was to be the third launch airlines, had pulled out due to mounting losses of the AI group. Setting up a new base means incurring significant expense, something AI wanted to avoid at this point of time. Before AI Express pulled out, Noida airport had expected a footfall of around 60 lakh passengers in the first year, half of its annual capacity. Averaged, this would be 5 lakh passengers a month in the first year. The actual July footfall is well below these estimates.

The going was never going to be easy for Noida airport. It's the only instance of a second international airport opening in an Indian urban conglomerate without either the existing hub operating to capacity (like Mumbai CSMIA), being constrained (like Goa Dabolim) or the older one shutting down (like Bengaluru HAL, Hyderabad Begumpet.

Gleaming counter, grimy kitchen: What lies behind the tempting kebabs, sweet food counters

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Rows of golden, crisp samosas sit beside trays of ghevar dusted with silver leaf, tandoori chicken and kebabs turning slowly on their skewers. At sweet shops and eateries across NCR, counters offer a kind of theatre, built on colour and aroma and the promise of festivity as the season gets under way. What happens beyond that counter is a different story.

On Aug 25, Ghaziabad's food safety department raided a warehouse in Bihariपुरा and seized 10 quintals of chhena rasgullas suspected of adulteration. Officials alleged the sweets were made with adulterated paneer and sugar, along with chemicals including sefolite, a compound commonly used in textile printing and as an industrial reducing agent, not food. Four samples were sent for laboratory testing. The rest of the stock, taken into custody, was disposed of.

Adulteration, officials say, is only part of the problem. What the raids do not capture is the ordinary, unremarkable state of a kitchen on any given afternoon, the kind of thing a customer never sees. In Nehru Nagar, TOI last week found two

workers folding samosas in a cramped corner of a sweetmeat shop while ghevar and laddus were spread on a netted tray balanced atop a covered drain,

with an iron-welding unit humming a few feet away. The shop's owner, Jyoti Devi, made no claims to scale. “We keep the area clean as much as we can,” she said. “This is a small village area. My hands are clean and we ask our workers to wash their hands properly before cooking. That is it.” She added, without apology, “We are small units and we do not have that capacity and it does not concern people buying from us. It is taste, and our shop is very old.”

In Noida's Sector 29, a chicken grilling outlet known equally for its jhol momos had soiled work slabs and vegetables stacked loosely in a corner. A worker, Aman, explained the arithmetic of a small operation. “The investment is limited,” he said. “What we earn goes into buying vegetables and items needed to prepare the food and the salaries. The rent of this small shop is also paid by us. You cannot expect a 5-star treatment

here.”

A few metres on, another kitchen bore the residue of years of cooking, dried spice



spatter climbing the tiled walls. Subodh, who works there, described a routine shaped entirely by exhaustion. “It has been like this only,” he said. “It is our daily job, and chopping and cooking take a lot of effort. We have a lot of rush by the

evening and then we want to just go back home and sleep. We do not get much time, but clean it once in a while when it gets very dirty.”

Scale, it turns out, can buy cleanliness. At a prominent sweet shop in Nehru Nagar, preparations for Teej and Janmashtami were in full swing, with footfall expected to reach 5,000 to 6,000 customers over two days. Its second-generation owner, Sagar Yadav, presided over an operation with hair caps and gloves on the packing staff, a warehouse-like preparation floor upstairs for cutting sweets and dipping them in syrup, and an in-house kitchen with tiled interiors that looked, on the day of the visit, genuinely clean. “We have 40 workers and do whatever is needed to keep the area clean.”

In Indirapuram and Vaishali, several shops have simply moved the mess elsewhere, relying on centralised kitchens. One chain owner in Vaishali framed hygiene as a matter of brand survival rather than principle. “We are larger units and slight slack in hygiene can cost us the reputation of the brand,” he said.

AAP leader Gurpreet Gopi shot dead in Punjab's Ferozepur

Chandigarh. (Agency)

An Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader was shot dead by unidentified assailants in a firing incident in Punjab's Ferozepur district late Saturday evening.

The AAP leader, identified as Gurpreet Singh Gopi, was killed in the attack, while another party worker, Harpreet Singh, was critically injured in the incident in the Mamdot area of Ferozepur. Gopi and Singh were travelling on a motorcycle on Mamdot Road when unidentified assailants travelling in a car allegedly opened fire at them.

Vicky Maini, the newly elected president of the Mamdot Nagar Panchayat, along with two others, was travelling in a separate car and was present at the spot. Ferozepur SSP Bhupinder Singh Sidhu said the incident was linked to an old election-related rivalry.

According to the police official, Gopi and Harpreet sustained bullet injuries and were rushed to a hospital. Gopi died on the way, while Harpreet is undergoing treatment at District Hospital, Ferozepur. "Harpreet has given his statement and, based on it, an FIR has been registered under murder and provisions of the Arms Act," Sidhu said.

Police have identified the alleged assailant, who is believed to have a criminal background. However, his identity is yet to be disclosed. The SSP said police teams were working to arrest him. The incident is believed to have its roots in a rivalry following the urban local body elections held in Punjab earlier this year. Sources said Maini and Gopi knew each other, with Maini having been elected president of the Mamdot Nagar Panchayat in the polls.

Andhra Pradesh notifies interim fee structure for private medical colleges

VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)

The Andhra Pradesh Health, Medical and Family Welfare Department has issued orders notifying an interim fee structure for undergraduate, postgraduate, and super-speciality medical and dental courses in private unaided professional colleges for the academic year 2026–27.

The fee structure has been revised by enhancing existing rates by 10% for undergraduate courses, and 15% for postgraduate and super-speciality programs over the fees notified for 2025–26.

The government stepped in to notify the temporary fee structure after the Andhra Pradesh Higher Education Fee Regulatory and Monitoring Commission communicated its inability to process and recommend regular fee structures for the 2026–29 block period.

Colleges prohibited from collecting additional capitation fees

The commission stated that it is currently not fully constituted, and is awaiting detailed rules governing its statutory functions from the State.

Under the updated structure for undergraduate MBBS courses, the annual interim tuition fee for A-Category (Competent Authority Quota) seats has been fixed at Rs 18,150, B-Category (Management Quota) seats at Rs 14,52,000, and C-Category (NRI Quota) seats at up to Rs 43,56,000. For BDS courses, the fee stands at Rs 15,730 for A-Category, Rs 4,84,000 for B-Category, and Rs 14,52,000 for C-Category seats.

CM Naidu set to fulfil 30-year Veligonda dream

VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)

Nearly 30 years after performing its initial 'bhoomi puja' at Gottipadiya, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu will return to the site on August 31 to dedicate Phase-I of the Pula Subbaiah Veligonda Project to the nation. In a rare historical milestone, Naidu, who laid the foundation stone on March 5, 1996, will fulfil a long-standing pledge to the drought-prone populations of the Rayalaseema and coastal hinterlands.

Designed to draw 43.50 TMC of surplus Krishna floodwaters from the foreshore of the Srisaillam reservoir at Kollamvagu, the project is unique in its engineering. Unlike other regional floodwater schemes that depend on energy-intensive lift irrigation, Veligonda operates entirely through gravity flow, saving massive power costs over its lifespan.

Water conveyed through twin underground tunnels beneath the Nallamala range will bring permanent relief to chronically arid belts plagued by severe groundwater fluorosis, supplying fluoride-free drinking water to 1,657 habitations across western Prakasam, Nellore, and Kadapa. Under Phase-I, the state will impound 10.70 TMC of water in the newly formed Nallamala Sagar reservoir. This initial storage will immediately feed 1.19 lakh acres of farmland while supplying safe drinking water to nearly 4 lakh residents en route.

After exam glitches and protests, Bombay High Court cancels clerk typing test

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Bombay High Court on Saturday cancelled the typing test held for the recruitment of 1,362 clerk posts after candidates complained of technical glitches at examination centres across Maharashtra, and ordered a fresh test.

The decision comes after days of protests by candidates who alleged that server and hardware failures, software lag, unexpected logouts and differences in test start times had affected their performance. The fresh test will be conducted on a schedule and at venues to be announced separately on the High Court's website.

The Registrar (Personnel), in a notice issued on Saturday, said the August 16 typing test had been cancelled "for upholding the highest standards of fairness in selection process". "The schedule, venue and other necessary details about the fresh Typing Test will be notified separately on the official website of the High Court, Bombay," the

Around 13,000 candidates had qualified for the recruitment process; applicants had alleged server and hardware failures, software lag, logouts and mismatched start times at centres across Maharashtra

notice said. The cancellation follows complaints from candidates at several centres. The High Court registry had initially said that the technical problems reported during the examination were being examined and that candidates would be informed about the further course of action. The recruitment process has attracted a large number of applicants. According to the notification issued on December 8, 2025, applications were invited for 1,362 clerk

posts — 830 at the principal seat in Mumbai, 166 at the Nagpur bench and 366 at the Aurangabad bench in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar.

Around 13,000 candidates qualified for the



examination. The selection process consists of a 90-mark screening test, a 20-mark typing test and a 40-mark interview. Candidates are required to score at least 10 marks in the typing test, with the recruitment notification stating that a candidate who fails

the typing test "will not be considered for the post of Clerk". Candidates who appeared for the August 16 test alleged that the problems were not isolated to one centre. They reported hardware and server failures,

delays and software lag, unexpected logouts and test systems starting at different times. Some candidates said the glitches affected their typing speed and performance and could ultimately result in disqualification. Aggrieved applicants subsequently staged sit-in protests outside examination centres and demanded a re-test. Abhijeet Dipke, founder and national coordinator of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), also joined the protests. On August 16, while visiting an examination centre in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Dipke said candidates had travelled long distances to appear for the test and demanded that the re-examination not be conducted using the same faulty equipment.

Mumbai gets two more Ring Roads: MMRDA plans two 307-km loops

The eighth and ninth rings will stitch together existing sea links, coastal roads, tunnels and expressways, creating new loops around MMR; both targeted for 2029

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) is planning two more ring routes, taking its proposed network from seven to nine and extending it beyond Mumbai to Thane, Navi Mumbai and the northern suburbs.

The two proposed rings will together cover about 307 km. The MMRDA, however, is not proposing to build 307 km of new roads. Instead, the routes will connect existing roads with projects under construction and those still being planned, creating continuous loops across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.

The 197-km eighth ring road will connect Navi Mumbai and Thane, while the 110-km ninth ring road will run from Nariman Point along Mumbai's western coast to Borivali, turn east towards Thane and then return to

South Mumbai through the eastern corridors.

The addition marks a change from the



original seven ring road plan, which envisaged progressively larger loops beginning at Nariman Point. The new routes take the concept further into the wider MMR. "The approach represents a paradigm shift from looking at individual infrastructure projects in isolation to treating

Mumbai and the MMR as one integrated road network," said Sanjay Mukherjee, metropolitan commissioner, MMRDA.

The eighth ring road will begin at Sewri, the Mumbai end of the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL). It will use the Eastern Freeway and its under construction extension towards Thane.

From Thane, the route will use the Anand Nagar Saket elevated road and then head towards Navi Mumbai through the Mumbai-Vadodara Expressway and NH 4B to Chirle. From there, it will head onto the MTHL to return to Sewri. According to MMRDA officials, the route will provide a direct connection between Thane, Navi Mumbai and Bhiwandi and improve access to the JNPT region and other major freight and development centres. It will also connect emerging development areas such as Amane in Thane.

Bengaluru CBI court convicts I-T officer, chartered accountant in 14-year-old bribery case

Bengaluru. (Agency)

A CBI court in Bengaluru last week convicted an Income Tax officer and a chartered accountant in a 14-year-old bribery case. Judge Manjunath Sangreshi directed I-T officer V Nagaraj and chartered accountant Nagingchand Kincha to undergo three years of simple imprisonment and fined them Rs 1 lakh each.

The case dates back to mid-2012 when the complainant A K Halim, a resident of J P Nagar in Bengaluru, informed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) that Nagaraj had been demanding a bribe from him in return for lowering his tax liability.

The complainant alleged that Nagaraj issued notices to him claiming that over Rs 3.28 crore in income "escaped assessment" while

determining his tax liability for the 2008-09 and 2009-10 assessment years. When Halim appeared before Nagaraj on August 14, 2012, with supporting documents, he was



allegedly told his actual tax liability would be around Rs 80 lakh — but that this could be brought down to Rs 30 lakh if he paid a bribe of Rs 20 lakh. In September of that year,

Nagaraj purportedly called Halim and asked him to hand over the bribe amount to Kincha. Thereafter, Halim approached the CBI and handed over recordings of his conversations.

Based on Halim's complaint, the CBI registered a case on September 8, 2012, and set up a trap operation the same day. As part of the operation, Halim visited Kincha's office, where Nagaraj was also present, and gave a pre-arranged signal — a phone call in which he said "please arrange train ticket" — alerting the waiting CBI team. Officers immediately raided the office and recovered the bribe money. Both accused were arrested on the spot and released on bail two days later.

Last week, the two were finally convicted under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Poison, a pillow, 99 calls: How a 'natural death' turned into a murder plot in Karnataka

Bengaluru. (Agency)

In 2020-2021, as the COVID-19 pandemic left elderly parents increasingly isolated from their adult children living elsewhere, a Mangaluru family did what many did during that period — hire a caregiver to look after their ageing parents. Six months later, the woman of the household died, and what at first was considered a natural death soon turned out to be the result of a sinister plot.

