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Non-bailable warrant against LeT commander Saifullah linked to Pahalgam attack

Bengaluru(Agency)

A special NIA court in Jammu has issued a non-bailable warrant against Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba commander Saifullah, who officials said has been linked to several major terror attacks, including the April 2025 Pahalgam massacre. The NIA sought the warrant, saying he has been operating from Pakistan and providing weapons, funds and directions to terrorists in the Kashmir Valley.

Officials said Saifullah, a resident of Changa Manga village in Pakistan's Kasur, is also known by several aliases, including Sajid Jatt, Ali Bhai, Habibullah Malik, Langda, Noomi, Numan, Usman Habib and Shani. He is described as a key figure in the outfit's operations and has remained active for more than two decades. The warrant comes after the NIA busted what it described as a deep-rooted LeT module headed by Pakistani terrorist Abdullah, alias Abu Hureira. He was arrested along with another Pakistani accomplice, Usman alias Khubaib, and three local operatives early this year.

Vijay govt secures Rs 15,300-crore UK investment commitments for Tamil Nadu

Chennai. (Agency)

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay returned to Chennai on Thursday after a six-day official visit to London aimed at attracting global investments and speeding up industrial development in the state.

An official release said the visit to the United Kingdom brought in fresh investment commitments worth Rs 15,300 crore and also advanced plans for a Motor Sports City in Tamil Nadu. The agreements signed during the visit are expected to create more than 10,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Vijay left for the UK on the night of September 10 and led a state delegation



to position Tamil Nadu as a major international destination for advanced manufacturing and technology.

On September 12, Indian High Commissioner to the UK Kumaran Periasamy met the Chief Minister in London to discuss emerging trade opportunities and partnerships under the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement framework.

During the visit, Vijay also inspected the Silverstone Motor Racing Circuit as part of follow-up action on his Rule 110 announcement in the State Assembly on September 3, 2026, on setting up a Motor Sports City in Tamil Nadu. He reviewed the race control systems, track facilities, race museum, and safety and operational arrangements for long-distance racing. He also flagged off the 2026 Michelin Le Mans Cup race at Silverstone, which featured actor and racing driver Ajith Kumar.

Adoption of BRICS New Delhi Declaration shows world's trust in India: PM Modi

PM Modi said the unanimous adoption of the New Delhi Declaration at the 2026 BRICS Summit reflects the world's growing trust in India.

New Delhi (Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the unanimous adoption of the New Delhi Declaration at the 2026 BRICS Summit was a major testament to the world's growing trust in India. PM Modi made the remarks while inaugurating SEMICON India 2026 in New Delhi on his birthday on Thursday. At the 2026 BRICS Summit in New Delhi, India secured the unanimous adoption of the New Delhi Declaration following overnight negotiations aimed at resolving geopolitical gridlock between Iran and the United Arab Emirates. Prime Minister Narendra Modi turned 76 today.

Referring to India's economic performance, PM Modi said the country's quarterly GDP report was released in September and that India recorded 7.8 per cent growth despite a

challenging period. "India's quarterly GDP report was released in September itself, and even during this challenging period, India achieved 7.8 per cent growth," PM Modi said. He also said Japan's credit rating agency upgraded India's sovereign rating during the same period, describing it as a significant development that came after nearly three decades, or around 35 years.

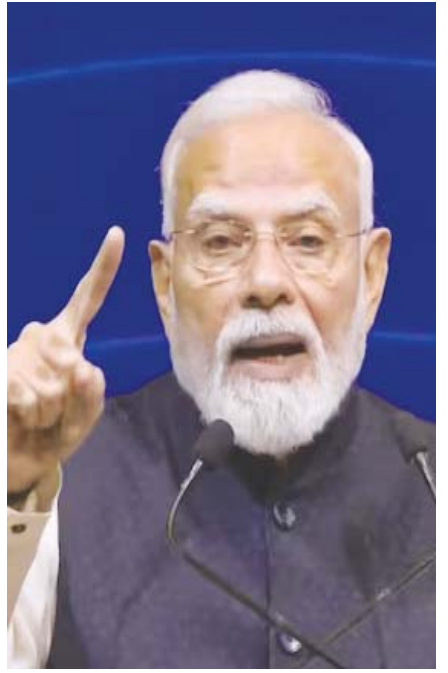
"On one hand, India's economy is growing. On the other, the world's trust in India is also increasing," PM Modi said.

He pointed to the recently concluded BRICS Summit as another example of this growing international confidence in India. The summit concluded three days ago after India hosted the grouping in New Delhi. PM Modi also highlighted other developments that took place in September. "In this very month of September, exactly 10 days ago,

the Global FinTech Fest took place in Mumbai. In it, discussions were held on inclusive finance through Agentic AI, tokenisation, and quantum technology," he said. He further said that approximately 3,000 kilometres of the Dedicated Freight Corridor in India became fully operational during the same period.

Reiterating India's economic growth, PM Modi said, "In this same time frame, in September itself, India's quarterly GDP report was released. Even in this challenging period, India achieved and demonstrated a growth rate of 7.8%."

He said the coincidence of Vishwakarma Jayanti and the launch of the PM Vishwakarma scheme reflects the blend of India's centuries-old tradition of creation and construction with 21st-century technology and vision.



Outraged Citizens and Opposition Leaders Demand Independent Anti-Corruption Bureau Probe and Strict Criminal Action

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Anand: A massive and shocking financial scandal has recently come to light within the Anand Municipal Corporation, exposing what local activists and taxpayers are calling a brazen loot of public tax money under the noble pretense of the statewide Clean City drive. According to official documents and verified files recently obtained through the Right to Information act, civic officials allegedly entered into a deeply entrenched, corrupt nexus with private contractors, engineering a high-value fraud centering entirely on the procurement of routine civic dustbins. Municipal records and audit files confirm that a staggering 1 crore of public taxpayer funds was aggressively drained from the treasury to purchase a mere 295 dustbins, raising immediate red flags among financial monitors. Blatant Flouting of Procurement Guidelines: Prices 4 to 6 Times Above Standard GeM Rates To ensure strict fiscal transparency, eliminate bureaucratic corruption, and maintain fair market competition, state and central government mandates explicitly require all urban local bodies and civic agencies to route public procurement through the centralized Government e-Marketplace portal. However, RTI revelations clearly indicate that these



mandatory statutory guidelines were systematically and intentionally bypassed by the municipal administration: Exorbitant Market Markups: Official portal data confirms that the individual dustbins were acquired at prices ranging astonishingly from 4 to 6 times higher than the standard, government-approved benchmarks clearly listed on the GeM portal. Estimated 75 Lakh Embezzlement: A detailed comparative financial audit analyzing prevailing open-market rates versus the heavily inflated invoiced amounts reveals that the actual intrinsic cost of

manufacturing and supplying the 295 dustbins was drastically lower than reported. Financial analysts and local whistleblowers estimate that approximately 75 lakh of public money was systematically siphoned off straight into private pockets through coordinated overbilling and secret kickbacks. Widespread Public Outrage, Substandard Quality, and Demands for a High-Level Probe The unearthing of this multi-million rupee scam has ignited widespread fury and indignation among local citizens, taxpayers, and opposition political leaders alike.

Beyond the glaring financial discrepancies and daylight robbery of public funds, severe concerns have been raised regarding the shockingly poor quality and durability of the expensive dustbins procured, which are reportedly already showing signs of wear. Furthermore, evidence points toward the deliberate manipulation and tailoring of tender conditions specifically designed to favor select, politically connected contractors while shutting out transparent competition. In the wake of these explosive revelations, conscious citizens, municipal watchdogs, and civic associations are demanding an immediate, impartial, and independent investigation by premier oversight bodies such as the State Vigilance Commission or the Anti-Corruption Bureau. Public pressure is mounting rapidly for strict criminal prosecution, asset seizure, and full recovery of funds from all corrupt civic officials and private agencies found culpable in this scandal. Mahanagar Metro News will continue to maintain a close watch on this developing story, publishing follow-up investigative reports as official inquiries unfold and accountability is pursued. Would you like me to add specific reactions from local political leaders or details on the exact dates these tenders were passed?

ASML begins local supply-chain push; semiconductor growth is "unfolding," says Union Minsiter Ashwini Vaishnaw

New Delhi(Agency).

India's semiconductor industry is entering its next phase of growth across manufacturing, equipment, research, talent and chip design, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said, as Dutch semiconductor equipment major ASML begins building a local supply chain in the country.

At SEMICON India 2026, several global semiconductor companies outlined investment and expansion plans in India. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw also met Wayne Allan, Executive Vice President and Chief Strategic Sourcing and Procurement Officer at Dutch semiconductor equipment major ASML Holding, who discussed the company's plans to expand its presence in the country. "We need to build a supply chain before we can do manufacturing

because we don't want to be shipping parts in for manufacturing. We want to be able to build a supply chain locally, so this is going to take some time," he said in the interaction with the



Minister. He added that ASML has started engaging with potential suppliers in India and

that the initial response has been encouraging. The company is also engaging with industry peers, including Applied Materials and Lam Research, to learn from their experience in the Indian market. "We are just getting started, so we are getting names of suppliers and starting to have those engagements now. This is quite encouraging already," Allan said. Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said Semicon 2.0 will focus on developing a skilled workforce, with plans to train one lakh technicians for semiconductor manufacturing.

"Young people who want to join the semiconductor manufacturing sector will undergo systematic training programmes aligned with industry requirements, enabling them to work in factories being established under the Semicon Mission," he said. Vaishnaw said a stable foundation has been established for India's semiconductor industry.