On January 26, 2021, around 6.10 pm, Ronald Carlo, then a 42-year-old electrician, received a call from his sister-in-law Violet that his mother, Benedict Carlo, had become unconscious. Benedict Carlo, 72, suffered from age-related illnesses. The woman had seven children — six sons and a daughter — and none stayed with her. A few months before his mother's death, Ronald had hired his distant relative Elma Preschith Baretto, then 23, to take care of his parents. Benedict's husband was also ailing and left bedridden after a paralytic stroke. Ronald shifted his mother to a hospital, hoping the

doctors would be able to revive her. Benedict was diabetic and a blood pressure patient. But the doctors at the hospital informed him that Benedict was brought dead.

But soon after, doctors felt there was something suspicious about the death. According to a police officer, doctors said that Benedict had injuries on her neck, shoulder, and left hand. Thereafter, they shifted the body for a post-mortem examination.

Meanwhile, Ronald tried to contact Baretto, but the calls went unanswered. The Bantwal rural police were informed about the death, and Police Sub-Inspector Prasanna visited the spot.

Prasanna asked Ronald to check if something was missing from his residence. Upon checking, a gold chain with a Jesus cross, seven finger rings, a pair of bangles, earrings, and a thali were found missing. It became evident to the family and the police that Benedict Carlo did not die naturally. After the post-mortem, the body was handed over to the family, and the final

rites were performed. But all this while, Baretto stayed away.

"It was at this point that our investigation pointed towards Baretto, who had taken care



of Benedict for six months, had not attended the final rites and was avoiding phone calls," a police officer said.

T D Nagaraj, then a police inspector at the Bantwal Rural police station, recalled, "In one of the calls made by Ronald, which Baretto had answered, Ronald had asked her why she did not turn up for the funeral, and

A Karnataka court sentenced 3 people to life imprisonment for murdering a 72-year-old Mangaluru woman and stealing her gold ornaments.

her response was 'I did not do anything'. It was quite an unusual response." On February 2, 2021, the police picked up Baretto for questioning. Meanwhile, they also found out that a person came to drop off and pick up Baretto from work for the last three to four days before Benedict's death. Armed with this information, the police questioned Baretto, who revealed that the person in question was her boyfriend Satisha A R. Satisha, who is also from Bantwal taluk, was taken into police custody. "We questioned them in separate rooms. We told Satisha that Baretto had confessed and had spoken about his involvement, and there was no chance to escape. Whereas we told Baretto that Satisha had confessed to the crime. Thereafter, they began to confess," a police officer said.

It turned out that both Satisha and Baretto had hatched the plan to steal valuables. Nagaraj, the investigating officer in the case, said, "Their initial plan was to slowly poison Benedict. Baretto used to mix pesticides in coffee or tea.

The link between falling fruits and failing hearts

In a recent online post, Vidya Yeravdekar, chancellor of Symbiosis University, noted that the jamun fruit (Indian blackberry) started falling from trees earlier this year. She recalled her grandmother's comment from years ago that an early fall of the jamun portends a period of diminished rainfall and possibly a drought. This is not mere folklore. It is indeed a recorded scientific observation. The phenomenon is called 'drought escape' or 'stress fruiting'. In conditions of water shortage, plants like jamun yield smaller fruits with higher sugar content. Tacit knowledge of communities stored as experiential wisdom reflects past observations. It is of value even if it is not an accurate meteorological forecasting based on modern scientific methods. The anecdote is a timely reminder that nature retains a long memory and uses its recall to fashion a species survival response in the plant. When its roots are alerted by unfavourable environmental signals related to soil moisture, the plant prioritises flowers and fruit over new branches and leaves. Anthropogenic climate change is now stretching the limits of nature's ingenuity. A similar phenomenon is also observed in human beings. When a growing foetus or young infant suffers early childhood malnutrition, there is early sexual maturation. This is especially evident among females. Early menarche (onset of menstruation) can be accompanied by increased fertility if there is improved nutrition as the child grows. If social customs force an early marriage, a spate of teenage pregnancies can result. Even more alarming is the widespread impact of sequential early childhood malnutrition followed by an adiposity rebound in later childhood and adolescence. Physiological programming, of the epigenetic levers of gene expression, results in a 'metabolic mismatch' of the nutritional parsimony experienced in the early years of life and relative caloric largesse in later life. British epidemiologist David Barker drew attention to the 'foetal origins of adult heart disease' by initially pointing out that the high rates of premature adult deaths from coronary heart disease in England and Wales correlated with high infant mortality rates of earlier decades (reflecting adverse early childhood influences). He later showed the association of low birth weight and small birth size with early onset of coronary heart disease in adult life. Many studies across the world corroborated this association.

In India too, studies in Delhi, Mysuru, Vellore and Pune have affirmed the link between early childhood malnutrition and adult cardio-metabolic diseases—diabetes, hypertension and coronary heart disease. A team of University of Auckland scientists led by Peter Gluckman showed that these effects are not due to structural alterations in genes but are mediated by functional changes in gene expression. Such 'epigenetic' modifications up-regulate or down-regulate gene functions. These can extend across several generations but are also potentially modifiable within an individual's lifetime under the influence of behavioural and socio-environmental factors. The heightened risk of cardio-metabolic diseases in adulthood results from mechanisms that nature crafted to ensure the survival of the undernourished foetus, infant and young child. Muscle mass is kept lean and the muscle membrane becomes resistant to the action of insulin. This is because glucose should be prioritised for use by the brain and nervous system and not be burnt up by the muscle. Being more essential for survival, the brain wins nature's vote against the muscles. Most of the other organs assume a modest size to let the brain become the maestro. Among the blood cholesterol sub-fractions, high-density lipoprotein (HDL) levels are reduced and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) levels are increased. This ensures that cholesterol is deposited in the brain and blood vessels rather than being drawn away from them. Underutilised blood sugar also gets converted to triglycerides. Abdominal fat deposits increase, to store energy for hard times.

Skilling alone won't solve the job problem

The economy needs to create far more productive work, backed by a robust social security system

INDIA's employment challenge contains a troubling paradox. Millions of young people are looking for work, while employers simultaneously complain that they cannot find workers with the skills they need. There is both a shortage of jobs and a shortage of suitably skilled people. This diagnosis is not new. The International Labour Organisation (ILO)-Institute for Human Development's India Employment Report 2024 and Azim Premji University's State of Working India 2026 have documented its different dimensions. What makes NITI Aayog's new report, Reimagining Skilling for Viksit Bharat@2047, significant is that the diagnosis now comes from within the government's policy establishment. The report is unusually candid about higher education. Curricula in many institutions are outdated, teaching remains excessively theoretical, practical exposure is inadequate and links with industry are weak. It cites the Economic Survey to note that only 8.25 per cent of graduates work in roles aligned with their qualifications. More than two crore students are enrolled in BA, BSc and BCom programmes, many of which have weak links to identifiable occupations. India's impressive expansion of higher education has not had commensurate progress in the quality and relevance of courses. A student moves from school to college, acquires a degree and then discovers that the credential does not provide access to the work that was expected. The consequences show up in educated unemployment. The ILO-IHD report found that unemployment among young graduates was 29.1 per cent, against 3.4 per cent among those unable to read or write. Azim Premji University's report finds unemployment close to 40 per cent among graduates below 25, and about 20 per cent among graduates aged 25-29. Between 2004-05 and 2023, around 50 lakh graduates were added annually, but only about 28 lakh found employment. This does not mean India has too much education. Education continues to yield substantial economic and social returns. It means that education, skills and the structure of employment are badly out of alignment. Indianews updates There is an even less visible part of the problem. Conventional unemployment statistics capture those looking for or available for work. They miss many young people who have disengaged altogether. NITI Aayog estimates roughly nine crore youth as not in employment, education or training—the category known as 'NEET'. A large majority are engaged

in domestic duties. The gender dimension is stark: the ILO-IHD report found that in 2022, young women accounted for around 95 per cent of India's 'NEET' population.

Thus India's employment problem has at least three dimensions: a mismatch of skills, an inadequate supply of productive work, and millions of young people—especially women—who never make a successful transition into the labour market.

The skill mismatch is perhaps the most immediately repairable. Universities, colleges, polytechnics and industrial training institutes (ITIs) need much closer links with industry. Internships and apprenticeships should become integral to many courses rather than peripheral

excessive uniformity. India does not have one labour market. Skills needed around automobile clusters in Pune and Chennai differ from those needed in tourism, textiles, electronics or agro-processing. National frameworks can ensure standards and portability, but universities, states and even districts need room to respond to local economic conditions. A one-size-fits-all approach is especially unsuitable for higher education. Indianews updates

Yet skilling addresses only the supply side. The economy must also generate productive work.

Recent employment growth needs to be interpreted carefully. The ILO-IHD report notes that nearly two-thirds of incremental employment after 2019 was self-employment, with unpaid women family workers

prominent, while the long movement of labour out of agriculture went into reverse. A falling headline unemployment rate therefore does not necessarily mean that the quality of employment has improved.

Nor should India expect every young person, or even a majority, to obtain a conventional permanent salaried job. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data shows that only about 30 per cent of working youth presently have regular wage or salaried employment. The future will contain much more self-employment, freelancing, platform work, short contracts and multiple sources of income. The relevant distinction is not simply between a job and no job. It is between productive work and precarious work. There may be plenty of work without enough conventional jobs. Our social security architecture must adjust accordingly. Health and accident

insurance, retirement savings and other protections should increasingly attach to workers rather than to one employer, and be portable across firms and platforms. Platform and gig work today unfortunately remains essentially an extension of informal employment with very little social security. The vacancies within the government are also part of this discussion. Official data showed 9.64 lakh sanctioned civilian Central government posts vacant as of March 2022. Recruitment has accelerated subsequently, but no equally recent consolidated vacancy stock has been published. These are not make-work jobs. Vacant posts of teachers, nurses, engineers, police personnel and administrators also mean weaker public services.



additions. Employers should participate not merely at the recruitment stage but in designing curricula, providing laboratories, offering live projects and bringing practitioners into classrooms.

Curriculum reform must also become much faster. Artificial intelligence is already changing work in software, finance, design, media, customer service and engineering. A syllabus which takes several years to revise can become obsolete even before a student graduates. Institutions therefore need substantially greater academic and administrative autonomy and less inertia. NITI Aayog itself calls for greater autonomy over course mix, faculty and procurement in technical and vocational institutions. This also requires resisting

Treat Himalayas as one disaster zone, coordinate data to improve response

The region is warming and its glaciers are rapidly losing ice. These changes make it important to understand how risks are evolving rather than assume that past patterns will always hold

Wednesday's furious flash floods and landslides on the Nepal-Tibet border show how closely interconnected the Himalayan region is as an ecological disaster zone. An extreme event in the mountains can affect communities far away, across national borders. What happens in one part of the Himalayas cannot be regarded as any one country's problem. The danger extends across the region.

For India, the concern is immediate and geographical. The Tibetan-origin Lhunde river, where the flooding initiated, forms the Bhote Koshi in Nepal, which flows downstream as the Trishuli and the Narayani, which flows farther into India as the Gandak. What happens in the upper reaches of the river system can affect people downstream. The Himalayan rivers make cooperation on disasters a practical necessity, whatever the political circumstances. The latest floods also point to a changing pattern of Himalayan risk. No rain fell when flooding occurred. The trigger appears to have been a glacier collapse and an ice-



rock avalanche, followed by a temporary blockage and the sudden release of water and debris. This differs from the familiar picture of flooding and shows why disaster warnings in the mountains have to look beyond rainfall.

Weather forecasts will need to be backed by closer

monitoring of glaciers, unstable slopes and other sources of sudden flooding. In the mountains, such events can develop rapidly, leaving little time to evacuate. Climate change must be part of this discussion, with continuously evaluated evidence. The broader changes in the Himalayas are clear. The region is warming and its glaciers are rapidly losing ice. These changes make it important to understand how risks are evolving rather than assume that past patterns will always hold. Infrastructure presents another challenge. Roads, bridges, hydropower and tourism facilities are necessary for Himalayan communities and their economies. But projects in the mountains must account carefully for unstable slopes, glacial lakes, changing river flows and the risk of sudden landslides and floods. India can play an important role in strengthening cooperation with Nepal and, where possible, China.

Hindu Kush glaciers losing ice at double the rate

➤ The largest area losses are concentrated in the Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra basins, where over 74% of the region's glaciers are found.

GLACIERS across the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) are melting at an accelerating rate, with ice loss rates doubling since 2000, according to two new reports by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). The reports, Changing Dynamics of Glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalaya Region from 1990 to 2020 and HKH Glacier Outlook 2026: Insights from 50 Years of Himalayan Glacier Monitoring, provide comprehensive evidence of glacier change in the region. They reveal a loss of up to 27 metres of ice thickness since 1975, sounding an alarm for the nearly two billion people downstream who depend on meltwater from the 'Water Towers of Asia'. The HKH holds the largest volume of ice outside the poles, with an inventory of over 63,700 glaciers covering nearly 55,782 square km. These glaciers are the source of at least 10 major Asian river systems, supporting the food, water, energy, and livelihood security of billions. However, around 78% of this glacier area, located between 4,500 and 6,000 metres above sea level, is highly exposed to elevation-dependent warming. This isn't a distant problem; it's a crisis unfolding in real-time, with new disasters every summer and monsoon. The fact that ice loss rates have doubled this century should shock us all into action," said Pema Gyamtsho, Director General of ICIMOD. "The Hindu Kush Himalaya is at a crossroads. The rapidly escalating impacts we're seeing from water uncertainty to catastrophic floods underscore that we are in a critical decade for the cryosphere. We must scale up monitoring and invest in adaptation now. These aren't blind spots becoming surprises anymore; they are our new reality." The comprehensive analysis reveals that



between 1990 and 2020, HKH glaciers lost about 12% of their total area and 9% of their estimated ice reserves. According to Sudan Bikash Maharjan, Remote Sensing Analyst at ICIMOD and lead author of the glacier dynamics report, the most immediate threat comes from the region's smallest glaciers.

"Between 1990 and 2020, HKH glaciers lost about 12% of their total area, but the losses are most acute for the region's smallest glaciers—those below 0.5 km²—which are shrinking more rapidly than others," said Maharjan. "This poses immediate risks of localised water shortages for high mountain communities and intensifies hazards like glacial lake outburst floods. The danger is magnified because three-quarters of the region's glaciers

fall into this vulnerable size class. We are not just losing ice; we are facing a rapid escalation of risks."

The HKH Glacier Outlook 2026 synthesises data from 38 monitored glaciers, revealing that widespread wastage has doubled post-2000, signalling that parts of the Himalayan cryosphere may be nearing critical tipping points toward irreversible retreat. Yet, the reports highlight a critical data gap: of those 38, only seven meet the global benchmark monitoring standards of the World Glacier Monitoring Service (WGMS). Major glacierised regions, including the Karakoram, Sikkim, Zaskar, and Bhutan remain largely unmonitored. "We are trying to navigate a rapidly changing future with an incomplete map," said Mohd Farooq Azam, a cryosphere specialist at

ICIMOD and one of the report's authors. "Large parts of the Himalaya remain blind spots. Without expanding our monitoring networks and standardising methodologies, accelerated changes in water flows and cryosphere risks could remain undetected until the impacts are severe. Sustained monitoring of representative glaciers like Mera and Rikha Samba in Nepal, and Chhota Shigri in India, is critical, they are our early warning indicators for the entire mountain system." Indianews updates

The reports highlight that glacier losses are spatially skewed, with the highest percentage of area loss in the eastern Hengduan Shan mountains, where some areas lost up to 33% of their glacier area in just three decades. However, the largest absolute area losses are concentrated in the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra basins, where over 74% of the region's glaciers are found, underlining their critical vulnerability. The larger glaciers above 10 km² hold nearly 40% of the region's natural water reserves. The heavily glaciated Karakoram range, home to 18 of the 25 largest glaciers, remains highly vulnerable to long-term water, food, and disaster risks with ramifications for the entire region. With 2025 designated as the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation and the start of the Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences (2025-2034), these findings serve as a stark reminder of the urgent need for action. The authors call for a massive scale-up in glacier monitoring, better standardisation of methodologies, and robust investment in climate-resilient adaptation planning to mitigate the impacts of a rapidly changing cryosphere.

"add a pop of colours"

Raseel Gujral Ansal, interior designer
Festivities and celebration call for a splash of colour. Wallpapers with coordinated textiles and show plates brighten up your home in a jiffy. The aesthetics in wallpapers have evolved from an Occidental vocabulary to strong graphic prints and colours to emote the soul of the space. The right wallpaper can work magic.

Muted pastels in furniture can be brightened up with bejewelled photo frames, pop-colour candles, side tables and statement accessories – all adding a touch of elegance. Opt for candles in different shapes and sizes in different corners. Using digitally-printed side tables, bright cushions, quirky lamp shades and colourful crockery adds a new persona to your home. Fresh flowers and the fragrance of lavender is a great way to freshen up ones home. From orange sunsets and Mediterranean blues to the verdant palms and striking pink flamingoes, each shade conveys an emotion as rich as the décor it is set in.

"Make sure your home is always well-ventilated"

Anu Malhotra, filmmaker and artist
I like my home to be fresh, harmonious and positive. For that I use 'dhuna/loban' everyday, using frankincense, benzoin and sandalwood resins. There are crystals in every room for good energy. I use a

Textiles in the verandah!

homemade room spray with essential oils of lavender, eucalyptus, lemon grass and sandalwood. There are indoor plants and fresh flowers in every room. I also ensure that the entire home is always well-ventilated. Essential oils of lavender is used in the mopping water instead of chemical cleaners. The home is kept mosquito free with home made spray and vaporiser of essential oils (made out of citronella, lavender and lemon grass).

"I hang a reversible jamavar in my verandahs"

Pranavi Kapur, designer
I like to energise and redo my home with textiles that I've collected over the years. For me, festivity is displaying the Jamavar paisely, the 19th century table cover that I cherish. Or, I

use old collectables to create a buzz. For instance, I like to display the Tree of Life embroidered on a woollen namda (felted rugs) – which is my treasure – on a wall. I hang a reversible jamavar in my verandahs... It's my way of celebrating my home with things I love.

"I USE A LOT OF MARIGOLD AT THE ENTRANCE"

Ramneek Pant, model

For Diwali, it starts with the regular cleaning and putting up door hangings. I fill the house with fresh flowers, candles and lights. I use a lot of marigold at the entrance and throw colourful cushions to make my living space look bright. Incense sticks with scented oils for fresh aroma work wonders.



"Sight, Smell AND Sound AS IMPORTANT AS SPACE"

Ashiesh Shah, celebrity interior designer

I work on the principle of 4S – Space, Sight, Smell and Sound – to re-energise any space. One must unclutter before redoing a space. Do a little festive cleaning. I add some festive colours and innovative lights to my existing

decor. I use local Indian flower fragrances, with mogra and jasmine. Invest in a good pair of speakers and keep your SoundCloud handy.

"My personal favourite are soy candles"

Blossom Kochhar, beauty entrepreneur

It simply takes a few candles to make my home look cosy and elegant. Using candles can be a stimulating experience – it helps you to get in touch with your emotions better. My personal favourite are soy candles (non-toxic). You can also boost the energy of your space by using Tibetan bowls as bells. Essential oils remove dysfunctional energy from your home. Personally, I like basil oil in a diffuser. It's amazing how it can instantly uplift the feeling in a room or home. Use flowers instead of synthetic fragrances. Orange or rose fragrance are absolutely divine and can be used to create a peaceful, relaxing atmosphere instantly.



Know the reason behind Diwali card parties

5 low-cost home Decor tips



It is that time of the year again when Diwali card parties are being held in most homes celebrating the festival.

As per the legend

Hindu mythology says that playing dice on the day of Diwali is very auspicious and the legend goes that once Goddess Parvati played dice with her husband Lord Shiva and enjoyed the game thoroughly. She was delighted and thus declared that whosoever plays dice on this day shall stay prosperous throughout the year. With the passing of time, the dice was replaced by cards and people organize card parties on this day, where friends and relatives get together and indulge in friendly gambling matches with limited stakes.

Reasons to have card parties

Since the festival is all about getting together with the people you love the most, good food and celebrating life, there is no reason why not to continue with the tradition. Card parties are hosted ahead of Diwali to invite good fortune and prosperity. So try to get lady luck to smile on you and make a small fortune as you play the game of cards. This fun ritual usually takes place on the first night of Diwali, after the Laxmi puja.

Changing trends

Nowadays, the trend is to have card parties before Diwali. With elaborate food and music arrangements, the card parties lead up to the main festival. Teen Patti is the most popular Diwali card game that has been played by families and friends together for years. However, instead of going for the usual game, make your card party a hit by playing unconventional variations of it this Diwali.



Not all of us have the luxury of living in an architect-designed home where everything is perfect. And not all of us have deep wallets to fix the many design lacks in our house. Here are some easy, low-cost ways to improve your home without restructuring it.

1. If you live in a home with a small living room, make it seem bigger with a striped carpet or a rug. The stripes will elongate
2. The best feature a room can have is natural light. If a room seems small, use a transparent curtain to let in as much natural light as possible to give it depth.
3. Mirrors are an old trick to make a room look bigger. Go ahead and be bold and fix a large mirror on a wall so that it reflects the entire room.
4. If you're living in a house with a low ceiling, furnish it with low furniture. This will immediately add height to a room.
5. To take your eyes away from the small dimensions of a room, dress up the ceiling with an exciting colour or wall paper on the ceiling.



Make your Kitchen a sleek and stylish Space

Your kitchen should be a sleek and stylish space. Here are some simple tips you need to keep in mind when you are choosing a modular kitchen.

Yet stylish - that is what modular kitchens are all about. These kitchens not only make cooking convenient and efficient, they also make your kitchen look like a happier and fun place to be in. Modern modular kitchen furniture include various units of cabinets, each designed for a unique purpose, so it increases your efficiency. Pick one that has the most appropriate design to suit your particular needs. Here are some simple tips you need to keep in mind when you are choosing a modular kitchen...

Know your Budget

With the variety available these days, you could easily tend to overspend. So, it is best to decide on a budget before you go out shopping for your modular kitchen. There are small-budget kitchens also available that do not compromise on functionality. And of course, there are very high-budget kitchens that are glamorous.

You need to plan well

Measure the exact area and also keep in mind the layout and kind of space you have in your kitchen before you go out looking for a modular kitchen set-up. An important thing that you need to bear in mind is what your specific needs are — do you need a built-in hob, or would just a simple oven work? Do you need a microwave oven or grill? What kind of chimney do you want and how much space are you allocating for it? Would you opt for an L-shaped kitchen counter or would you need a kitchen island?

Wood you?



What would you choose — there is a variety of designs and materials available right from the more contemporary steel and , glass, to the classic wood and stone. It would be wise to choose something that not just looks nice but is also sturdy and long-lasting. Another thing you need to keep in mind is that it should be easy to clean.

Size it up

Keep comfort in mind when you are selecting your modular kitchen. The cabinets that you get installed in your kitchen should be within your reach. You should be able to use them without straining yourself unnecessarily.

Flashy or functional

When you are selecting decorations and fixtures for your kitchen, you should ideally look for designs that are functional. The decorations should not obstruct your free movement in the kitchen.

Does it Cater to your needs?

Your modular kitchen should have cabinets and drawers that cater to your daily and specific cooking needs in the kitchen. Ideally, separate racks and storage units for your cutlery should be built. You should have your ovens and other electrical appliances fitted in according to your needs.

Light right

When you are getting your kitchen installed, make sure you know where you want the lights. If you have a large window in the kitchen, you should install your kitchen in a way that it does not get blocked — a dark kitchen area can hinder energies. It is a good idea to use accent lights, wherever needed. Under-cabinet lighting is also essential for your work area.



1. Anyone with the interest and little space for growing plants, even on a window-sill or balcony can build and enjoy Bonsai collection.
2. The 3 main techniques to grow your own Bonsai plants are growing, pruning and shaping.

Growing- select a tree from a nursery which has a thick trunk. take a small ceramic container to plant the bonsai - usually the depth of the pot should be equal to the thickness of the trunk of the plant. Place a plastic net at the base of the container, so that water can drain out. Now add the specially prepared bonsai soil made of garden soil, cow manure, broken brick pieces, sand and organic manure (available in the market). Trim 1/2 to 1/3rd pf the existing roots of the plant. leaving most if the thin white roots (known as feeder roots) and some old thick roots. Plant the tree into the pot.

NOTE- materials matter, so if the soil good, the bonsai will take few months or even a year to grow, and two years for fruits to flower

Pruning: Generally, you have to prune the roots and the foliage. Pruning bonsais is one of the more enjoyable aspects of growing bonsais.

Pruning roots: Due to small containers, bonsai roots are stunted in growth. By pruning roots, you will ensure that there is space for the new roots to grow, which is critical for the health and growth of the bonsai. Prune roots twice a year and change the soil when it's done.

Pruning Foliage: This is vital for aesthetic purposes. Workout a specific design in the mind for your tree and shape it into the form you desire. Removing dead leaves help keep it healthy and beautiful.

Shaping: To create a desired shape, you can use a wire (copper wires are the best) to assist the branches to grow as per your design. Make sure that the wire is of the right thickness and does not break the branches. Hold the branch you are wiring in both hands and carefully wind the wire around it.

3. Select the plants which can be easily trimmed and shaped, and ones with a rough bark.

4. For the flower and fruit bonsais, four to five hours of direct sunlight is essential.

5. Avoid too much of watering. Alternate days are good enough.

6. Ready-made bonsais are available. Plant them into containers with the given steps

7. Bonsais are kept indoors, but a suitable place is on the window sill, balcony, terrace or a garden shelf. Avoid keeping them in an A/C room for long.

8. Although Bonsai trees can be grown from seeds ,

Beginners guide to Bonsai

Bonsai



You can make your bonsai into master pieces provided you follow the right techniques. We list down the basics of bonsai.

more developed material is already available. Seedlings, cuttings or young trees with smaller leaves are usually preferred.



Tea break turns lifesaver for 5 Chhattisgarh men amid Nepal floods

What was meant to be a brief pause, ended up saving the men from the deadly fury of the disaster that unfolded on Wednesday. The group spent the next two days harrowingly sheltering on higher ground, sleeping in their rented car and watching the swollen Trishuli river rage below.

Delhi. (Agency)

Sometimes, it is the most trivial decision that can alter the course of a life. For five friends from Chhattisgarh, a casual tea break in Nepal on August 26 became the thin line between being swept away in a devastating flash flood and escaping it. What was meant to be a brief pause, ended up saving the men from the deadly fury of the disaster that unfolded on Wednesday. The group spent the next two days harrowingly sheltering on higher ground, sleeping in their rented car and watching the swollen Trishuli river rage below.

Narayan Sen, Dinesh Ojha, Prem Singh Jagat, Yatendra Prakash and Dinesh Singh Thakur, all aged between 50 and 60 years and residents of Mana Camp area in Raipur, returned home on Saturday.

SURVIVORS RECOUNT NEPAL FLOOD FURY

"We were lucky that we stopped for tea on August 26 when the flash floods struck. If we had left 10-15 minutes earlier, we might

have got trapped," 53-year-old Sen, who runs a salon, was quoted as saying by news agency PTI. "Had we not stopped there, we do not know what would have happened," he said. The group departed from Raipur on August 21 and arrived in Nepal the following day. They had hired a car and were planning to visit the Pashupatinath Temple, Manokamana Temple and other tourist attractions in the Himalayan nation.