"Impossible to overstate your personal contribution": Putin wishes PM Modi on birthday; highlights role in strengthening Russia-India ties

The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday set aside a West Bengal Fire Services Department order directing occupants to vacate the sixth and seventh floors of a Kolkata building housing TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee's office. The court ordered a fresh inspection after considering the party's reply.

New Delhi(Agency).

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his 76th birthday and lauded his contribution to strengthening the "special and privileged strategic partnership" between India and Russia, the Russian Embassy in India said. In a post on X, sharing Putin's message, the Russian Embassy in India said that the Russian President warmly congratulated PM Modi on his 76th birthday, which falls on September 17. In the attached message, Putin said, "You are rightly enjoying a deep respect from your compatriots and great authority on the global stage. It is impossible to overstate your personal contribution to strengthening

the special and privileged strategic partnership between India and Russia." The Russian President also expressed gratitude for the welcome and hospitality extended to him and the Russian delegation during his visit to New Delhi last week.



"I would like to express my gratitude for the warm and cordial welcome and hospitality extended to me and the Russian delegation during my visit to New Delhi last week," Putin said, according to the message shared by the Russian Embassy. "The talks we held were undoubtedly substantive, frank, and productive. As always, it was a genuine pleasure to talk with you, and our discussions once again demonstrated your extraordinary political wisdom and foresight," he added.

As govt amends UPI norms, traders warn costs will pass on to customers

Noida/Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Traders across Noida, Ghaziabad and Delhi have opposed Centre's newly introduced 0.4% merchant discount rate (MDR) on specified UPI transactions above Rs 2,000, saying the charge will squeeze already-thin margins and could ultimately push businesses to pass on the cost to customers.

"The load on traders keeps growing, and it's unclear when it will ease. Customers won't feel any relief either, since every transaction above the threshold will now carry an extra charge. Earlier, MDR applied only to card payments — now UPI will attract it too," said Atul Mehra of ARM Jewellers in Sector 18. He urged govt to review the decision in the interest of traders.

Under the revised framework, effective Oct 15, MDR will apply to specified person-to-merchant (P2M) UPI transactions above Rs 2,000. The charge will be capped at Rs 300 per transaction for payments of Rs 75,000 and above. UPI payments between individuals will remain free, while merchant payments up to Rs 2,000 and eligible small merchants covered under the zero-MDR framework will remain outside the levy.

SK Jain, president of the Sector 18 Market Association, said the charge could eventually be reflected in prices even if it is not directly imposed on customers. Citing industry figures, he said UPI transactions were worth Rs 314 lakh crore last year, of which payments above Rs 2,000 accounted for Rs 207 lakh crore. "India accounts for 49% of global digital payments, with UPI facilitating 83.7% of domestic digital payments. We request govt to rethink the charges, as this could discourage digital payments," Jain said.

Brijesh Goel, chairperson of Chamber of Trade and Industry, said traders had spent years shifting customers towards digital payments. "In the past six years, we have with great difficulty brought even the smallest shopkeepers and street vendors onto UPI. Today, 90% of payments in Sadar Bazar, Chandni Chowk, Lajpat Nagar, Chawri Bazar, Kamla Nagar, Karol Bagh and Gandhi Nagar are through UPI. If MDR is imposed, it will be a setback to Digital India mission," he said.

Indirapuram residents seek fixes for frequent power outages

Noida.(Agency)

Residents of Gyan Khand and Abhay Khand in Indirapuram complained of frequent power cuts on Wednesday and throughout Tuesday, sparking frustration ahead of children's exams. The recurring outages prompted residents to raise grievances on social media, demanding immediate action and transparency on the electricity supply situation. Residents in Greater Noida, meanwhile, flagged open and damaged feeder boxes, exposed electrical cables and 33kV power lines across several sectors and urged NPCL to repair power infrastructure.

"Even after all the drama yesterday, the work remains unfinished... please have some mercy," Rashmi Singh, a resident of Gyan Khand 1, said, urging officials to expedite repairs. "More than three hours without electricity. Isn't electricity the consumers' right?" another resident, Manleen Kar, asked, stressing the need for prior warning regarding such outages.

Several residents reported hours-long outages and voltage fluctuations, demanding clarity regarding the problem. Pawan Kumar from Ghaziabad's power department PUVNL, meanwhile, said that fuse-setting work was underway in Gyan Khand 1, adding that supply would be restored as soon as the work was completed. Despite the assurances, however, residents continued to report low-voltage issues and raise concerns regarding the reliability of the electricity supply in the area. Around 1.30pm on Tuesday, Kumar told residents that the supply issues stemmed from a damaged cable box on the feeder line and that the issue would be fixed in around 15 minutes.

Class X student dies by suicide in Ghaziabad, note cites study pressure

Noida.(Agency)

A Class X student died after she allegedly jumped from the 15th floor of her home in Siddharth Vihar on Tuesday. A note recovered from her room cited extreme pressure over studies, police said. Police said on the first page of the note, she wrote, "Only doing this because of academic pressure. I don't blame anyone. I blame myself. I love you mummy papa." The 16-year-old was a student of a private school. ACP (Kotwali) Upasana Pandey said the security guards and several residents had heard a thud around 7pm on Tuesday. When they checked, they found the girl lying in a pool of blood and immediately informed police. A police team rushed the girl to a nearby hospital where doctors declared her dead.

"We received a two-page suicide note. We are also examining her call details and mobile phone. We have sent the body for autopsy and reports are awaited. The note has been sent for handwriting matching. No complaint has been made by the victim's family members," she said. President of Parent Association in Ghaziabad Vivek Tyagi told TOI academic pressure on students has become a serious concern. "Children are not just studying anymore. They seem to be constantly preparing for the next test, assessment, project or examination. The system has increasingly become a grilling process, where there is very little time to simply be a child," he said.

He added in the past, the academic calendar was comparatively less exam-driven, with major examinations at the end of the term or year. "Today, students are assessed continuously, leaving them with the feeling that they are always studying for something," he said.

Rupesh Solanki's Poetic Reflection Explores the True Essence of Love Beyond Words and Possessiveness

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Author: Rupesh Solanki, Love is a profound emotion that transcends the boundaries of ordinary language, operating on a frequency where words are entirely unnecessary. Sometimes, the genuine concern reflected in someone's eyes quietly blossoms into love, while at other times, patiently and silently waiting for someone becomes the most eloquent language of the heart. True connection does not merely mean being physically together; it also means selflessly praying for someone's happiness, success, and well-being even when you are miles apart. When a relationship is built on a foundation of deeper understanding rather than suffocating possessiveness, and holds an abundance of pure affection rather than endless complaints, love gradually and permanently makes a home in the heart. "Love is not the insistence on possessing someone; love is finding your own happiness in someone's smile." True love never seeks cheap attention, vali-



dated, or validation through public show-offs. It possesses the rare ability to read the silence of one particular person even in the middle of a chaotic, noisy crowd. When words come to a complete halt, it intuitively understands unexpressed emotions, and during life's most difficult, testing times,

it stands firmly beside you without expecting anything in return. However, navigating the landscape of modern relationships comes with its unique challenges. In today's fast-paced world, relationships frequently break and fracture because of trivial misunderstandings and a

lack of patience. We are often in an unnecessary hurry to defend and explain ourselves to others rather than pausing to truly understand their perspective. When healthy communication decreases and rigid ego increases, emotional distances begin to grow rapidly—even in situations where true love still exists beneath the surface. To keep love alive, vibrant, and enduring, grand gestures or expensive gifts are never truly necessary. What is fundamentally needed is a little patience, a little understanding, a little quality time, a lot of unshakeable trust, and an abundance of affection. Because at the very end of life's journey, it is never the material gifts or luxury items that remain etched in our memories; what truly remains is the warm, comforting feeling that someone genuinely understood us with pure, unadulterated love. Ultimately, love is the most magnificent poem of life—one that is rarely written down on paper, but is simply felt, embraced, and read deeply by the heart.

'Zindagi Once More' Makes Grand OTT Debut on ShemarooMeDharma Productions Marks Historic Entry Into Gujarati Cinema as Presenter and Distributor

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Ahmedabad: Following a highly successful and critically acclaimed theatrical run across multiplexes and single-screen cinemas throughout Gujarat, the hit emotional family drama 'Zindagi Once More', starring veteran comedy and drama icon Siddharth Randeria, is officially set to capture hearts globally on digital platforms. Following its successful theatrical release on June 19, 2026, the film is now making its exclusive and much-awaited digital premiere on the popular regional OTT platform ShemarooMe. Historic Milestone and Landmark Debut for Dharma Productions This release marks a historic milestone for Karan Johar's premier banner, Dharma Productions, as the iconic studio officially makes its grand entry into the thriving regional landscape of Gujarati cinema for the very first time as a presenter and distributor. Produced collabora-



tively by Vartaakar Films and Vasu Dholakia, the movie beautifully explores intricate family bonds, generational sacrifices, and the profound, often unexpressed emotional connection shared between a father and his son. A Poignant Tale of Second Chances and a Father's Quiet, Unyielding Strength The narrative centers around the theme of second chances in later life and highlights the silent, heavy sacrifices made by fathers that often go unnoticed. It poignantly portrays

how a dedicated father sets aside his own personal aspirations, dreams, and comforts for the secure future of his children, all while remaining a steady, unshakeable anchor for the entire family through every storm. Siddharth Randeria Shares His Deeply Moving Experience: Lead actor and regional superstar Siddharth Randeria shared his thoughts on the project, stating, "Bringing to life the quiet strength, patience, and resilience behind a father's silence was a

deeply moving and transformative experience for me as an actor. I truly hope viewers gain a renewed understanding, deeper empathy, and emotional warmth toward their own fathers after watching this heartfelt journey unfold on screen." Deep Dholakia on Uncovering a Father's Past: Actor Deep Dholakia, who plays the pivotal role of the son Shekhar—a young man who gradually uncovers the hidden chapters of his father's past—noted that the film serves as a poignant, timely reminder for younger generations to appreciate their family roots and acknowledge their father's hidden sacrifices before it is too late. A Perfect Blend of Wholesome Entertainment and Deep Emotion With ShemarooMe continuously expanding its rich library of meaningful, high-quality Gujarati content, 'Zindagi Once More' adds another stellar, t

between houses & IAF ammo depot

Gurgaon.(Agency)