At around 10 am on August 26, the day the disaster struck, they stopped for tea at a hotel in Nepal's Dhading district. "There we learnt that a bridge ahead had been washed away in a flood. The hotel belonged to an Indian, who helped us a lot and provided us with food," Sen said. The men became unwilling eyewitnesses to the unfolding tragedy. The group managed to take shelter on higher ground at Malekhu and spent the night in their vehicle. Locals and authorities helped them. Thakur (55), who is a police head constable, said he and his friends were around 50 km from Pashupatinath Temple when the catastrophic

flood struck.

"While having tea at the hotel, we noticed people suddenly becoming restive. Later, we learnt about the devastation caused by the flood. We heard that entire villages,



buildings, offices and hydropower projects had been devastated," he recalled. They later visited the bank of the Trishuli river to witness the situation first-hand. "What we saw is very difficult to describe in words," said Thakur. "We kept chanting Lord Shiva's name, and we feel his blessings protected us," he added. Thakur lauded the

local administration and police's handling of the deeply distressing situation. "There was no electricity and water, but the administration and police helped us. They told us that we were at a higher place and should not worry," he said.

The tourist group managed to stay in touch with their families back in India via the internet, and used the helpline provided by the Indian government to share their location.

"Internet service was working well there, so we remained in contact with our families and did not panic," Thakur said. The friends were finally able to leave Nepal on August 28. Amid the devastating disaster, the five men shared a heartwarming moment when local women security personnel tied rakhis on their wrists to mark Raksha Bandhan. "We were supposed to return from the trip after the Rakhi festival, so our sisters had already given us rakhis. The women security personnel deployed there tied these rakhis on our wrists. That was the most comforting moment," Thakur said.

Delhi court takes cognisance of NIA chargesheet on Red Fort blast

Delhi. (Agency)

A city court on Saturday took cognisance of the National Investigation Agency's (NIA) 7,500-page chargesheet against 13 accused in the Red Fort blast case that killed 11 people and left several injured in November last year. Special Judge Prashant Sharma took cognisance of the agency's chargesheet and posted the matter for further proceedings on September 9. On May 14 this year, the NIA had filed the chargesheet against 10 accused people.

All 10 accused, including the main accused Dr Umer Un Nabi (deceased), were linked to Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (AGuH), an offshoot of Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), the chargesheet had said. The next month, the agency filed a supplementary chargesheet against three more persons, including an absconding paediatrician identified as the founding member of a terror module, for involvement in the blast, taking the number of those chargesheeted in the case to 13.

The trial court had in February granted 45 days more to the NIA to complete its investigation in the case. The court had passed the order on an application filed by the central probe agency, which sought three more months from the court to complete its probe, which it claimed to be "on a crucial stage".

The agency said it required more time to conclude the probe in light of a new evidence. As per law, if the probe agency does not file a charge sheet within a stipulated period from the arrest of an accused, he gets entitled to bail. The period, however, can be extended by a court.

A city court on Saturday adjourned framing of charges against Lalu Prasad Yadav and others in the ED's land-for-job and IRCTC scam cases. Special Judge Vishal Gogne adjourned the ED land case to September 30 and the IRCTC matter to September 7. On October 13 last year, the court framed charges against Yadav, his wife and son in a CBI case.

Impersonation case: Suresh gets 8-year jail term

Delhi. (Agency)

A city court on Saturday awarded an eight-year jail term to conman Suresh Chandrasekhar for impersonating a sitting Supreme Court judge to influence a special judge for bail in a corruption case in 2017, saying the sentence "must necessarily carry a deterrent message".

Chief Judicial Magistrate Harshita Mishra awarded a two-year jail term each for



impersonating a public servant (section 170 of IPC) and threatening injury to a public servant (section 187 of IPC), and a four years' jail for criminal intimidation (section 507 of IPC). The judge added that the convict shall be entitled to the benefit of period undergone in custody. She said the punishment should send a message that calculated criminality, particularly against administration of justice, will invite consequences equal with its gravity.

New SOP on the cards to improve cleanliness in Lutyens' areas: NDMC

The jackets are aimed to make the workers more visible to the public, while fluorescent strips would enhance their safety during nighttime work.

Delhi. (Agency)

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) is set to develop a standard operating procedure (SOP) to enhance the cleanliness of roads and public spaces, emphasising on the use of pressure-jet water cleaning and mechanised sweeping in the Lutyens' area. NDMC chairman Manoj Kumar Dwivedi said on Friday that pressure-jet water cleaning was already being undertaken and would be integrated

with other cleaning measures before being institutionalised through an SOP.

Six mechanised road sweeping machines have already been deployed, he said, with plans to add more soon. He highlighted the



importance of maintaining a consistent water supply for these machines to effectively control dust while they sweep the roads.

On a social media post on X, he said, "We will integrate it with other things and make an SOP for best

cleaning and dust/ dirt removal. Then we will institutionalise it." He acknowledged that dust on the roads is linked to issues with road conditions and the maintenance of green spaces alongside the roads. Some of these issues are "legacy problems" that will take time to resolve, he noted.

The chairman also indicated that the NDMC is considering 'reengineering' measures to address these challenges and emphasised that international standards will be followed in the construction of new roads. He announced that wearing fluorescent safety jackets will be made mandatory for all ground staff. The jackets are aimed to make the workers more visible to the public, while fluorescent strips would enhance their safety during nighttime work.

Claims window to open on Aug 31 as 48 lakh may be left out of Delhi SIR draft rolls

Delhi. (Agency)

Nearly 47.7 lakh names out of Delhi's 1.45 crore electors are likely to be left out of the draft electoral roll to be published on Monday under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR). The final electoral roll is scheduled to be published on November 4.

Those whose names do not figure in the draft roll can seek inclusion by filing claims and objections from August 31 to September 30, officials said.

The draft roll is expected to include around 97.5 lakh electors whose enumeration forms were submitted and digitised during the door-to-door

exercise that concluded on August 17. This accounts for 67.18 per cent of



Delhi's 14,510,299 electors, according to figures released by the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer (CEO). The remaining 47.7 lakh electors have been marked "uncollectable" and placed in the "Absent, Shifted, Dead, Duplicate and

Others (ASDDO)" categories. They will not appear in the draft roll but can seek inclusion by filing claims and objections from August 31 to September 30, officials said. The publication of the draft will also begin the next phase of scrutiny, with some electors whose names figure in the roll likely to receive notices if their details could not be linked to the 2002 intensive revision roll or if anomalies were detected in their enumeration forms, officials said. A Delhi CEO official said such anomalies could include a mismatch between an elector's name in the current roll and the 2002 roll, an age gap of less than 15 years or more than 50 years between an elector and a parent, or a gap of less than nine months between the birth dates of siblings.

Inspections ordered into waterlogging hotspots in Delhi

Adequate measures to prevent waterlogging have been ordered, with a detailed report to be submitted to the PWD principal secretary.

Delhi. (Agency)

Two days after Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu directed officials to treat water logging as a "disaster" and mount a war-footing response, the government on Saturday directed exhaustive inspections of waterlogging hotspots in PWD areas and sought a report by Monday. All the top officials and engineers have been directed to carry out inspections at a few specific locations.

Adequate and foolproof measures to prevent waterlogging have been asked to be put in place, and a detailed report is to be submitted to the principal secretary, PWD. The Delhi Traffic Police had identified 113 waterlogging locations till August 20, with 26 more reported during the August 24 showers,

the statement said.

The recurrence of waterlogging at these spots has prompted a field assessment to determine whether PWD can undertake additional short-term measures using existing infrastructure and resources. According to PWD Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh, inspections have already been conducted at several locations with officers examining drainage arrangements, outfall conditions, siltation and blockages, pumping arrangements, etc.

The minister said that senior officers, including the principal secretary, will inspect waterlogging locations on the

Mehrauli- Badarpur road. A special clear assessment and a practical secretary will inspect locations on MG Road, the Old Delhi-Gurugram road, response and continuous monitoring



will remain our priority," he said. Orders have also been issued to provide jackets or raincoats bearing PWD logo to all pump-house operators, PTO pump operators, and engineers, so that responsibility can be fixed in case of laxity. The chief engineers will inspect locations under their jurisdictions, with emphasis on recurrent spots, including New Rohtak Road and 100 Feet Road, Burari; Balbir Singh Sidhu Marg; Prembari Underpass; Palla and Dabri Nala Road; RTR Marg; and Najafgarh-Kapashera Road.

and the Mahipalpur Bypass. "We will not wait for the next spell of rain to expose the same problem. Every recurring waterlogging point needs a

No valid hydrotest, no fuel: Delhi CNG stations asked to tighten norms

Delhi. (Agency)

The Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation on Thursday directed stringent safety enforcement at CNG stations across Delhi-NCR following a recent cylinder blast that killed three people and injured two at a retail outlet of Indraprastha Gas Limited. PESO has instructed all city gas distribution (CGD) companies to prominently display safety signage at CNG outlets and ensure that fuel is dispensed only to cylinders that meet approved standards and carry a valid hydro-test certificate.



The notice emphasised a strict message, "No valid hydro test, no CNG", mandating that stations refuse refuelling to vehicles with uncertified or expired cylinders. It also directed companies to comply with provisions of the Gas Cylinders Rules, 2016, and licence conditions under Form-G.

The advisory is aimed at preventing untoward incidents by tightening on-ground checks. PESO has also asked CGD companies to sensitise employees and station managers to ensure strict adherence to safety norms during inspection and dispensing of CNG.

A hydrotest is a periodic safety check conducted to assess the strength and integrity of gas cylinders under pressure. Hydro testing (hydrostatic testing) for CNG cylinders in the city costs between Rs 500 and Rs 3,000 and is mandatory every three to five years under the gas cylinder rules. The Gautam Buddh Nagar administration had earlier tightened checks at CNG stations across Noida and Greater Noida starting last week.

HDFC Bank boss on way out, won't seek reappointment

MUMBAI. (Agency)

Sashidhar Jagdishan, chief executive and managing director of HDFC Bank, who was handpicked by the bank's founding CEO Aditya Puri to succeed him in 2020, has decided not to seek reappointment when his current term ends in October, bringing to an end his nearly three-decade career with the country's largest private sector bank. "Despite persuasion, Jagdishan reiterated his decision to not seek reappointment when his term ends on October 26, 2026. The board deeply appreciates his commitment, leadership, contribution to the growth and stability of the bank and his role in the successful completion of one of the largest mergers in corporate India," the bank informed the stock exchanges on Saturday. The board has now fast-tracked the process of finding his successor, it added. Jagdishan's biggest achievement at the bank was arguably the merger of parent Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) with HDFC Bank in July 2023. Valued at around \$44 billion, the transaction was one of the largest M&A deals in corporate India. However, the merger also brought a host of challenges, particularly on the asset-liability and margin fronts. The bank also faced several other issues during Jagdishan's tenure, the most significant of which was in March 2026 when non-executive chairman Atanu Chakraborty resigned citing concerns over the bank's functioning. The bank also faced allegations of mis-selling low-investment-grade bonds to NRIs through its Dubai branch, with customers allegedly promised higher returns that were not received. In a separate case involving the alleged mis-selling of Additional Tier-1 (AT1) bonds issued by failed Swiss lender Credit Suisse, American investors reportedly threatened to initiate a class-action lawsuit against the bank.

Shopping with AI: Consumers ask artificial intelligence for advice but less than half trust it

Traditionally, (Agency)

shopping advice came from friends, parents, relatives and even online reviews. Now, consumers have found an unlikely shopping companion — artificial intelligence, though it is yet to earn the same level of trust. Generative AI and other digital tools are increasingly becoming part of the shopping journey, helping consumers discover products and weigh their options, even as their trust in these sources remains low. According to a report by McKinsey Podcast, trust in generative AI has fallen below 40 per cent. "We found significant skepticism around algorithm-driven channels like social media, and in particular generative AI, where the trust level is below 40 per cent," Danielle Bozarth, global leader of McKinsey's Retail and Consumer Packaged Goods Practices said in an episode of The McKinsey Podcast. Younger consumers are also showing limited trust in recommendations from family and friends. At the same time, they are drawing on a wider range of information before making purchasing decisions.

"While these consumers are bringing more sources of information into their consideration set, they trust those sources significantly less," Bozarth noted. "That creates a real challenge for brands and influencers as they try to shape the consumer decision journey." The changing way consumers search for information is also creating a new challenge for brands. The research found that brand-owned websites account for minimal.

India becomes key petrol supplier to Russia amid attacks on refineries, fuel shortages

New Delhi. (Agency)

India has emerged as a major energy supplier to Russia, exporting almost 1 million barrels of gasoline over the past two months as Moscow turned to overseas supplies amid a worsening domestic fuel shortage. Russia's seaborne gasoline imports reached a record of around 125,000 barrels per day (kbd) in August, equivalent to about 470,000 tonnes for the month, according to energy analytics firm Vortexa. India was among three countries supplying gasoline to Russia during the month, alongside Turkey and Morocco. India steps up petrol supplies to Russia. The shipments have largely come from Nayara Energy's Vadinar refinery in Gujarat, which is half-owned by Russia's Rosneft. India's role as a gasoline supplier comes against the backdrop of its increased purchases of Russian crude since 2022. India imported more than 2.6 million barrels per day of Russian crude in June and July, compared with 1 million bpd in February. During the period, Russian crude accounted for more than half of India's crude imports. India's refiners may therefore have used Russian crude to produce some of the gasoline subsequently shipped back to Russia. Vortexa said almost 55 per cent of Russia's gasoline imports in August, or around 260,000 tonnes, arrived on sanctioned tonnage. "All India-origin gasoline cargoes Russia imported in August were carried on sanctioned fleets and involved dark ship-to-ship (STS) transfers in the Mediterranean," it said. Around 40 per cent of Russia's total gasoline imports in August were moved through ship-to-ship transfers.

From Archies cards to Air Jordans: How India's gifting culture is changing

New Delhi. (Agency)

I still remember the good old days when a gift could begin and end with an Archies card. On a birthday, anniversary or any other special occasion, giving someone a card was an occasion in itself. You would walk into an Archies store, stand there flipping through dozens of cards, read the messages inside, reject a few because they sounded too cheesy, and finally pick the one that somehow said what you wanted to say. A few carefully chosen words in your own handwriting could make the card feel more personal. The card wasn't just paper. It carried a thought, an emotion and, quite literally, a piece of you. Today, that memory feels like it belongs to another India. I grew up in the 1980s, when birthday gifts were considerably simpler. A pencil box. A water bottle. A toy bought from the neighbourhood shop. A board game. If you were particularly lucky, perhaps a

From handwritten Archies cards and Rs 101 shagun envelopes to branded sneakers and curated hampers, India's idea of the perfect gift has evolved. How did we get here, and what does it say about the India we live in today?

Barbie doll, a He-Man and the Masters of the Universe toy or a G.I. Joe. And when friends couldn't quite decide what to buy, there was always the good old shagun ka envelope. Rs 101 had a certain charm. Nobody asked which brand the gift belonged to. Nobody checked its price



online. And nobody wondered whether it would look good on Instagram. A gift was simply something useful, something fun or something that made the birthday child happy. Which is why a recent conversation with my teenage daughter left me staring at the ceiling for a few

seconds. I asked her what she wanted for her birthday. I thought I was being generous and practical, so I offered her a fairly respectable menu: a wristwatch, shoes, clothes, perhaps a pair of gold studs or a locket. Her answer came almost instantly: shoes.

Union, Canara Bank to appeal NCLT's Chandra order

MUMBAI: (Agency)

Canara Bank and Union Bank of India are challenging NCLT's approval of Zee group founder Subhash Chandra's repayment plan, under which creditors would recover 0.03% of their admitted claims relating to his liabilities as a personal guarantor, arguing that the plan was approved despite opposition from public-sector creditors. The insolvency proceedings were initiated by Indiabulls Housing Finance against Chandra. Canara Bank, which has a 1.6% voting share, and Union Bank of India, which has 0.76%, opposed the repayment plan and sought its rejection. LIC Housing Finance,

with a 6.1% voting share, also voted against the plan. However, the plan secured the support of private creditors holding an 80.8% voting share and was approved by NCLT. The total admitted claims stood at Rs 22,006 crore, of which Rs 6.5 crore was proposed to be paid, including Rs 6.3 crore to creditors and Rs 25 lakh towards process costs. This amounts to a 99.9% haircut, with creditors recovering about 0.03% of their admitted claims.

Canara Bank has said it sought a forensic audit, but the request could not be pursued because of its minority voting share. The bank is therefore challenging National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) order before National Company

Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT). On Thursday, HDFC Bank confirmed that it plans to appeal NCLT order before NCLAT. Its claim of Rs 697.59 crore accounted for about 3.17%, or 3.2%, of the total admitted claims. Zee group founder Subhash Chandra has disputed the Rs 22,000 crore liability, saying it reflected historical claims filed in 2022.

He put the claims of objecting creditors at Rs 3,992 crore, of which Rs 620 crore had been settled, while borrowing entities had offered another Rs 1,063-1,113 crore. The remaining Rs 16,201 crore of claims by creditors who supported the plan were also being addressed by the principal borrowers.

US-Venezuela energy pact: What we know about Trump's 'biggest oil deal in world history'

New Delhi. (Agency)

US President Donald Trump has put Venezuela's vast oil reserves at the centre of what he calls "the biggest oil deal in world history." Venezuela's interim President Delcy Rodriguez stated that the energy pact with the US will last 25 years and aims to revive the country's struggling oil industry. Trump said the deal was negotiated by secretary of state Marco Rubio, defence secretary Pete Hegseth and Rodriguez. However, the White House has so far shared little information beyond Trump's social media post announcing the agreement.

For Rodriguez, the deal is about turning Venezuela's oil wealth into real benefits for its people. Speaking on Saturday while visiting reconstruction work after twin earthquakes in late June left thousands of families homeless, she said the reserves would "cease to be an inert, cold statistic and will instead become concrete solutions. Housing is one of them." "What we are doing is for the development of the country, but above all, to serve the Venezuelan people, to provide them with more jobs, better wages, and access to public services such as water, electricity, hospitals, schools and adequate food," she said.

What does the deal include?

The US government and an unnamed private operator in Venezuela have set up a new company with rights to untapped oil fields for 100 years. Rodriguez said the agreement aims to increase Venezuela's oil production to 1.5 million barrels per day. The deal covers 17 fields with a proven potential of 65 billion barrels, according to her statement. It could bring \$100 billion in investment into Venezuela's oil industry and generate more than \$209 billion in taxes for Caracas.



How much oil will the US get?

The US will get 55% of the new company's effective output through an ownership stake and the right to buy oil at cost. A US official, who was not authorised to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, said oil bought by the US would go towards its strategic oil reserves and the military. The company would become the second-largest corporate holder of proven oil reserves after Saudi Aramco, the official said.

ONGC explores drillship buy for deepwater capacity under Samudra Manthan

The initiative is aimed at creating dedicated, priority-access deepwater drillship capacity, according to the EOI issued by ONGC

New Delhi. (Agency)

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is exploring the acquisition of deepwater drillships or formation of a joint venture to secure dedicated drilling capacity as it steps up efforts to accelerate offshore exploration to find oil and gas reserves under its Mission Samudra Manthan programme. ONGC has issued an Expression of Interest (EOI) to engage a specialist global offshore rig-broking consultant to identify potential drillship owners or

counterparties, assess assets and valuations, and support the state explorer in negotiating a possible ownership or joint venture arrangement. The initiative is aimed at creating dedicated, priority-access deepwater drillship capacity, according to the EOI issued by ONGC.

"ONGC is undertaking a structured capacity-creation programme to secure dedicated, priority-access deepwater drillship capacity in support of Mission Samudra Manthan. In view of the same, ONGC is exploring possibilities of ownership or JV model for Drillship acquisition," the EOI said. The Union Cabinet had last month approved Samudra Manthan, the National Offshore Exploration Scheme, with an outlay of ₹84,084 crore through 2030-31. The central-sector scheme is aimed at accelerating exploration of India's offshore oil and gas resources,

particularly in deepwater and ultra-deepwater areas, as the government seeks to boost domestic production and reduce import dependence. Under the



scheme, the government will provide financial support of up to 50 per cent of the cost of deepwater exploration wells, subject to a cap of ₹675 crore per well. The programme includes drilling of 60

deepwater exploration wells, large-scale seismic surveys, development of common offshore production and evacuation infrastructure, and creation of an Oil and Gas Manufacturing and Services Zone. To undertake such deepwater drilling, companies such as ONGC require specialised drillships. India currently does not have the manufacturing capability to build deepwater drillships, leaving explorers dependent on foreign-owned rigs typically secured through time-charter arrangements. The proposed consultant will help ONGC identify suitable global drillship owners and contractors, undertake commercial benchmarking and technical due diligence, and assist in negotiating an ownership or JV deal.

Surat BJP leader's son, woman friend held for abetment days after his wife's 'suicide'

Surat.(Agency)

The Surat Rural Police on Saturday arrested a 26-year-old man – the son of a former vice president of the women's wing of the Surat BJP – and his female friend on charges of abetment to suicide and alleged dowry demands, days after his wife “died by suicide”.

The accused, Saurabh Singh, is the son of Sashi Sanjay Singh Rajput, a former vice president of the BJP's women's wing in the district. Earlier, the brother of the deceased registered a complaint against his brother-in-law (Saurabh Singh) and his female friend.

According to the Kadodara police, Saurabh Singh's wife Nidhi Kumari (24) allegedly died by suicide at her matrimonial home in Kadodara town on Tuesday, when the other family members were not at home. Sashi Rajput returned home later the same day and found Nidhi's body hanging in her bedroom, following which she called her husband Sanjay Singh and son Saurabh and also informed the police.

A police team soon reached the house and sent the body to a hospital for postmortem examination. Doctors found a suicide note written in Hindi while checking clothes on the body, police said.

Signal School Bus not just a vehicle, but a strong bridge connecting kids to mainstream of society: SC judge

Surat.(Agency)

“WHEN WE see a child at a traffic signal, a thought comes to mind, and when the signal turns green, we move forward, but the child remains at the signal. Signal School teaches us to look at that child with a different and respectful eye. A child standing at the signal should not be seen as just a child asking for help, but as a child who has the ability to go to school and study, play, make friends and dream of the future,” Supreme Court judge and National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) Executive Chairman Justice Vikram Nath said on Saturday.

Elaborating on the project, Justice Nath said that the initiative does not wait for the child to reach the education system, but “takes education to the child's home”. “After contacting family and providing basic education and culture, he/she should be admitted to a regular government school. Hence, the Signal School Bus is not just a vehicle, but a strong bridge connecting the child to the mainstream of society. This success in Ahmedabad will now brighten the future of Surat's children as well.”

Praising the working style in Gujarat, he added, “Here, ideas are not just left on paper; they are brought down to the ground level. But the real test of any scheme depends on the ground commitment after the inauguration.”

“Admission of children is done in schools run by the Municipal Corporation, but the biggest responsibility is how we can prevent drop-out of children. Children come to study, but after some time, drop-out starts. GSLSA (Gujarat State Legal Service Authority) is constantly trying to prevent this,” Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal of the Gujarat High Court said in her address.

At 4.30 am, two 'mehnati kudiyan' rise to milk cattle, and push a thriving dairy business

Jalandhar.(Agency)

At 4.30 am, while most of their classmates and peers are asleep, Jashanpreet Kaur, 19, and her sister Supandeep Kaur, 17, are in the cattle shed outside their home in Ladhuwala Uttar village of Fazilka.

They start the day by feeding the animals, cleaning the shed and milking the buffalos before attending to household work and their studies. There is also the daily milk supply to manage. Their working day often stretches until 11 pm.

For the sisters, this has been the daily since they were 11 and 9 respectively.

Growing up in a financially constrained family, the sisters grew up watching their parents struggle to make ends meet. Their father Gurvinder Singh had about 2.5 acres of inherited land and, until a few years ago, also drove a school van to supplement the family income. Watching them struggle, the sisters encouraged and motivated their parents to continue with dairy farming and gradually expand it. The dairy began with a single buffalo around seven or eight years ago. Today, the family has 22 cows and buffaloes, with the livestock valued at around Rs 30 lakh. They sell nearly 100 kg of milk a day, earning about Rs 5,000. The income is supplemented by sale of calves and young animals. The family puts its profit margin from dairy at 40-50 per cent.

The change has gone beyond the cattle shed. A loan taken in the initial years to build the shed and buy animals has been repaid. The family now owns a tractor, farm implements, a house and a car, and has begun taking additional agricultural land on lease.

Elgaar case: Court refuses to cancel bail of 4 accused over Press Club gathering

NIA failed to produce evidence that Sudha Bharadwaj, Varavara Rao, Vernon Gonsalves and Arun Ferreira met to further 'Urban Naxal' activities, court says

Mumbai.(Agency)

A special court on Saturday refused to cancel the bail of four accused in the Elgaar Parishad case, holding that the NIA had failed to produce evidence that their presence at a January gathering at the Mumbai Press Club amounted to a violation of their bail conditions.

The NIA had sought cancellation of bail of lawyers Sudha Bharadwaj and Arun Ferreira, Telugu poet Varavara Rao and activist Vernon Gonsalves, alleging that they had breached a condition prohibiting them from contacting or communicating with co-accused. The agency claimed the four attended a January 19 gathering at the Press Club to discuss ways of furthering the 'Urban Naxal' movement.

Special Judge Chakor S Baviskar said the four had indeed gathered with other invitees at the Press Club and may have spoken to one another, possibly even discussing the case. But that, by itself, could not establish a breach of their bail conditions. “The prosecution has to establish it at least with some sort of acceptable

evidence,” the court said, noting there was no evidence to show that the accused had gathered with the specific intention of propagating the activities of the banned CPI (Maoist).



The court said the purpose of the bail condition was to prevent the accused from engaging in “similar activities” to those alleged in the case. “Sans any evidence to that effect, certainly, mere gathering of the accused falls short to conclude that, the bail condition is breached,” it said. The court, however, said the accused should have exercised greater caution and recused themselves from the gathering to avoid

any complications.

The defence had argued that the four were invited by a third party and were unaware that the others would be present. Lawyers Yug Chaudhry and R Satyanarayan, appearing for Bharadwaj and Rao respectively, said the discussion was general and included issues such as prison conditions. The court also noted that the accused routinely meet in court and corridors during hearings and may speak to one another or discuss the case. Merely because the venue shifted from the courtroom to the Press Club, it said, could not amount to a breach of bail conditions. It also examined CCTV footage of the gathering, which had no audio. The court said the mood and body language visible in the footage did not indicate that the accused were discussing serious issues such as the ideology of the banned organisation. Bharadwaj was granted bail by the Bombay High Court in December 2021, while Rao was granted interim bail on medical grounds in February 2021, which was later confirmed by the Supreme Court in August 2022. Gonsalves and Ferreira were granted bail by the Supreme Court in July 2023. The trial is yet to begin.