The 900-metre restricted zone around Indian Air Force's ammunition depot in old Gurgaon has been almost entirely built over, with multi-storey houses standing virtually flush against the facility's boundary wall, leaving little to no buffer between habitation and a sensitive defence installation. Supreme Court on Tuesday criticised state officials for colluding with local land sharks to allow this encroachment. The depot was established in 1947. Fifteen illegal colonies have come up in the belt over the years, turning it into a dense urban pocket of kothis built cheek by jowl along narrow lanes. Residential buildings, PG accommodations, shops, schools, factories, cloud kitchens and commercial establishments now fill the zone. In several stretches, no open space separates the built-up area from the depot wall. Five- to seven-storey buildings have come up close to the installation, giving occupants elevated vantage points overlooking the depot — effectively erasing the physical buffer the restricted zone was meant to preserve. The affected pockets include

Sheetla Colony, Rajiv Nagar, Sanjay Gram, Sukhrali Enclave, Ashok Vihar Phase 3, Om Vihar, Dharma Colony, Amanpura and Caterpuri, among others. The 900-metre zone covers roughly 2,325 acres. During Tuesday's hearing, CJI Surya Kant said the no-go zone was earlier more than a kilometre and it gradually reduced to 900 metres, and even then, the illegal constructions were carried out right under the nose of the officials. "Are the encroachments not because of the collusion of govt officials with the land mafia," he asked. Surveys and govt reports put the numbers differently. An MCG survey in 2017 identified 4,156 illegal structures within this belt. Officials estimate the number has since roughly doubled. Older govt data, including in the submissions made to the high court, had put total structures at 14,154, while a more recent MCG report flagged over 5,000 unauthorised structures and more than 190 ongoing construction sites in the zone. Punjab and Haryana high court had previously held that the 900-metre strip must remain free of urbanisation, and found that authorities allowed illegal construction to proliferate there. The

court described the depot as a strategic installation where national interest could not be compromised. But govt action has repeatedly cut against this position. In 2015, Haryana filed an affidavit before the high court seeking to reduce the restricted zone from 900 to 300 metres.



In 2016, the urban local bodies department approved temporary water connections for families in the 900-metre zone, citing the difficulty of removing thousands of residents. In 2017, authorities were directed to clear encroachments within a tighter 300-metre radius. A subsequent survey found 3,346 structures there, and the high court ordered their removal. MCG sealed several under-construction buildings last

month, but a follow-up visit found many had been de-sealed and construction resumed. Hundreds of buildings are currently under construction in the zone. Residents describe a parallel civic ecosystem that has grown alongside the illegal settlement. A Sheetla Colony resident of about a decade alleged that local politicians and officials encouraged poor families to invest in construction there. "They help residents get voter cards and then use them as a vote bank during elections," he said. A woman living in the area said residents have long been promised regularisation. "They help us get water and electricity connections. Roads have been built and sewerage laid," she said. Another resident alleged that development tenders issued for adjoining areas are, in practice, executed inside the restricted zone: "Tenders are issued for development work in adjoining areas, but the actual work is carried out inside the 900-metre zone," this person said. The issue has remained politically live.

Stones thrown at mosque in Karnataka town during Ganesh immersion procession

Bengaluru (Agency).

Tension gripped Karnataka's Bhatkal town on Wednesday after unidentified persons threw stones at a mosque during a Ganesh immersion procession, damaging the building's window panes, police said. The incident took place when the procession, which started from Taland, was passing through the Ismail



Sunni Jamia Masjid and the adjoining Tajus Sunnah Arabic Madrasa on its premises. Police are investigating the circumstances surrounding the stone-throwing and efforts are underway to identify those responsible. A complaint has been registered at the Bhatkal Town Police Station by 67-year-old Abdul Alim and Shahul Amin Gawai, saying

that the window panes of the mosque and madrasa were damaged after stones were thrown at the building. Muslim community members staged a protest outside the police station, demanding the arrest of those responsible for the incident. Uttara Kannada Superintendent of Police Deepan visited Bhatkal and said police had reached the spot and would take immediate action against those responsible. "A complaint has already been registered regarding the incident. We will take immediate action on it. Police personnel have already reached the spot. We will definitely take action in this matter," Deepan said. The SP urged people gathered at the spot to disperse and allow the police to

investigate the incident. "Whoever has committed any wrongdoing, we will certainly take action against them. All we are asking is that you allow us to do our work," he said. Additional police personnel have been deployed in Bhatkal following the incident to maintain law and order.

Harpal Singh Cheema breaks silence on Dalit labourer's death, says Opposition 'conspiring to frame' him

BJP MP Tarun Chugh meets Gulzar Singh's family, says will raise the issue with Union Home Minister Amit Shah

Chandigarh (Agency).

Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema on Wednesday broke his silence over the death of Dalit labourer Gulzar Singh, accusing the Opposition parties of joining hands to "frame" him, even as BJP MP Tarun Chugh visited the bereaved family in Sangrur, demanded a CBI probe and said he would take up the case with Union Home Minister Amit Shah. With the Opposition parties also demanding Cheema's resignation, the minister said he had "enough evidence" to counter the allegations. "I have enough evidence. I do not want to bring out that evidence now as an investigation is currently underway. Let the investigation be completed," Cheema told reporters. "I will reply to each leader when the time comes and will show the people how they are playing politics over dead bodies," he said. Cheema's remarks came soon after Chugh reached Toor Banjara village in Sangrur's Dirba to meet Gulzar's family. Calling the death "deeply disturbing", Chugh later said the family told him they were still facing pressure and intimidation. Chugh said he would seek an investigation by a central agency and place the family's allegations

before Amit Shah. Gulzar died on September 7 after allegedly consuming poison. His family has alleged that he was harassed and subjected to casteist slurs after he questioned Cheema about the availability of drugs in his area at an event a day earlier. A purported video recorded by Gulzar before his death, in which he spoke about having questioned the minister, has since



become a central point of the Opposition's campaign against Cheema. "The central question is whether raising a complaint against drugs has itself become a crime under the Bhagwant Mann government," Chugh said after meeting the family. He said allegations that Gulzar was subjected to pressure and

intimidation, and that he was not provided timely medical assistance after his suicide attempt, required a "thorough and impartial investigation". The family, Chugh said, had informed him that Gulzar was taken from one place to another for several hours after the suicide attempt. He asked the family to give details of the alleged pressure and intimidation in writing so that these could be submitted to the Union Home Minister.

Chugh also demanded Cheema's resignation and registration of cases against all those named by Gulzar in his purported final video. In Fazilka, Punjab BJP president Kewal Singh Dhillon said the state was facing a serious drug problem and its impact was not confined to the youth alone, as entire families were being affected. "Someone's son, someone's brother, someone's husband and someone's father is falling prey to drugs. The stories of families devastated by drugs are deeply disturbing," Dhillon said. Gulzar's death is being investigated by a special investigation team constituted by the Punjab Police. Cheema, meanwhile, said Gulzar's family's original statement was already in the public domain. "People have seen it and know the facts surrounding the matter," he said.

Maharashtra to survey crop losses next month, give aid to drought-hit farmers

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said his government will start crop loss surveys after October 5 and release state aid to farmers before NDRF relief arrives. The announcement comes as drought-like conditions deepen across Marathwada.

Chhatrapatisambhajinagar (Agency).

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday said the state government will carry out crop loss surveys after October 5 and provide financial help to farmers from its own funds while it waits for support from the National Disaster Response Fund. He said the government had already begun preparations for the surveys as large parts of the state face a drought-like situation due to inadequate rainfall. Speaking after attending the flag-hoisting ceremony for Hyderabad Muktsangram Din in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, Fadnavis also announced a waiver of pending farm electricity bills worth Rs 48,000 crore and outlined plans linked to water supply, industrial expansion and road infrastructure in the Marathwada region. Fadnavis said Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule had already flagged a drought-like situation in 18 districts, with nearly half of Maharashtra's farmers affected. "I assure farmers that the government will stand firmly with them during this



crucial time. We will provide all possible assistance. We have to conduct the panchanama (crop loss assessment) after October 5 as per the rules, but we have already begun preparations. Farmers will receive assistance from the NDRF, but before that, the government will provide aid from its own funds," he said.