219 of 319 Tamils in Nepal safe, says Minister A Rajmohan

CHENNAI.(Agency)

The state government has so far identified 319 Tamils who were in Nepal when severe floods struck the country, of whom around 219 have been traced and are safe, School Education Minister A Rajmohan said on Saturday. Efforts are under way to locate the remaining and facilitate the return of those who have been rescued. Rajmohan, who is in Delhi coordinating the rescue and relief efforts, said the travellers would be brought back to Tamil Nadu depending on the availability of flights.

“There have been instances where people were found alive several days after such major tragedies.

Our minister for Non-Resident Tamils Welfare K Thennarasu will also be in Delhi to coordinate the efforts,” he said. The minister

said rescue teams were also recovering bodies from locations several kilometres away from the areas initially affected by the floods. The government was coordinating with authorities



to ascertain whether any of the deceased were Tamils and to facilitate identification and repatriation.

Asked whether the government had been able to establish the exact number of Tamils who were in Nepal, Rajmohan said the exercise was still under way as some people had travelled individually while others had gone as part of groups.

“We have identified most of those who travelled in groups. However, some had travelled individually, including from places such as Bengaluru and Maharashtra. Our intention is to ensure that all of them are rescued, and we are coordinating with the centre in this regard,” he said.

The minister said the government's efforts were not confined to Tamils residing in Tamil Nadu. Some Tamils from other parts of India, including Maharashtra, as well as Tamils from Malaysia, were also in Nepal when the floods occurred. Officials were working to establish their whereabouts and coordinate their rescue as well.

Uproar erupts after CAG report flags lapses in Rajasthan Jal Jeevan Mission

JAIPUR.(Agency)

Rajasthan failed to utilise more than 70% of the Central funds allocated under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), and the scheme's implementation was marred by irregular payments, poor quality checks and procedural lapses, according to a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report.

Rajasthan had 1,07,75,281 rural households when the JJM was launched on August 15, 2019. Of these, 11,68,553 households, or 10.84%, had tap-water connections, leaving 96,06,728 households to be covered under the scheme. As of January 2025, tap connections had been provided to 47,65,980 households, or 49.61%, the report said. The audit, covering August 2019 to March 2024, found that Rs

29,145.92 crore of the total allocation of Rs 41,414.24 crore remained unutilised.

State laboratories could test water



samples for only 41 of the 78 prescribed quality parameters and lacked facilities to detect radioactive and toxicological contaminants. District-level laboratories could test for only 9 to 22 of the 34 prescribed parameters.

The CAG also questioned the use of JJM funds for foundation-stone-laying ceremonies.

It attributed the slow implementation to systemic shortcomings, including repeated tender cancellations and delays in awarding contracts for regional water-supply projects. The report rejected as “untenable” the contention that the Russia-Ukraine war had contributed to the delays. Field verification of selected projects uncovered irregular payments totalling Rs 7.07 crore against bills that were allegedly fake, missing, cancelled or reused. The report highlighted lapses in quality control. Contractors working on 26 regional water supply schemes received payments of Rs 122.31 crore without safety validation. The department initiated 511 transactions.

Farmers gear up for week-long Chandigarh-Mohali protest, announce route

Patiala.(Agency)

At a time when the Punjab government is grappling with an agitation by employee unions, another major protest is set to begin in Chandigarh and Mohali, with the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) gearing up for a week-long dharna from September 1 to September 7.

The SKM has issued a detailed route and parking plan to its constituent farmer organisations across Punjab. While hundreds of tractor-trolleys and trucks are being prepared in villages to ferry farmers and ration to the protest site, some participants are also expected to travel by train and buses.

Earlier, the SKM claimed a site between Sectors 49 and 51 had been allotted for its protest, but Chandigarh Senior Superintendent of Police Kanwardeep Kaur subsequently denied it.

“Following a meeting of the SKM's Punjab unit with the Chandigarh and Mohali administrations, we have got approval for the protest site in Sector 48-C. It will be on one side of the road leading from the IISER T-point towards Tribune Chowk,” said Raminder Singh Patiala, a national coordination committee member of the SKM, while talking to.

The IIT dream that turned into a scam

Mumbai.(Agency)

He had once gone to Kota with the same ambition as thousands of students who arrive there every year to crack the IIT entrance examination and become an engineer. Yuvraj Kumar Sharma alias Sonu Kumar, 35, did not make it to an IIT. He eventually studied civil engineering at MIT Academy in Pune, graduating in 2016. Years later, according to the police, he was running an operation that allegedly preyed on students with precisely the ambition he had once pursued himself.

What started as a coaching centre and an admission consultancy eventually became, police allege, a seasonal admission racket run through two bogus call centres in Pune. The operation would spring to life when engineering admissions began, find anxious parents and students through social media, promise seats in reputed colleges and then disappear before the admission lists were announced.

The racket came to light after a mother from Powai approached the police alleging that she had been cheated of Rs 16.5 lakh. Gracy Peter Swami, 47, had come across an Instagram account called “techorbit1111”,

through which she was allegedly promised admission for her son to the International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad. She paid Rs 16.5 lakh, but the promised admission did not materialise. Her complaint eventually led investigators to a much larger operation.

Police contacted the banks and managed to freeze Rs 16 lakh of the amount allegedly transferred by Swami. Following police intervention and a court order, the entire amount was returned to her, Deputy Commissioner of Police Datta Nalawade said.

Investigators then followed the digital trail.

Five mobile phones allegedly used by the suspects were identified. Their locations and other technical evidence led police to two rented apartments in Viman Nagar and Lohegaon and the third floor of City Vista Building in Kharadi. Raids were conducted on August 16. Ten people were found working in the call centres. Police allege that they were not operating an ordinary consultancy. The group had built a system around the admission season, using social media to find

potential victims and a team of engineers and students to make the operation appear credible.

THE ADMISSION SEASON SCAM

According to investigators, the group created paid Instagram and Facebook



accounts using bogus SIM cards. They monitored posts and enquiries from students and parents looking for admission to engineering colleges.

Once a prospective victim was identified, the callers got in touch.

The pitch was that a seat could be arranged in a reputed engineering institute through a management or NRI quota. Meetings were arranged with students and their parents,

mostly outside college campuses.

At these meetings, police allege, one of the accused would pose as someone connected to the college administration. Money would then be collected in the name of admission fees, often in cash.

For parents who insisted on making an online payment, the group allegedly had another system.

Police said the accused opened a bank account in 2024 to receive such payments. After the money was deposited, they allegedly approached petrol pump employees and offered them commissions to withdraw or collect the money after transferring it through Google Pay or debit cards. Then came the part that investigators believe helped the operation evade detection.

The call centres would shut down. The phones and SIM cards used to contact victims would allegedly be destroyed. The operators would disappear before the college admission lists were announced.

By the time parents realised that the promised admission had not materialised, the people who had taken their money had vanished.

NEWS BOX

Lionel Messi rolls back the years with four-goal masterclass for Inter Miami



New Delhi. (Agency)

Lionel Messi rolled back the years with a stunning four-goal masterclass as Inter Miami ended their five-game winless run across all competitions with a 7-1 rout of Montreal in Major League Soccer on Saturday night. Messi scored four goals in an MLS match for the first time in his career, taking his tally for the season to 18 and moving top of the Golden Boot race. He struck shortly before half-time, added another in the 52nd minute and completed his hat-trick in the 83rd before curling in a free-kick deep into stoppage time. The performance marked the ninth time in Messi's professional career that he has scored at least four goals in a single match.

The Argentine's four-goal haul also saw him move ahead of Dallas' Petar Musa, who has 16 goals this season, in the MLS Golden Boot standings. Musa and Dallas face St. Louis City SC on Sunday. Inter Miami secured three crucial points to improve to 12-4-6 with 42 points, while Montreal's four-game unbeaten run in league play came to an emphatic end. Casemiro, Luis Suarez and rookie Alexander Shaw were also on the scoresheet for Miami. Casemiro opeed the scoring in the 20th minute, heading home from Telasco Segovia's corner. Montreal responded in the 37th minute when Fabian Herbers fired past Miami goalkeeper Dayne St. Clair after Noah Streit picked him out near the top of the box. Messi restored Miami's lead just three minutes later, bending a free-kick just inside the near post before Montreal goalkeeper Thomas Gillier could react. His second goal in the 52nd minute was arguably the pick of the bunch. Messi weaved between three defenders before finding the back of the net to put Miami firmly in control.

India still miss PR Sreejesh, and the Hockey World Cup proved it



New Delhi. (Agency)

When the Indian men's team's Hockey World Cup 7th-8th place playoff against Belgium went into a penalty shootout, there wasn't that familiar sense of comfort around the side. Yes, India had clawed their way back into the contest, and some could argue that momentum was finally on their side. But the confidence wasn't quite the same. Mohith stepped into the firing line with the gloves on, while Belgium had their own wall of hockey, Vincent Vanasch, guarding the goal. Mohith did his best, but he couldn't prevent India from slipping to defeat. Vanasch, meanwhile, produced two sensational saves when it mattered most to power Belgium to victory. It was hard not to notice the missing sense of security in that shootout. One big name was absent from the Indian lineup: PR Sreejesh. For years, India had relied on the goalkeeper from Kerala to pull them out of the toughest situations. In his final campaign at the Paris Olympics, Sreejesh played a starring role in India's quarter-final shootout win over Great Britain after the team had played with 10 men for more than 40 minutes. And that was far from an isolated occasion.

Sreejesh's absence was perhaps best summed up by legendary Dutch goalkeeper Pirmin Blaak, who was working with the Indian women's team. While India had Mohith and Suraj Karkera producing some good performances, Blaak felt they lacked the X-factor needed to t'I watched the men's team also and there is a huge gap after the legendary PR Sreejesh retired. The big-status goalkeeper.

Jadeja's no-ball blunders irk Gavaskar, calls for fining bowlers, bowling coach

Ravindra Jadeja's repeated no-balls in two-match Test series in Sri Lanka have irked Indian great Sunil Gavaskar, who wants bowlers fined for every overstep and the bowling coach penalised too.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Ravindra Jadeja's habit of overstepping became a talking point during India's two-match Test series against Sri Lanka, and legendary India captain Sunil Gavaskar believes it is time for bowlers to pay a price for repeated no-balls in red-ball cricket. Jadeja bowled a string of no-balls across the two Tests. Since 2021, the senior left-arm spinner has bowled more than 85 no-balls. Debutant Saransh Jain also struggled with his front-foot discipline, bowling several no-balls in the second innings of the

Colombo Test. India's spin bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule had jokingly suggested that a free hit after a no-ball could help prevent bowlers from overstepping. Gavaskar, though, does not want Test cricket to take that route. "The no-balls being bowled by the Indian bowlers came in for a fair bit of comment. This has to be looked at urgently because it can change the colour of the game. There are very few aspects of the game that are totally in the players' control, and a batter taking guard and a bowler not bowling a no-ball are two such aspects. Players, when they come for interviews, talk about doing things within their control. Today, with a tape measure available to mark the run-up, there should be no excuses for overstepping the bowling crease," Gavaskar wrote in his column for Mid-Day. **GAVASKAR DOES NOT WANT FREE HITS**

Gavaskar rejected the suggestion of introducing free hits, arguing that Test cricket should not offer batters another avenue to score easy runs. "The India team

spinning coach jokingly said that giving a free hit after a no-ball might help in curbing the offence. Please, let's not make scoring runs in Test cricket easier for batters with this penalty. As it is, with the restriction on



bouncers to two in an over and the boundaries being brought in, run-making has become a little simpler," he added. Instead, Gavaskar wants a financial penalty every time a bowler oversteps. He has proposed that the fine should double with

every subsequent offence, making repeated no-balls increasingly costly. **BOWLING COACH IN GAVASKAR'S FIRING LINE**

Gavaskar does not want the responsibility to rest solely with the players. He has also suggested that the bowling coach should be fined half the amount imposed on the bowler. "Instead, how about a fine which gets doubled for every further transgression, plus half the amount of the fine for the bowling coach, too. The fines collected can be used for the final team dinner before the boys disperse," wrote Gavaskar. He also suggested that teams could introduce their own fines for other lapses on the field, with players deciding collectively

whether an offence warrants a penalty. "There could be other fines too, for example, not backing up for a throw or something else not done on the field, which the whole team can vote on whether to impose or not.

Tottenham spent big, but De Zerbi questions Spurs' mentality after poor start

Tottenham Hotspur's big summer spending is yet to translate into results, with manager Roberto De Zerbi saying finding the "right mentality" is his biggest challenge after Spurs suffered their second straight Premier League defeat.

London. (Agency)

Tottenham Hotspur's big summer spending has not yet translated into results, and manager Roberto De Zerbi has admitted that finding the "right mentality" remains his biggest challenge after Spurs suffered a second consecutive defeat in the Premier League. Tottenham suffered a 2-0 defeat to Newcastle United on Saturday, with Spurs fading in the second half after dominating large parts of the opening period. Despite spending around 380 million pounds in the summer transfer window, De Zerbi believes his side needs time to develop the balance and mentality required to compete at the top. "There is no panic," De Zerbi said after the defeat. "I know where we are going and what the plan is. I'm sorry for the fans for the result. We have to improve. We have to work hard on the pitch and find

the connection between the players." The pressure surrounding Tottenham's



spending was impossible to ignore. Five of their eight summer signings started against Newcastle, including Omar Marmoush, who joined from Manchester City for 60 million pounds. Sandro Tonali was the biggest statement signing of the summer, with Tottenham paying an initial 92.5 million pounds for the midfielder. However, the Italy international endured a

difficult afternoon against his former club, with Newcastle fans booing his every touch. There were glimpses of quality from Tottenham. Marmoush showed some bright touches on his debut, while Mathys Tel tested Luks Horncek with a powerful effort. Jan Paul van Hecke also came close with a header. But ewcastle ultimately exposed the gap between Tottenham's spending power and their progress on the pitch.

"It's the biggest problem, it's the biggest challenge and the biggest target is to find the right mentality," De Zerbi said. The right mentality in the transfer market. Football is a magical thing, you can change a lot of players and you can find the balance immediately or you need more time. "De Zerbi insisted he was confident Tottenham would eventually find that balance, even if it takes time.

Sunil Chhetri a little jealous of India's Brazil chance, urges football unity

New Delhi. (Agency)

Sunil Chhetri admits he will be watching India's upcoming clash against Brazil with a hint of jealousy. The former India captain never got the chance to play against one of football's biggest teams during his international career. The current generation will get that opportunity when India face five-time world champions Brazil in Kolkata on October 3, followed by a match against Uruguay three days later. "I feel a little jealous as a spectator. In my 24-26 years as a professional and nearly 20 years with the national team, I never got an opportunity like this," Chhetri said on sidelines of the Football Players' Association of India's Indian Football Awards 2026 in Kolkata. The 42-year-old, who remains one of the



most recognisable figures in Indian football, backed the current players to make the most of the opportunity.

"This is their time. There are so many talented youngsters in the team. Everyone gets their opportunity; just like I got mine 20 years ago," he said. Chhetri has returned to training recently but ruled out any immediate thoughts of coming out of

international retirement, joking about his own fitness. "I just trained for 20 minutes. I'm around 42 now, I can barely run properly and I'm struggling," he said. Asked about the selection of the current India squad and the exclusion of certain players, Chhetri was reluctant to offer an opinion. "The coach has to answer that. I'm just a fan now, watching like everyone else," he

said.

I AM ALWAYS HOPEFUL

The former striker's comments came at a difficult time for Indian football. The national team have slipped to 138th in the FIFA rankings, while uncertainty continues around the domestic calendar after the Indian Super League's previous commercial management contract ended.

US Open Day 1 schedule: Veterans Novak Djokovic, Venus Williams begin campaigns



New Delhi. (Agency)

Novak Djokovic begins another attempt at history while home favourite Jessica Pegula gets another chance to chase her maiden Grand Slam title as the US Open gets under way on Sunday. Djokovic, the fifth seed, opens his campaign against Argentina's Mariano Navone on Arthur Ashe Stadium as he continues his pursuit of a record 25th major title. The 39-year-old has come close since winning his 24th Grand Slam at the US Open in 2023, reaching two major finals and six semi-finals. He reached the Australian Open final earlier this year and the Wimbledon semi-finals, but the elusive 25th title remains out of reach. "I know a lot of people are retiring me already, for many years," he said in a documentary released earlier this month.

"Why would you want me to retire when I am still playing and competing at the highest level? I'm still top-five, top-10 in the world. Why would I talk about retirement when I am proving to myself that I can still win?"

Two-time champion Venus Williams will make her 26th US Open main-draw appearance when she faces fellow American Sofia Kenin. Williams, 45, remains one of the most recognisable names in the tournament and will be looking to mark another appearance at Flushing Meadows with a strong start. Kenin, the 2020 Australian Open champion, stands in her way in an all-American first-round clash. Pegula, meanwhile, starts her 10th US Open main draw against Romania's Elena-Gabriela Ruse. The 32-year-old came closest to winning a Grand Slam on home soil when she reached the 2024 US Open final, where she lost to Aryna Sabalenka. Sabalenka ended her run again in the semi-finals last year. Pegula has reached the Australian Open semi-finals and Wimbledon quarter-finals this year, while also making the finals in Washington and Cincinnati before arriving in New York.

Rohit Yadav: India's next big javelin story is taking shape

New Delhi. (Agency)

Rohit Yadav has been struggling to sleep since coming back from the Commonwealth Games. An 81.56-meter throw in the men's javelin final meant that the Indian finished 7th among 12 athletes in Glasgow. Among the three Indian athletes present in the final, Rohit's throw was the lowest. The other two, Neeraj Chopra and Yashvir Singh, took silver and bronze respectively, both with throws just above the 85-meter mark. Neeraj's season best of 85.83m at the time and Yashvir's personal best of 85.41m were well below what Rohit had thrown just before the Commonwealth Games: 87.05m. The fact that he was nowhere close to that still irritates Rohit. The 25-year-old, hailing from Dabhiya village in Machhlisahr, redeemed himself just weeks later, hurling a massive throw of 87.68m at the Continental Tour silver meet in Bhubaneswar. The distance mattered. It vaulted Rohit into the second spot among Indian javelin stars, behind only Neeraj Chopra. But even that

could not make him happy.

"What is the point of throwing here? I need to throw big in bigger competitions, that is my goal," Rohit Yadav told India Today in an exclusive interview. "I was really sad and irritated with my throw in Glasgow. I am not happy with this personal best as well," he added. While he continues to brood over the result, the reality is that Rohit's performance in the Continental Tour earlier in August put him firmly in medal contention for the Asian Games 2026, set to be hosted in Japan next month. With Neeraj Chopra now out of the competition due to a season-ending ankle injury, Rohit is India's strongest hope for what could possibly be the country's final javelin medal in 2026.

ANOTHER 90M THROWER IN THE MAKING?

A 90m throw is a rare commodity in javelin. The sport, inducted for the first time in the Olympics in 1908, has only 28 athletes to date that have breached the 90m mark. Germany has the best consistency in 90m

throws, producing 7 out of those 28 athletes. That is why Neeraj Chopra's feat at Doha (90.23m) was so special: he became the first and only Indian thrower to breach the



elusive 90. But what after Neeraj? What happens when age catches up to him? What happens when the athlete retires? That's where Rohit Yadav comes in. With him hurling two throws above 87 meters in 2026, naturally, the conversation moves into that territory. Can he achieve 90m? His former coach, Michael Musselmann,

who trained Rohit early in his career, believes he is an exceptional talent with a natural arm capable of producing big throws. "He's a very impressive talent. He's

not tall, not strong in terms of weightlifting, but naturally very strong and has an amazing arm," Michael says from Peru, where he trains athletes across the globe online. Rohit is a very natural thrower. I think it comes from cricket, or maybe he just had it in his system. He knew how to use his legs, his upper body, the rotation, and the follow-through, and he always had a good feel for the javelin."

"I think he has 90 metres in his body."

ROHIT YADAV'S JOURNEY IN JAVELIN

That natural instinct did not start in high-performance elite centres; it traces back to his childhood home. The roots of Rohit Yadav's javelin journey began in 2012, when he was in Standard V.

Sukesh Chandrasekhar Claims

Nora Fatehi

'Begged' Him To Leave

Jacqueline: '10 Calls A Day...'

A hand-written letter of alleged-jailed conman Sukesh Chandrasekhar to actress Nora Fatehi has surfaced on social media in which he seen claiming how Fatehi was after his money and wanted her to leave Jacqueline Fernandez. The letter emerged days after Nora spoke about the emotional trauma she experienced after being linked to Sukesh in the Rs 200 crore money laundering case. If a report by is to be believed, even though the handwritten letter has been verified as authentic, the allegations



made by Sukesh in it have not been verified. In the letter, Sukesh claimed that he had given Nora Fatehi crores of rupees to help her purchase a house in Casablanca, Morocco. Therefore, he asked Nora to 'stop this pathetic drama' of being a victim and threatened to release their conversations from that period. Sukesh further referred to alleged WhatsApp conversations in which he claimed Nora discussed luxury gifts with him. He also alleged that Nora was jealous of his relationship with Jacqueline and would call him several times a day asking him to end his relationship with Fernandez.

"You used to bombard my phone with up to 10 calls a day begging me to leave Jacqueline and brain washing me to fully finance your lifestyle," Sukesh wrote in the letter. He then issued a warning to Nora and added, "Do not provoke me."

For the unversed, both Jacqueline and Nora have been making headlines due to their alleged involvement in Sukesh Chandrasekhar's Rs 200 money laundering case. While Jacqueline is an accused in the money laundering case, Nora is still a person of interest and a witness. They have been questioned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) multiple times.



Anushka Ranjan Opens Up On IVF Journey, Says, 'I Always Wanted To Have Two Kids Because...'



Aditya Seal and Anushka Ranjan, who tied the knot on November 21, 2021, welcomed twin daughters on August 23. The couple opted for IVF to become parents, and recently, in a podcast with Soha Ali Khan, Anushka opened up about her journey, challenges and much more. The actress, while sharing how the two decided to go for IVF and how she always wanted to have two kids, revealed that they decided to extend their family in 2023, and it was in November 2025 that they finally decided to begin their IVF journey.

Anushka Ranjan shared, "In 2023, Adi and I decided that we wanted to start a family, and we were trying naturally. We went to a doctor at a very big hospital, and she told us that we could try for six months to a year naturally and check on my ovulation days. But that didn't seem like the right way to go about it because I am not in my 20s."

Revealing how she always wanted to have two kids, she added, "I always wanted to have two kids because I know the value of having a sibling. So I was like, I have to do it soon. I went to another doctor who advised me to try IUI, a very, very milder version of IVF. But even then, I had to take a lot of medicines and injections, and it was causing me a lot of emotional problems. This happened in 2025. Later, I again tried for IUI, and it failed. My doctor was very upset, and then she told me to try one more cycle before jumping to IVF. But I was like, if we are anyway upping the medication, we might as well try IVF. So that's when we decided to do it."

The couple finally went through their first IVF in November 2025, which turned out to be a success for them. For Anushka, who conceived twins, the injection part was the toughest. The actress revealed that she hated how people kept giving random advice and shared, "People keep telling me to listen to the Bhagavad Gita and all, and I say I listen to the Hanuman Chalisa because I like listening to the Hanuman Chalisa. That keeps my peace of mind. I just don't like people giving me faltu ka gyan."

Sharon Verma Hits Back At 'Kashmiri' Samay Raina After 'Bihari' Joke: 'I Left My State By Choice'



Comedian Sharon Verma recently appeared on India's Got Latent 2 when she trolled Samay Raina and gave him a befitting reply for mocking about her Bihari roots. It all started after Samay welcomed her on show and introduced her to audience in his style. "She is from Bihar. She is so Bihari, she thinks ebola means someone said something." To this, Sharon hit back, saying, "Samay is so Kashmiri, he loves getting stoned." This did not stop Samay. He then continued and added, "Sharon Verma is a Bihari who came to Mumbai in search of a job. Just Bihari things. However, what Sharon said next left everyone jaw-dropped. "At least, I left my state by my choice," she said. This even left Samay Raina laughing out loud, who stood up from his seat and clapped, as the audience also cheered.

Soon after a video of the sequence from the episode surfaced on social media, several users reacted to it. "She cooked him hard", one of the users wrote. "Samay Raina tried to troll Sharon Verma, but she turned the tables and roasted him instead," added another.

Samay Raina On Being A Kashmiri Pandit

Previously, during his 'Still Alive' act, Samay recalled how his parents had to leave Kashmir overnight when he shared, "My mom and dad got married in Kashmir. They were living a great life in the early 90s. My father was a very respected news reporter. Then we all know what happened. We had to leave the valley. My parents went to New Delhi. But they did not like it. They went back in 1996. I was born in 1997, and in 1998, a bullet was fired at our home. We left overnight. In search of a new private job, he landed in Hyderabad."

"When the fight is not fair, you f*** off from there. We are five per cent in Kashmir. If my parents would have taken up arms, saying 'We'll fight for our motherland, they all would have died. I'm so glad all the Kashmiri Pandits fled the Valley overnight."

Tara Sutaria

Calls Yash 'Most Sensitive', Says 'Bohot Kam Hai Industry Main Yeh Dekhna'



Tara Sutaria has opened up about what it was like for her to work with Yash in Toxic. In the film, Yash's character is roughed up and angry. Tara said that in real life, Yash is a very sensitive person who thinks about others more than he thinks about himself. She said that people like Yash are very rare in the Indian entertainment industry.

Tara said on The Male Feminist podcast, "He is one of the most sensitive, and genuinely, he is thinking about the other person more than himself. Bohot kam hota hai hamare industry mein, ye dekhna (It is rare to see such a person in this industry). He is unlike anyone I have met. He is very considerate."

Besides Yash and Tara, the film also stars Kiara Advani, Nayanthara, Huma Qureshi and Rukmini Vasanth in important roles. Tara also opened up about being compared to other actresses and said that everyone's work is different and cannot be compared. She also mentioned that male actors are not subjected to this comparison. "In our industry, every single actress fits a different role. I don't think you can compare anybody. Everybody is doing different work. Sometimes we are compared with one another on social media. This or that. This name or that name. They never

do that for guys! I have never seen this hero or that hero," Tara said.

Meanwhile, directed by Geetu Mohandas, Toxic arrived amid considerable expectations, particularly as it marked Yash's major theatrical outing following his previous commercial success. Reactions on social media have been divided, with its treatment and creative



choices becoming subjects of discussion among viewers. However, the divided reception has not stopped Toxic from recording strong numbers during its opening days. According to Sacnilk, the Yash-starrer collected Rs 138.75 crore net in India during its first two days. Its worldwide gross collection stood at Rs 185.60 crore over the same period. The film's weekend performance will now be closely watched, particularly after its strong initial numbers.