He said the eight-district Marathwada region had faced development challenges for years and was now going through a drought year. "Earlier, we thought the crops would grow well this year. However, the lack of rainfall has resulted in crop losses, and farmers are in distress," he said. According to a government report, Dharashiv district, formerly known as Osmanabad, did

not receive rain for 80 days, which could lead to crop losses of 80 per cent to 85 per cent. The district collectorate said the lack of rain had caused severe moisture stress during the key flowering and pod formation stages, affecting grain development and grain filling. It also said farmers were feeding dried plants from their fields to cattle. Fadnavis said the government had made arrangements to deal with possible shortages of fodder and drinking water. "There is a possibility of fodder and drinking water shortages, but the government has made the necessary arrangements to address these issues. Marathwada has the largest number of beneficiaries under the Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar loan waiver scheme. The government is providing free electricity to farmers," he said.

At the event, the Chief Minister paid tribute to those who fought for the liberation of the erstwhile Hyderabad State. India became independent on August 15, 1947, but the Marathwada region was freed from the Nizam's rule 13 months later.

Goondas Act can't be used as tool of oppression by bureaucrats: Allahabad HC

Prayagraj (Agency).

The Allahabad High Court has said the Uttar Pradesh Control of Goondas Act, 1970, is being used as a tool of oppression by bureaucrats and the state government, despite the court's consistent rulings on the issue. It warned that the bureaucracy must stop issuing illegal and arbitrary orders or face punitive damages. The court awarded Rs 50,000 in damages to petitioner Abhishek Tyagi, against whom proceedings under the Goondas Act had been initiated. It also said the state government was free to recover the amount from the salaries of the bureaucrats concerned. In an order dated September 10, Justice Sandeep Jain allowed Tyagi's petition challenging the proceedings initiated against him under the Act. The court quashed the orders passed by the Additional Commissioner of Police, Ghaziabad, and the Commissioner, Meerut Division. Proceedings against Tyagi had been started on the basis of two criminal cases. By an order dated September 18, 2025, the ACP, Ghaziabad, had directed Tyagi to stay at his permanent address and mark his attendance at the police station concerned on every second and fourth Saturday for six months. His appeal against that order was later dismissed by the Commissioner, Meerut Division, on December 10, 2025. The court said that despite its consistent view that a person cannot be branded a "goonda" merely on the basis of one or two cases, the bureaucracy had "deliberately not noticed this" and

The Allahabad High Court cancelled Goondas Act proceedings against Abhishek Tyagi and awarded him Rs 50,000. It said the law was being used oppressively and warned officials against arbitrary orders.

was continuing to pass contrary orders. "Moreover, there is a gap of 3 years in the occurrence of the two criminal cases which shows that he is not a



habitual offender," the court added. It then observed, "It is apparent that the Act of 1970 is being used as a tool of oppression by the bureaucracy and the State which is contrary to the objects of the Act of 1970." The court further said the time had come for a strong message to be sent to the bureaucracy to stop such conduct or face punitive damages.

13 years after Jhiram Valley massacre, 10 Maoist convicts get death penalty

A special NIA court in Chhattisgarh's Jagdalpur sentenced 10 Maoist convicts to death over the 2013 Jhiram Valley massacre, which killed 27 people, including Congress leaders.

Raipur (Agency).

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Wednesday welcomed a special NIA court's decision to award the death penalty to all 10 convicts in the 2013 Jhiram Valley Maoist attack case, calling it a "victory of justice". Former Chief Minister Bhopesh Baghel, however, termed the punishment "incomplete justice" and said those who masterminded the massacre were still free.

A special NIA court in Jagdalpur sentenced the 10 convicted Maoists,



including two women, to death in the 13-year-old case in which 27 people, including senior Congress leaders, were killed. The court had convicted the accused on September 5 and reserved its order on the quantum of punishment for Wednesday. In a post on X, Sai said the Jhiram Valley massacre was a painful chapter in Chhattisgarh's history and that memories of the tragedy would continue to cause pain. "We lost senior leaders of the state, security personnel and common citizens in this horrific communist violence," he said. "The death sentence

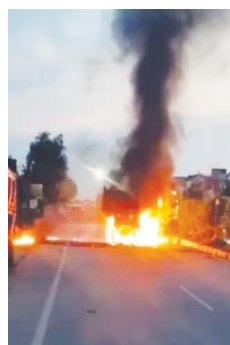
awarded by the Jagdalpur NIA court to the 10 Maoists found guilty in the case is a victory of justice. The NIA also deserves appreciation for taking the investigation to its logical conclusion," Sai said. He also said Chhattisgarh had been freed from armed Maoist insurgency under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and that Bastar, once affected by Left-Wing Extremism, was moving towards peace, trust and development. The Chief Minister also said, "This is also a moment for introspection, especially for those who engage in politics over the bodies of tribals and who provide intellectual and ideological support to terror. 'Urban Naxals', too, must realise the consequences of sheltering or abetting terror for vested interests are invariably catastrophic for everyone. The monster of terror battles against Indian democracy, the Constitution, and respects no ideological or territorial boundaries." He added, "I bow to the souls of all those who lost their lives in that brutal Jhiram attack. A humble tribute." Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma, who holds the Home portfolio, said the verdict showed the NIA investigation had been carried out thoroughly. Speaking to reporters in Kawardha, he said the death sentence was awarded after the court considered the evidence collected by the agency. "Today, it has become clear that the NIA conducted the investigation with great effort and sincerity," he said.

Teen dies after being hit by dumper in UP's Gorakhpur, locals set vehicle ablaze

Soon after the accident, a large number of villagers gathered at the spot and, in an angry reaction, set the dumper ablaze. The incident heightened tensions in the area.

Gorakhpur (Agency).

A 17-year-old boy was killed after being hit by a dumper while crossing the road in the Gorakhpur district on Wednesday, following which angry villagers set the vehicle on fire. The incident took place in the district's Naharapur area, where the teenager was crossing the road when he was run over by the dumper. He died on the spot.



Soon after the accident, a large number of villagers gathered at the spot and, in an angry reaction, set the dumper ablaze. The incident heightened tensions in the area. On receiving information about the accident, the local police reached the spot and brought the situation under control. The police took the teenager's body into custody and initiated the necessary legal proceedings. Police said they were gathering details about the circumstances that led to the accident and were also trying to ascertain the identity and whereabouts of the dumper driver. The police are also questioning villagers in connection with the burning of the dumper. Further details about the incident are awaited.

Kerala power cuts to continue for now, relief likely in coming days: Minister

Thiruvananthapuram (Agency).

Kerala Electricity Minister Sunny Joseph on Wednesday indicated that power cuts in the state will continue for now, though he said the situation could improve in the coming days. He said he could not give a clear date for when normal supply would resume. Speaking to reporters, Joseph said there would be some relief as 250 MW under a 'swap arrangement' was ending on

pushed up demand for electricity across India, and that many states, including Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, were facing a crisis. Joseph said many states or companies were willing to provide more power during the day, when Kerala did not need it, and less during the night, while charging the same rate for both. "That will not receive the approval of the regulatory commission," he said.



Wednesday. He added, "By the end of September, the remaining 250MW of the swap arrangement will also come to an end." The minister said the government was making every effort to restore normalcy and buy power, with Chief Minister VD Satheesan speaking to various states for electricity supply. He said a shortage of coal, lower power generation and higher consumption had

He also said the government had planned to commission some battery energy storage projects in October, but the companies handling the work had not yet received the required machinery from China and had sought more time. "We have not yet granted them the extension and have directed them to bring the machinery on an urgent basis," Joseph said.

Need to recognise light at the end of the tunnel

Kerala Chief Minister V D Satheesan recently stated that a new dam at Mullaperiyar alone can resolve the state's safety concerns over the age-old structure. He was only reiterating the public stance taken by previous Kerala governments. The state of Tamil Nadu, on the other hand, has been opposing the proposal throughout.

The idea may be found unfeasible even on the grounds of ecology, economy or practicality. Let it be assumed that the gravity masonry dam poses a potential threat to Keralites on account of its age and fragility. Just because some earlier expert bodies had confirmed the dam's safety, it may not stand as an eternal guarantee. Yet, if a new dam is to be constructed for that reason alone, it might result in a technological fallacy.

Given that the average life-span of such a dam is considered to be about 100 years, Kerala would need to construct new dams at such gaps in the time to come. This will have to be done at an ecologically-sensitive area in the Periyar wildlife sanctuary. Environmental clearance for such a project would be extremely difficult. "No more dams" and "Damn the dams" were the slogans of environmental movements across the world towards the end of the last century. Ecologist Patrick McCully's classic work, *Silenced Rivers: The Ecology and Politics of Large Dams*, shows the devastating impact of large dams.

Now, Kerala is willing to supply water to Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu, for itself, does not want to perpetuate any threat to its neighbour. These positions of the respective governments are in the public domain. Given this, it should not be difficult to swiftly resolve the interstate dispute over the dam and the water level, provided that the Chief Ministers of the states, along with their governments, act in a statesmanlike manner.