NEWS BOX

Ruoning Yin leads FM Championship after chip-in birdie and late 68

Norton.(Agency)

Ruoning Yin took the third-round lead at the FM Championship on Saturday after a 4-under 68, helped by a chip-in birdie from just off the 18th green and a 20-foot birdie putt on the par-3 16th. The Chinese player moved to 12-under 204, one shot clear of South Korea's Sei Young Kim and Hyo Joo Kim. Yin said she was pleased with the way her game was shaping up heading into the final round. "I think my swing is in a good spot, my putting and every part of my game I think are pretty good," Yin said. "I'm just going to play my game. I'm not going to play safe when it's time to go aggressive."

Yin, who has five LPGA Tour victories, won twice in 2023 and three times in 2024. She said patience would be important in the final round. "I think just play my game," Yin said. "I knew today was going to be tough and tomorrow is going to be tougher, so just be patient and play my game." Sei Young Kim, who led after the first round with a 64, bounced back from a second-round 74 with a 67. "A little more emotional today," she said. "It kind of helps today, like positive way." Hyo Joo Kim carded a 70 and stayed in contention. She has won the Founders Cup and Ford Championship this season. "I just want to make sure I'm doing a good job tomorrow," she said through a translator.

Somi Lee, who shot 70, and Jenny Bae, who had a 72, were tied for fourth at 8 under. Japan's Miyu Yamashita, who had shared the second-round lead, fell six shots behind after a 75. On Sunday in Canada, she had tied the tour's 72-hole scoring record in a nine-stroke victory.

Bhotekoshi flood toll nears 700 as Nepal warns rescuers over rising waters

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

Water levels in Nepal's Bhotekoshi River rose again on Sunday, days after a devastating flash flood hit the area, prompting authorities to warn search and rescue teams in the affected districts to stay alert. The death toll from the disaster has climbed to nearly 700, while nearly 2,400 people are still missing, according to officials. The river, which flows south from the Himalayan border region, had sent huge volumes of water downstream into central Nepal during flash floods on Wednesday. Bodies are still being recovered as search and rescue operations continue amid renewed rainfall and rising water levels. "The water level in the flooded Bhotekoshi river has risen to some extent; all concerned are urged to take precautionary measures," the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority said in a statement. It asked those involved in search and rescue operations, and others in Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading and Chitwan districts, to remain alert. The authority said it would issue further updates after receiving more information.

More than 15,000 security personnel have been deployed for search and rescue work, while helicopters have been making repeated sorties to evacuate stranded people and deliver relief supplies. The flash floods swept through the Bhotekoshi and Trishuli river corridors, damaging roads, bridges, settlements and hydropower infrastructure. At the Trishuli hydropower project site, Nepalese security personnel, with the help of Indian tunnel experts, continued efforts to evacuate those trapped by locating the tunnel entrance even after midnight on Saturday, despite heavy rain through the night, Nepal Army sources said..The NDRMA said 242 injured people had been admitted to hospitals, including Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital and Bir Hospital in Kathmandu, and Rasuwa District Hospital in Dhunche, till Saturday evening.

Niger mutiny leaves dozens dead or held as junta faces internal revolt

Niamey.(Agency)

Dozens of soldiers were killed or arrested after a group of young troops attempted a mutiny in Niger's capital, in what was seen as a major threat to the country's ruling junta, according to state television and analysts. Gunfire and explosions were heard overnight into Saturday at a key military base inside Niamey's main airport complex and near the presidential palace. The unrest lasted nearly 24 hours and was seen as being driven by anger among younger soldiers over worsening militant violence under the military rulers. Analysts and diplomats said Russia's Africa Corps gave aerial and ground support to local forces resisting the rebellion, while the full situation on the ground remained unclear. State broadcaster RTN showed footage of dozens of mostly young soldiers being paraded in public after the fighting. "The fighting lasted a few hours in several places, which allowed (security forces) to gradually control the situation, arrest and incapacitate these moody soldiers," state TV reported. The whereabouts of military leader Abdourahmane Tchiani were not clear. According to diplomats and analysts, some

of the mutinous soldiers came from the southwest of the country, one of the regions worst hit by insecurity. The unrest began with a hostage situation. RTN briefly stopped its live broadcast on Saturday morning before returning with a statement from Defence Minister Gen. Salifou Mody, who said a group of soldiers had taken some officers hostage at the base and opened fire at "sensitive sites" in a "break with the discipline and military regulations."

Analysts and diplomats said the rebelling soldiers remained at the base until late Saturday, while the presidential guard secured the presidential palace and was deployed to regain control of the base. Russian media quoted Moscow's Ambassador to Niger, Viktor Voropayev, as saying senior Nigerian military officers visited the Africa Corps base at the airport and "expressed gratitude to its servicemen for their assistance in suppressing the rebellion". Wassim Nasr, a senior research fellow at the Soufan Centre, said loyalist forces had regained the "upper hand at least at the airport (and base)", though some forces were still moving towards the capital and it was not clear whether they were coming to back the mutiny or the junta.

How a Nepali teacher's quick thinking saved 1,643 children from monster floods

A Nepali school principal rushed 1,643 children to safety after a warning that muddy floodwaters were surging towards their school. His split-second decision came as a glacier-triggered disaster tore through the region and left hundreds dead.

world.(Agency)

"He said the village was gone: taken by the river. He told me to run." The warning came at 9:20 am on Wednesday from a friend to Rajendra Dawadi, principal of Tribhuvan Trishuli Secondary School in Nepal's Trishuli Valley. He had 1,643 children in and around the three-storey school as a devastating flash flood, triggered by a glacier collapse, tore through mountain river systems, killing 734 people in Nepal and 16 in Tibet.

Buildings, bridges and power stations were swept away as torrents of rock, ice, mud and debris surged through the region. About 2,498 people remain missing in Nepal, while another 546 are missing in Tibet's Gyirong County, according to the latest figures. With the floodwaters rising rapidly, Dawadi, a 47-year-old English teacher, had just minutes to act. He was responsible for the children at the school in flood-hit Nuwakot that morning, and their safety now depended on his decision. Dawadi initially thought the school was safe. Built of concrete and about 60 metres above the river, it stood on the same level as the steel bridge linking the village to the eastern bank, The Times reported.

Then a parent rushed in with a more alarming message: the water was rising fast. Dawadi rang the school bell and

ordered teachers to evacuate the classrooms. He called the school bus drivers, telling all but one to turn back. Then he saw the bus he could not reach crossing the bridge. By then, the children were beginning to realise they were in



danger. One girl suffered a panic attack and was taken uphill on a motorbike. The others fled on foot, with Dawadi following behind, according to The Times. The children eventually took shelter beneath a

bodhi tree as the floodwaters swept away their school buildings. Dawadi's quick thinking saved 1,643 children and all but one member of the teaching staff. Social history teacher Santos Pariyar, 32, was washed away after returning to his rented room beside the river to cook breakfast. The school's janitor, Sultan Lama, was also killed after returning to close the doors.

'WHAT ELSE COULD I DO?'

Locals have called Dawadi a hero for saving the children. But he is less convinced. "What else could I do?" he said while surveying the muddy ruins where the school once stood. The flash flood was triggered by a huge chunk of ice and rock that broke away from Langtang Lirung peak and plunged about 1,200 metres into the steep upper gorge of the Lhende Khola river near the Tibet border.

We retain sovereignty over resources: Venezuela leader on 'historic' US oil deal

Caracas.(Agency)

Venezuelan interim President Delcy Rodriguez said on Saturday that an energy agreement with the US would remain in force for 25 years, target an increase in crude output to 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd) and preserve the country's sovereignty over its natural resources. Rodriguez hailed the accord in a late-night address as a "historic" deal that would help revive the economy and boost government revenue, saying it would help shape the country's future. "This 25-year bilateral project envisages the development of 17 strategic oilfields with a production target of more than 1.5 million barrels per day," Rodriguez said on state broadcaster VTV. "That figure relates solely to the bilateral agreement

between Venezuela and the United States." Rodriguez added that the agreement's target of 1.5 million bpd was only an initial goal and that the



broader plan also included the development of eight greenfield oil blocks as part of a wider expansion of the country's energy sector. President Donald Trump on Friday announced plans for the US to take partial control of Venezuela's vast oil reserves, betting that American companies can

help revive the South American nation's battered energy industry while providing a new source of crude to help lower US fuel prices.

Trump provided few details on the agreement, saying only that the US had secured majority control of more than 65 billion barrels of Venezuela's proven oil reserves through a partnership with private business. Venezuela has the world's largest proven oil reserves, but it produces only about 1.25 million bpd – far below its potential – after years of underinvestment, mismanagement and sanctions. Rodriguez said the agreement could generate about \$209 billion in revenue for the Venezuelan state, based on a benchmark oil price of \$65 per barrel, though she acknowledged crude prices could fluctuate.

China's cover-up amid Nepal floods? Posts by Tibet locals deleted, rescue images promoted

Videos posted by Tibetan locals on Chinese social media platforms showing the flash floods are reportedly being removed by President Xi Jinping's regime. The censorship by the Chinese Communist Party has raised concerns that restricted access to information could hinder transparency and rescue efforts.

world.(Agency)

The floodwaters tore through villages, roads and border infrastructure. But on the Chinese side of the Nepal-Tibet frontier, another kind of disappearance appears to have followed. Videos posted by Tibet locals showing the scale of the devastation were reportedly removed from Chinese social media by the President Xi Jinping-led regime, leaving behind a tightly curated stream of official rescue footage. That contrast has put

China's handling of the disaster under scrutiny. While journalists in Nepal have been collecting eyewitness accounts and images from the ground and the Nepalese government is also being transparent about the ongoing developments, information emerging from China's side of the border has largely come through state-controlled media. According to a report in The New York Times (NYT) newspaper published on August 27, videos showing the mudslide engulfing the Gyirong border crossing had been censored on Chinese social media platforms.

The development comes even as the sheer scale of the damage from the Himalayan disaster shocks the world. A high-altitude glacier collapse caused flash floods in the Lhende Khola river in the Nepal-Tibet border region on August 26. The fallen ice and debris

resulted in a violent wall of water, mud, and rock rushing downstream into the Bhotekoshi and Trishuli river basins of Nepal. News agency Reuters on Saturday (August 29) reported in the evening that the death



toll had risen to 675 in Nepal, with more than 2,400 people still missing, while the Chinese state-sponsored news agencies had reported that only five deaths in China's Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).

South Carolina officer killed in park gunfight after domestic dispute call

Columbia.(Agency)

A police officer was killed and another was injured in a gunfight at a park in South Carolina on Saturday after police responded to a call about a domestic dispute, Columbia police Chief W.H. "Skip" Holbrook said. The suspect, a 33-year-old man with a lengthy criminal record, also died, Holbrook told a news conference in the state capital. The officer who died was identified as 29-year-old Christopher DeLong, who had been with the police department for two years. He is survived by his wife and two young children. "Our hearts are broken this evening," Holbrook said, appearing emotional at times. According to Holbrook, the incident began at about 9.30 am on Saturday when a woman called police and said a man she had a restraining order against was damaging property at her home. DeLong arrived quickly and was told the suspect had left. The woman gave him a description of the man and the vehicle, the chief said. At about 10.30 am, DeLong left the home. Minutes later, he reported a suspicious person after seeing a man near a vehicle matching the description given by the woman, Holbrook said. Officer David Dymock then arrived as backup, and minutes later radioed that the officers "were hit and a suspect was down", the chief said. Holbrook identified the suspect as Adam Tyler Dowdy and said he had a history of arrests in at least four states, including on charges of disorderly conduct, contempt of court, public intoxication, possession of a controlled substance and probation violations.

After the Saturday night news conference, Holbrook and other law enforcement officials joined a procession from the hospital. Dymock was in stable condition, the chief said. In a social media post, DeLong's wife described him as the "best dad to our babies" and said she was "living a nightmare". Holbrook said the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division would investigate the shooting, and a spokesperson for the agency said the investigation was ongoing. "I hope that our officers know that they're not alone in this. We will lean on each other in this tragic time," Holbrook said. "Let's pray for this department." The shooting left one officer dead, another injured but stable, and the suspect dead, with the investigation now under way.

TikTok video gives Indian-origin woman clue on mother missing after Nepal floods

A daughter traced her missing mother's last known location through a TikTok video posted before the Nepal floods. The clue has intensified families' search for pilgrims still missing across the border region.

Kathmandu.(Agency)

The daughter of an Indian-origin woman in the UK, who has been missing since devastating flash floods struck Nepal, has traced her mother's last known location through a TikTok video posted hours before the disaster. The floods, which struck parts of Nepal and Tibet on Wednesday, swept through valleys and villages, leaving at least 675 people dead and more than 3,000 missing. Among those unaccounted for are 33 British nationals, including a 13-year-old child, NHS workers and a priest. A UK team is due to arrive in Kathmandu on Saturday to assist with efforts. Tulshi Patel's mother, Hemangini Jitendra Patel, and her aunt, Hema Sunil Amin, were on a pilgrimage to Tibet when



GPS AND SOCIAL MEDIA HELPED TRACING

Patel, a pharmacist from Milton Keynes, said she last spoke to the women on Monday and received a photograph of them the following day. Their tour group's last known GPS location placed them at Friendship Bridge on the Nepal-China border. The family then conducted its own search online and found a TikTok video posted by a local Nepali tour guide. "We did our own deep-dive research and we found a

TikTok video that verified and showed my mum and auntie and three other people from the tour at the border waiting to cross," Patel said. The video was recorded shortly before 6 am local time on Wednesday, hours before the floods struck. Patel said the women had been expected to cross the border on Tuesday but were delayed, apparently because of weather conditions. The family has since repeatedly tried to contact the women and their tour guide through WhatsApp and other channels.