The Supreme Court's judgement regarding the Mullaperiyar dam in Tamil Nadu vs Kerala (2014) is significant. This was an original suit filed by Tamil Nadu under Article 131 of the Constitution challenging the amendment brought in by the Kerala legislature by way of Irrigation and Water Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2006. This law fixed the dam's water level at a height of 136 feet, reasoning that a higher level would run the risk of endangering the dam and, consequently, the people in Kerala. Tamil Nadu contended that this unilateral fixation of height by way of legislation goes against the earlier Supreme Court judgement in its favour in 2006. The 2006 law also empowered the authority designed by it to suspend or restrict the functioning of the dam or even to decommission it. Tamil Nadu contended that it was a "legislative judgement" that overturned the Supreme Court's 2006 judgement that held that a water level up to 142 feet is safe. In the 2014 judgement, the Supreme Court declared that the law passed by Kerala is unconstitutional. The state was restrained from invoking the law to interfere with any of the rights conferred on Tamil Nadu regarding the dam. The Supreme Court, however, constituted a committee chaired by a representative of the Central Water Commission and consisting of one representative each from Tamil Nadu and Kerala. This was done to address Kerala's concerns over dam safety. The Supreme Court, in this judgement, did something more. It said that "any amicable resolution of the present dispute between the two states would have been really good for the people of these states but this has not been possible as the two states have sharp conflict over the subject matter and their stance is rigid, inflexible and hard". In essence, the judgement was an appeal to future statesmanship on both sides and this could turn out as a judicial prescription of solution based on the expert committee's recommendation. In paragraph 214 of the judgement, the court suggested a complete solution to the Mullaperiyar issue—one that would address the safety concerns of Keralites on the one hand and fulfil Tamil Nadu's need for the water on the other. The court laid out a formula: "Digging of a new tunnel, at say, 50 feet (from earth level), of course after conducting surveys, designs and techno-economic feasibility studies, with requisite sluice gates for evacuation of reservoir water from 106.5 feet to say 50 feet (from earth level)". It went on.

School education has lost its way

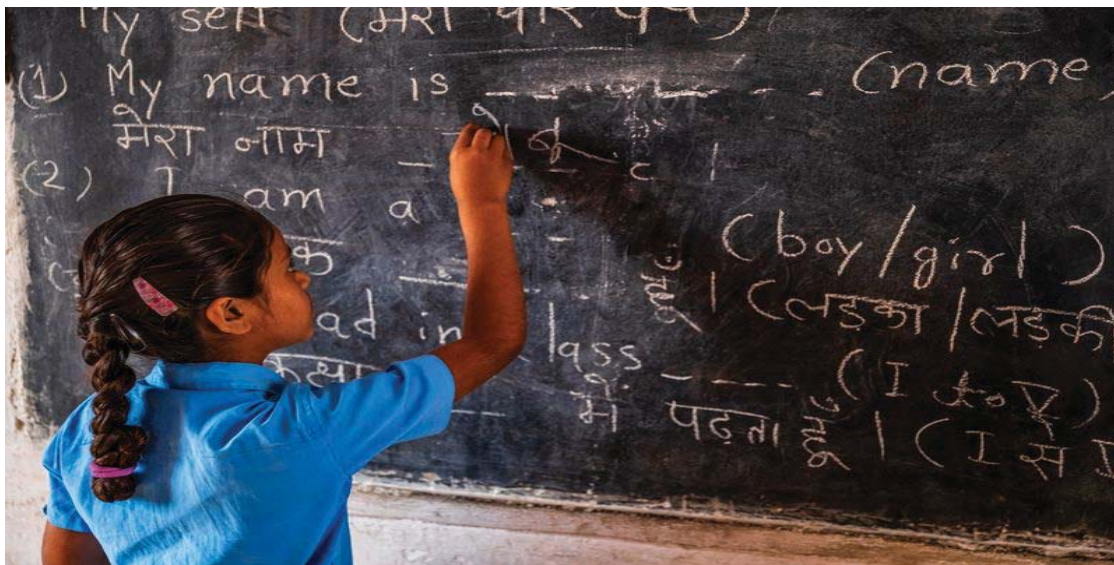
Cluster, block and district-level institutions face acute staff shortage and systemic exhaustion

SCHOOL infrastructure has once again claimed some space in the media. The last time it stayed in the news long enough to matter was in the mid-1980s, when a sensitive education secretary at the Centre put into effect Operation Blackboard. The idea was to enable primary schools to have the minimum requirements for practising active pedagogy. It was the first time that plastic globes, tablas and children's literature found a place in the supply list for primary schools. Small scissors and hand-held magnifying lenses were still not regarded as necessary and binoculars were light years away. Much has changed over the last 40 years, but small children are not supposed to learn by doing much with their hands as they used to in the 'basic' schools of the post-Independence era. Computers and AI are priorities. The news that European nations have banned them in elementary classes has not filtered down to state-level policymakers.

Radical expansion of the system occurred under the auspices of two flagship programmes: DPEP (District Primary Education Programme) and SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan). DPEP was launched in 1994 in response to an increasing social demand and a global consensus that also brought funds. It was followed by a more carefully planned SSA, which later became a vehicle for the implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act.

Both these programmes resulted in a massive growth of enrolment, retention and infrastructure. Dream-like decentralised governance featured cluster, block and district-level institutions — CRCs (cluster resource centres), BRCs (block resource centres), DIETs (district institutes of education and training) — to support pedagogic effort. Today, these structures face acute staff shortage and systemic exhaustion. Recent news reports about Punjab show that DIETs are running with less than half their staff strength. New officials don't remember what exactly the cluster and block-level resource centres were meant for. This is nothing unusual. Civil servants come and go, programmes carry on. The newly appointed have little time to read old reports. Once I asked an MEd student to find out how many officers serving the Directorate of Education in New Delhi were familiar with reports written over the previous decade. In her survey, just one elderly officer showed signs of vague familiarity with these reports. The rest said they had no time to read. Little wonder that no one involved in elementary education remembers the Anil Bordia committee report. It was an attempt to consolidate the gains of SSA.

A seasoned and distinguished bureaucrat, the late Bordia was the architect of Operation Blackboard. He knew that the old directorates were in no mood to own and sustain the innovations of SSA. After all, it was a mission, with



project-style funding and implementation, implying expedited procedures to meet deadlines. When its growth began to slow down, the structures created under its auspices had no state guardianship left. The committee headed by Bordia went into minute details in order to present a blueprint for "harmonising" colonial-era directorates with SSA's mission-mode attainments. It is a brilliant report, but no one reads it now. Schools with locked libraries, outcome-driven testing and teacher shortages are back. Adding to the children's woes, many teachers are away on SIR (Special Intensive Revision) duty. From teacher recruitment to construction work and school supplies, SSA created a parallel system. It was exciting to watch its progress, even as one knew that when SSA ended, an uneasy mix of old and new practices would stymie the system. That is precisely what happened. After the passage of the RTE Act, SSA began to slow down and eventually it was merged into the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, which was meant to cover secondary, not just primary, education, with stingier funding for the latter. The growth of private schools and the introduction of English-medium teaching without adequate pedagogic support led to new distortions. Sporadic reports in recent weeks have drawn public attention to the condition of schools in many parts of the country. Although these reports are patchy, they indicate that children's education is not in good health. Recruitment of teachers is sluggish, and multiple cadres persist because appointments made under DPEP and SSA have not been regularised. The problem of staff shortage in schools has become chronic,

and is further exacerbated by deployment of teachers for "official" duties like SIR. No one in authority worries about the impact a teacher's absence from school has on children's learning. The RTE law was supposed to inaugurate a new chapter in India's social history. The chapter did open up new, unprecedented vistas — like reservation for the poor in private schools — but older tendencies proved tenacious. Many factors weakened the RTE's implementation, especially the clauses covering quality. These clauses depended on the quality of training institutions. An overwhelming majority of them are privately owned and the government's regulatory authority could not control their ways.

The JS Verma Commission's sharp report on teacher training institutes now spends its peaceful afterlife on the Internet. In any case, the focus has shifted to maintenance of showpieces and shiny islands. The system has acquiesced to the wider culture of competition that merges into coaching for coveted courses. This ecology cares little for the vast majority. Historically, this is not new, but it is a disappointing reversal to the pre-RTE cultural ethos. Globally, too, it shows that our trajectory has little to do with viksit countries. Even in an absolutely basic matter like the importance of maintaining a regular teaching routine, we prefer the event-management model. Frequent holidays and official duties don't allow teachers to focus on teaching. School closures are common. The BRICS dignitaries won't know that Delhi schools were closed during their visit.

Law must keep apace as deepfake quality and quantity zoom

Non-consensual or unauthorised creation of replicas of another person's image, voice, or any biometric identity through AI must be criminalised irrespective of what's being done with it. The legal approach must be more preventive in nature than reactive

An AI-generated video in which Kerala Chief Minister V D Satheesan is seen dancing along with Kerala State Electricity Board employees has created a brouhaha with implications far beyond the state. By the time Instagram owner Meta pledged on Monday to restrict access to the video, it had been seen by crores of users; copies of it are still attracting views online. It has been shared at a time the state is reeling under a severe power shortage.

Satheesan declared his surprise and shock at the near-perfect rendition in the artificially-created video. He even made light of it, saying his AI avatar danced better than actor Mohanlal and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay. Jokes apart, the incident refocuses attention on an increasingly pertinent question: are Indian laws keeping up with ever-evolving AI usage?

The Kerala CM is the latest in a long line of Indian public figures whose deepfakes have confused, entertained and enraged viewers at the same time. It did not help when some official X handles of the BJP and the Congress



recently shared objectionable morphed images of each other's leaders. Such actions, much like Donald Trump sharing his own deepfakes, validate felonious behaviour to credulous netizens. Though the legal framework addressing deepfakes has evolved, including rules promulgated earlier this year mandating their clear

labelling and faster takedown, implementation remains constrained. While Section 66C of the Information Technology Act, 2000 punishes identity theft, Section 66D punishes cheating by digital personation. To be considered a crime, both require intent to defraud or an act of cheating. Thus, the law mainly focuses on punishing the consequences of deepfakes without directly criminalising the initial act of using someone's face, voice or identity without consent. Mischief and misinformation can flourish in the gap. An opportunity to change course is coming up at the Supreme Court, which has recently issued notice to transfer all deepfake regulation cases across the country to itself. Non-consensual or unauthorised creation of replicas of another person's image, voice, or any biometric identity through AI must be criminalised irrespective of what's being done with it. The legal approach must be more preventive in nature than reactive. It must be recognised that the theft of identity is wrongful in itself.

Why it's vital to win the tech war

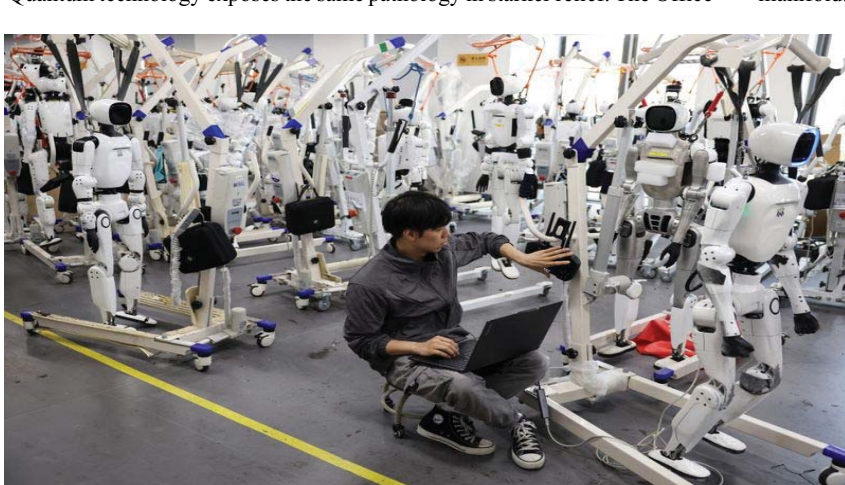
India's outlays for critical technologies lag far behind spending by China and the US

CHINESE President Xi Jinping is scheduled to visit Washington DC on September 24 amid calls from industry majors for "pacing the frontier" of artificial intelligence (AI), even as Beijing has accused the US of scaremongering aimed at curbing its lead in AI technologies. The two countries are locked in a contest for technological primacy, one in which China's humanoid robots are eclipsing champion sprinter Usain Bolt's benchmarks. This spectacle is the visible tip of an iceberg of State capacity and capital mobilisation that has allowed Beijing to seize the lead in 69 of the 74 critical and emerging technologies, according to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute's Critical Technology Tracker.

Critical technologies are defined as current and emerging technologies with the capacity to significantly enhance — or pose a risk to — a country's interests, including its economic prosperity, social cohesion and national security. Amid this tech race, where does India stand, and can it still stake a credible claim to Industry 4.0 before the window closes?

Beginning with AI, the technology now consuming capital at a pace without precedent in economic history, the Union Budget 2026 allocated roughly Rs 10,000 crore (about \$1.05 billion) to the IndiaAI Mission over five years, with the actual fiscal-year earmark being Rs 1,000 crore. Private pledges of over \$250 billion by 2035, announced with fanfare at the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi this February, sound impressive — until they are set against what Beijing and Washington are doing in real time. China has unveiled a 2-trillion yuan (about \$295 billion) national AI infrastructure plan for the next five years alone. The US' AI investment is set to reach 2% of GDP in 2026 itself and account for more than 80% of this year's \$800-billion global AI spending, according to TS Lombard, a buildout that might eclipse even the Gilded Age's Railway Mania as the largest infrastructure project in American history. Bridgewater Associates, Goldman Sachs and Lombard Odier converge on similar figures, placing US AI infrastructure spending in the range of \$650-800 billion or 2-2.5% of GDP. American private AI investment alone reached \$285.9 billion in 2025, more than 23 times China's \$12.4 billion. The next highest-spending nations, Norway and Saudi Arabia, will each spend merely 0.7% of GDP on AI this year; China's data-centre spending is approximately 0.4% of GDP, behind Malaysia and

Sweden. The World Economic Forum's ranking of historical AI investment as a share of GDP from 2010 to 2024 places India at the eighth position among 11 countries surveyed, with a range of just 1.2-1.8% of the 2024 GDP, against China's 1.7-2.6% and America's formidable 3.4-5.1%.



of the Principal Scientific Adviser's ITES report from April last year concedes that China's National Natural Science Foundation leads in all four domains of quantum science research funding, and in quantum computing specifically commands a leadoff roughly 2:1 over the US National Science Foundation. Global government funding figures make the disparity vivid: China, an estimated \$15.3 billion; Germany, \$5.2 billion; the UK, \$4.3 billion; the US federal figure, \$4.1 billion; France, \$1.3 billion; the EU, \$1.08 billion; and India, \$735 million — unable even to breach the billion-dollar threshold. India's National Quantum Mission, with its Rs 6,000-crore (around \$0.7 billion) outlay spread across eight years, is dwarfed not only by

China's roughly \$15-billion commitment — nearly double the EU's \$8.4 billion and more than four times the US government spending of about \$3.7 billion — but also by Japan's single-year commitment of \$7.4 billion in 2025. Germany, Britain, France and the Netherlands all outspend India manifold. Semiconductors follow the identical arc of asymmetry. The US CHIPS and Science Act authorises about \$280 billion to anchor domestic research and manufacturing. China's Integrated Circuit Industry Investment Fund, across its three successive phases, has amassed cumulative assets under management approaching \$100 billion, with the third phase alone accounting for around \$47 billion. India's semiconductor mission, spanning two phases, carries a total fiscal outlay of Rs 2.03 lakh crore (about \$21 billion). Critical minerals, the feedstock without which none of this technological architecture can be built, present an even more structurally disadvantageous picture for India. China has invested upwards of \$24 billion in lithium, cobalt and nickel operations spanning Chile, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Indonesia and Myanmar, from which it now sources 80-95% of its imports of these key minerals, creating a deep, mutually reinforcing dependency. For instance, the DRC supplies nearly 95% of China's cobalt. The International Energy Agency's Global Critical Minerals Outlook 2025 found that China is the leading refiner in 19 of the 20 strategic minerals, with an average market share of 70%, a processing chokehold that even Washington — spending at warp speed with the full weight of allied coordination — will take years to loosen. India's National Critical Minerals Mission, with its Rs 34,300-crore (nearly \$3.6 billion) outlay over seven years to secure supply chains for 30 vital minerals, faces the daunting challenge of catching up with an adversary that has spent two decades locking up global supply. In genomics and biotechnology, the story is repeated with a different vocabulary. India's genomics market, projected to reach \$1.86 billion by 2033 at a 16.6% compound annual growth rate.

Relationships

5 ways to get back to normal life after having a

Baby

Having babies is surely one of the best experiences in the world, as they say, there's no greater feeling than motherhood.

However, with parenthood, come responsibilities, most of which cannot be shared. Mothers have to invest a great deal of time and energy with the newborn, while fathers feel to have been ignored by their wives. Here's how you can strike a balance and live life your way, even after babies.

Go out on coffee or dinner dates with your spouse

Make sure you do not give up on spending quality time with your spouse, as the newborn will take up a lot of your time. Making it a routine won't be possible since kids don't have a fixed routine either, but you can

always sneak out for a while, when he/she is asleep. You can always use your balcony as a perfect setting for long night chats over coffee, or a cozy candlelight dinner whenever you have reliable help to take care of your kid for a while.

Catch up on some gossip while shopping with your girlfriends

Nothing beats an afternoon of shopping followed by loads of juicy gossip over sumptuous lunch. It doesn't have to be dragged for hours, even three- four hours of outing with your friends will rejuvenate you. You must understand that although taking care of your baby is

important, it is equally important for you to stay fresh and excited about motherhood, than being tired and hassled.

Never think of giving up your career

After a maternity break, you wouldn't feel like joining back soon since your baby needs you a lot this time, you can try working from home. If your employer is considerate enough, you can opt for a work-from-home set up, if not take up some freelance assignments. Your career is your high-point, even if you are a woman; get out of home and look at new opportunities.

Make your baby nanny and

grandparent-friendly

This will prove to be of great help, since the kid won't be too dependent on you, which will ensure you have enough time for yourself. Moreover, he/she would also learn values from the grandparents. This will also help you when you start working full-time or have to go on social outings without your baby.

Indulge in quality 'me' time

Do anything you love, read, listen to music, yoga or simply 'do nothing'. Spend enough time, just for yourself, this will help you de-clutter and start afresh. Indulge in 'me' time more often, since a happy you will keep everyone around happy.

Kids with disability don't affect couple's Divorce Risk

Couples raising a child with developmental disabilities do not face a higher risk of divorce, especially if they have larger families, as compared to those couples raising typically developing kids, new research has found.

Parenting a child with a developmental disability involves challenges and rewards that are unique to each family and prior research has shown that parents of a child with a developmental disability tend to experience greater marital stress compared to peers raising typically developing children. As a result, there has been "a conception that, in general, parents of children with disabilities are more likely to experience divorce, and we wanted to test that assumption", said first author of the study Eun Ha Namkung from University of Wisconsin-Madison, in the US. The team used data from the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study that has been following more than 10,000 men and women who graduated from

Wisconsin high schools in 1957 and some of their siblings for more than 50 years.

The researchers found that about 22 percent of parents with a child with developmental disability experienced divorce over the span of the study.

They also found that among couples with children without any disabilities, the risk of divorce was lowest for couples with one child and increased with each successive child.

In contrast, the risk of divorce for parents of children with developmental disabilities remained unchanged with increasing family size.

"Our results clearly show that the effects of having additional children are different for families of individuals with developmental disabilities compared to the effects on the general population," said Namkung. He suggested that "other children in the family may be a vital support system for parents coping with the care of a child with a developmental disability".



How to have a pet-friendly Diwali

While you might be planning on having a blast during Diwali, it's your pet who will suffer from all the noise pollution during the festival.

No matter how happy-go-lucky your pet is, he or she will end up hiding somewhere in the house for fear of those noisy crackers. This Diwali, ensure that you take care of your pets so that they stay protected.

Stay Around them

One of the best means to make pets feel comfortable is to not leave them alone as the sudden noise caused by firecrackers can scare them or cause discomfort. Anchal Animesh Devjani, who has two Labradors, of two months old each, said, "My pets are still young, so I am going to take special care of them. In our colony other residents also have pets, so we are going to take special care not to burst crackers inside the colony premises and will avoid creating any unnecessary noise that would alarm our pets. Even the children in our society will be using only phuljhadi or a chakri." Supriya Pathak, another dog lover who owns three pets — one German Shepherd, one Labrador and one Pomeranian, said, "We have an underground room in our apartment specially constructed for the dogs. During a festival like Diwali, we take them to this room where we have a play area built for them. Either someone from my family or I always takes care of them." Rashmi Raja who owns a six-year-old pug, said, "A festive day like Diwali also means one has to be more attentive towards one's pet."



For my pet's sake There are some people who prefer a cracker-free Diwali. Pradeep Tiwari who owns a three and a half year old German Shepherd, said, "Ever since Sheru became part of our family, we have not burst crackers in order to ensure that he is comfortable. We keep the windows closed to create a protected environment and never leave him unattended." Meghna Kumar who owns a Pomeranian, said, "My Pom, Goli, is very disciplined. She feels comfortable with my mom and stays with her during the festive period. However we only buy a packet of phuljhadi and chakri so that our pet is not hassled by the noise. In fact Goli sits besides my mom while we burst the crackers. We ensure that she remains at a specific distance to avoid accidents."

Feed them and keep them in a protected room

Most festivals bring in lot of engagements that might lead to pets staying unattended at times. So it is essential to ensure that the pet does not starve while you are busy attending to guests. Dr Parag Pandya, a veterinary surgeon, said, "It's better to feed the pet ahead of the celebrations. Pets are not habituated to sudden loud noises and are taken by surprise on occasions like Diwali. Pets should be fed in a room where windows are closed so that they have no fear of loud noise. It is advisable to allow pets to get acquainted with the surroundings."

A new study has found that kids from high socioeconomic background are more likely to rely on parental help as adults.

Author Anna Manzoni of the North Carolina State University said that she wanted to know how young adults become independent of their parents, adding that she ended up focusing on what he called 'partial independence,' when people don't live with their parents but still get financial support from them.

In the study, Manzoni looked at data on 6,471 people between 18 and 32 who participated in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health and found that 41.4 percent of the participants who were between the ages of 25 and 32 when the study conducted its most recent interviews in 2008 still relied on financial support from parents.

Manzoni said that those who attended four-year colleges and those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds were much more likely to be partially independent in their early 20s.

However, people who attended college were more likely to become financially independent as they reached their late 20s and early 30s.

She said that this was especially true for people who paid their own way through college, adding people whose parents supported them financially throughout college were also more likely to move back in with their parents at some point.



Kids from wealthy families more dependent on Parents



Dad's diet key to wellbeing of

A dad's diet before they conceive could be genetically passed onto the children, with a subsequent impact on those childrens' mental health, the team from Melbourne-based RMIT University reported.

While mothers' diet and impact on children has been widely



Offspring

researched, this is believed to be the first time the behavioural and hormonal effects of the male diet on offspring has been studied.

During the study, lead researcher and professor Antonio Paolini allowed male rats to eat abundant amounts of food and compared them to those with access to 25 percent fewer calories in their diet.

"Even though the fathers had no contact with their offspring and the mother's behaviour remained relatively unchanged, the offspring of the food-limited rats were lighter, ate less and showed less evidence of anxiety," he noted.

The differences appeared to be 'epigenetic', meaning the younger rats' genes functioned differently as a result of their fathers' experience.

"The results suggest that the diet of one generation may affect the next," Paolini pointed out.

Reduced calories may sharpen survival instincts, making animals less anxious and more adventurous in the way they explore their environment.

The kind of food your father relished may have a direct impact on your health and overall wellbeing, according to new research.

The environmental factors could also have an effect on sperm production in men in the days leading up to conception, posing an additional risk to the health of their children.

"This makes it important for both mothers and fathers to consider their environment and things such as diet, alcohol consumption and smoking, before conceiving," the authors noted.



Even if your five-year-old kid does not know what money can buy for him or her, the moment he or she gets to know the value of it, chances are the knowledge may make him or her less philanthropic in nature, says an interesting research.

In other words, the act of handling money makes young children work harder and give less.

This effect was observed in children who lacked the concrete knowledge of money's purpose and persisted despite the denomination of the money.

"Money is a double-edged sword. It produces good outcomes in terms of concentration and effort but bad outcomes when it comes to helping, taking, and donating," said professor Kathleen Vohs from the University of Minnesota and co-author of the study.

For this, the researchers conducted five experiments and one study involving 550 children (ages three-six) in Poland and the US.

In one experiment, the children were asked to either sort

Learning value of money may make kids less kind



money or buttons before completing a challenging puzzle.

After sorting money or buttons, the pre-schoolers were asked to help the experimenter prepare a task for another child.

The children who had sorted money were less helpful in terms of gathering crayons for the experimenter than those who had first handled buttons.

An additional study tested whether candy might elicit a similar response to money.

After sorting money, buttons or candy, the children were informed that they could take up to six Disney stickers.

All of the children who sorted money took at least three stickers, whereas only 78 percent of children who sorted candies and 76 percent who sorted buttons took as many.

The children were then told they could give some of their stickers to other children who did not participate.

Kids who sorted money prior to receiving their stickers donated half as many stickers compared to kids who sorted buttons or candy.

"Our findings with children as young as three years old suggest potentially significant implications for achievement, generosity, and interpersonal harmony," added Lan Chaplin, associate professor of marketing at the University of Illinois.

According to Vohs, the results with children mirror patterns from European, Asian and North American adult samples.

Multi-state ED raids in Ranchi RSS office attack case, Shehzad Bhatti Network under lens

The ED conducted raids in Delhi and three states in the Ranchi RSS office attack case and examined the accused's suspected links to the Shahzad Bhatti network. The action followed the Centre's decision to declare the Bhatti Network a terrorist organisation under UAPA.

Delhi. (Agency)

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday conducted searches in Delhi, Bihar, Jharkhand and Karnataka as part of a money laundering investigation linked to the June petrol bomb attack on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) office in Ranchi, officials said. The searches were carried out by the ED's Delhi zone under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The agency's investigation stems from a National Investigation Agency (NIA) case relating to the attack on the RSS office in Ranchi's Nivaranpur area. Officials said the ED is also probing the money laundering network of Pakistan-based terrorist Shahzad Bhatti in connection with the case.

Two petrol bombs were thrown by unidentified men at the RSS office in the intervening night of June 16 and 17. The NIA later took over the investigation from

the Jharkhand Police. The NIA's case records describe the matter as involving two unknown persons who threw bombs towards the RSS office premises. Initial investigations by the state police led to the arrest of Saif Ansari and Aman Ansari in connection with the attack. Investigators later found alleged links to the Shahzad Bhatti Network, officials said.

According to officials, one of the arrested accused had stayed in Dubai, where he allegedly came in contact with a handler identified as "Rana Sahib", who is suspected to be an associate of Bhatti. The ED's searches are aimed at tracing the money trail associated with the Ranchi attack and examining whether funds linked to the Bhatti Network were used to facilitate the operation, officials said. The ED raids came a day after the Union Home Ministry declared the Shahzad Bhatti Network a terrorist organisation under the Unlawful



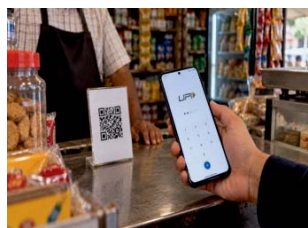
Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). The ministry said the Bhatti Network was involved in the cross-border smuggling of arms, explosives and narcotics and in recruiting vulnerable people into terrorist activities.

UPI fee sparks worry in Delhi market: 'Shopkeeper may hike price, pass it on to customer'

Delhi. (Agency)

At a shop in Sadar Bazaar, the next time a customer flashes a phone to pay a bill of more than Rs 2,000, the trader may have to do a quick calculation: absorb the newly-imposed UPI fee or try to recover the cost from the customer. The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) on Tuesday announced that UPI transactions over Rs 2,000 will attract a fee of 0.4% from October 15. Under the new system, it is the merchant who pays the 0.4% fee, not the customer directly. On a Rs 10,000 payment, the merchant would pay Rs 40.

This has left Delhi's traders divided. While some said the charge is too small to make much difference to their business, those operating on thin margins worry that even a small deduction could add up. An e-commerce



website, grocery shop or a shopkeeper, receiving more than Rs 1 lakh per month from customers paying through UPI are categorised as merchants. Mukesh Jain, general secretary of the Main Sadar Bazaar Traders Association, said the impact could be felt by both customers and shopkeepers. "Shopkeepers are already operating on such tight margins nowadays, this will eat into that also. As a result, they might increase prices and pass it on to the customer," said Jain, who owns a shop selling festive goods. "When making a UPI payment above Rs 2,000, the shopkeeper will either automatically increase the price by 0.4% or even more or tell the customer to pay the amount above the bill," Jain added. The Finance Ministry, however, has said banks have been "advised" to ensure that merchants do not pass on the cost to customers.

Bus services disrupted as strike by DTC drivers enters Day 2, protest to continue

Delhi. (Agency)

Bus services across the Capital were disrupted on Wednesday as drivers and conductors operating Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) buses went on a strike for the second consecutive day demanding higher wages. The strike is expected to continue on Thursday as the demands of the protesting drivers were not met. According to the DTC Karamchhari Ekta Union, drivers and conductors operating these buses are currently being paid Rs 862 as daily wage — the minimum wage fixed by the Delhi government — which, the union said, is typically meant for daily-wage labourers, factory workers or employees of small companies.



The union, in a statement, questioned whether paying licensed and qualified drivers and conductors Rs 862 to operate large buses in a crowded city like Delhi amounted to "bonded labour." "The dearness allowance, revised every six months under rules, had not been increased in the last one-and-a-half years, and the basic increment, due every five years, was last implemented in 2019, and has been due since 2024," said Lalit Chaudhary, president of the union. The union's main demands include a minimum daily wage of Rs 2,000 for equal work, payment for all government holidays, an annual bonus, and social security including a medical scheme. Delhi has around 6,840 DTC buses. Chaudhary estimated that roughly 12,000 drivers and conductors went on strike on Wednesday. On the protesting drivers' demand, Transport Minister Pankaj Singh said, "We have directed the private concessioners managing the DTC electric buses to sort the issues with drivers immediately."

427 new posts, day-to-day hearings: Delhi's push to clear backlog in trial courts

Delhi. (Agency)

With pendency in Delhi's trial courts rising by around one lakh cases every year, Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Tuesday approved the creation of 427 ancillary posts for 53 fast track special courts (FTSCs) across the Capital, as part of efforts to expand judicial capacity and speed up trials.

The new posts include 58 readers, 116 stenographers and 116 ahlmds, among others, and are expected to cost the government Rs 37 crore.

With over 20,000 criminal cases listed before Delhi's trial courts each day, the government also said existing vacancies will be filled on priority. Earlier, posts for 53 judges had been created for the FTSCs with the LG's approval. The additional staff is expected to enable the courts

to function effectively.

There are just over 740 judges in Delhi's trial courts, a number that has remained stagnant since 2015. Each judge handles an average of more than 2,100 cases. Court staff,



meanwhile, are operating at around 80% of sanctioned strength, which hasn't been revised in close to two decades. More than 1,700 posts of court staff are lying vacant against a sanctioned strength of 8,575.

Bail hearings

While the Delhi government is building new courts and creating additional posts, there is some

internal change underway as well.

Trial courts are now directing accused persons seeking bail to file affidavits containing relevant details before arguments are heard to expedite proceedings and to maintain "transparency". The affidavit will include case details, status of the trial and criminal antecedents, among others. A Delhi High Court circular dated March 19, displayed outside multiple trial courtrooms, states: "Every petitioner or applicant seeking bail, at any stage of proceedings, shall disclose all material particulars, including criminal antecedents and the existence of any coercive processes such as issuance of non-bailable warrants, declared as a proclaimed offender, or similar proceedings, duly supported by an affidavit."

Delhi Civic Body Cracks Down On Dangerous Buildings, 11 Properties Sealed

Delhi. (Agency)

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has intensified its city-wide enforcement drive against dangerous buildings, unauthorised constructions and violations of the Master Plan of Delhi (MPD) and building by-laws. According to the Delhi Government, strict enforcement action is being undertaken across all 12 zones of the Corporation to ensure compliance with building norms and safeguard public safety. As part of today's intensive enforcement exercise, 46 demolition actions were carried out across all 12 zones of the MCD. In addition, 11 properties were sealed, while 12 demolition orders were passed against properties found

violating applicable building norms and regulations. The MCD had also undertaken an extensive enforcement exercise yesterday, during which 40



properties were demolished, and 16 properties were sealed for violations of the MPD and Building Bye-Laws. During today's enforcement drive, major demolition actions were carried out at Kardampuri, Shahdara; Prasadi

Mohalla and Usmanpur/New Usmanpur in the North-East Zone; and Shastri Park in the East Zone, Swaroop Nagar and Rani Bagh, among other locations. The MCD has reiterated that no unauthorised construction or violation of building norms will be permitted within its jurisdiction. The Corporation has further stated that the enforcement drive will continue with full vigour against unauthorised constructions, dangerous buildings and other violations posing risks to public safety. The MCD has directed its field officials to maintain strict vigilance and take action against violations in accordance with the applicable provisions of the MPD, Building Bye-Laws and other relevant regulations.

A crime scene reconstruction and a manhunt: Latest in Gurgaon hit-and-run

Delhi. (Agency)

The Gurgaon Police have secured two days' remand of the two men arrested in connection with Sunday morning's hit-and-run on Golf Course Road to reconstruct the sequence of events and track down the co-accused hiding in Faridabad and Palwal. On Wednesday, Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) Nidhi Beniwal remanded Kalyan Bainsla (33) and his cousin Lavneesh Gurjar (34) to two-day police custody till September 18, the order noted.

Moving the remand application, the prosecution, led by Assistant Public Prosecutor Dr Sumitra and assisted by Sector



56 police station Assistant Sub-Inspector Jagbir Singh, submitted that Bainsla and Gurjar's disclosure statements revealed that their accomplices are hiding in Faridabad and Palwal. Police argued that their physical custody was essential to conduct raids and apprehend the absconding individuals.

The prosecution further stated that investigators need to take the accused back to the scene of the crime to reconstruct the sequence of events leading up to the crash, followed by sustained, in-depth questioning.

The counsel representing the accused opposed the custody plea. Advocates Bhadrash Hari Kant, Payal Khatana, and Harish Khatana, appearing for Bainsla, and Advocate Bharat Singh Khatana, representing Gurjar, argued that the men had been falsely implicated, that custodial interrogation was uncalled for, and that they were willing to cooperate with the probe. The magistrate, however, noted that the accused face serious charges of rash driving, act endangering life or personal safety, stalking, word, gesture, or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman, attempt to murder and joint criminal liability.

INS Kolkata vs PNS Hunain: Why Pakistan picked the wrong ship to mess with

While the PNS Hunain is an offshore patrol vessel, INS Kolkata is one of India's most powerful and advanced warships, nearly three times its weight. Clearly, Pakistan picked the wrong ship to mess with. We explain why.

Delhi. (Agency)

When Pakistan's PNS Hunain collided with the Indian Navy's INS Kolkata in the Arabian Sea on Tuesday, it was nothing less than a David vs Goliath moment. While the PNS Hunain is a 2,600-tonne offshore patrol vessel, INS Kolkata is one of India's most powerful and advanced warships, nearly three times its weight (7,400 tonnes). Clearly, Pakistan picked the wrong ship to mess with. The outcome was there for all to see. While the Pakistani vessel suffered a massive dent on its front arch and had to return to the harbour for repairs, the Indian destroyer continued with its operational deployment. The MEA stated that INS Kolkata did not suffer

any structural damage. Defence analyst Sandeep Unnithan told India Today that the difference between the two warships is "enormous". "Hunain is an offshore patrol vessel that has been slightly upgunned with more missiles. INS Kolkata is one of the largest frontline ships of the Indian Navy. That ship is a monster," Unnithan said.

PAK VESSEL COLLIDES WITH INDIAN WARSHIP

The incident, however, has sparked diplomatic tensions, with both countries summoning envoys. India said the warship was on a routine surveillance mission in the North Arabian Sea when the Pakistani vessel started to shadow it.



The PNS Hunain was in the region as part of the Pakistan navy's Sea Spark exercise. Sources said the Pakistani ship was moving at high speed before a close-range manoeuvre resulted in it grazing INS Kolkata. According to reports, PNS Hunain suffered a huge dent and a

possible crack. An OSINT account, War and Gore, claimed that four Pakistani personnel were injured in the incident. However, there has been no official statement from Pakistan. The incident, however, has brought into sharp focus the striking mismatch in the capabilities of the ships involved - INS Kolkata and PNS Hunain.

Unnithan said the incident could have gone horribly wrong for Pakistan. "If INS Kolkata had turned around, to protect its crew, and rammed the Pakistani ship, it would have just toppled over and sunk. It was a very dangerous kind of manoeuvre that Pakistan attempted," he said.

SEBI cracks down on two 'desi' Jane Street for F&O manipulation

MUMBAI. (Agency)

Market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has uncovered what looks like an encore of what the New York-based algo-trader Jane Street employed here earlier, wherein two little-known brokerages-- Prsaar Sampada and Chaubara Eats-- adopted a strategy of sophisticated cross-segment price manipulation involving stock F&Os, and froze their alleged gains of Rs 28.12 crore, besides barring them and four key individuals from the market.

An ex-parte interim order issued by whole-time member Kamlesh Chandra Varshney on Wednesday directed Prsaar and Chaubara, along with their key personnel Ved Prakash Gupta, Priti Gupta, Saroj Gupta, and Gaurav Tomar, to deposit Rs 28.12 crore in fixed deposits with SEBI. It also barred them from the market until they pay the amount and from trading in equity derivatives until the investigation is completed. According to the order, these two related entities used alternating futures trades to distort prices and trigger profitable options orders targeting relatively smaller and less liquid stocks among the bottom 100 by market capitalisation of around 211 NSE-listed stocks eligible for derivatives trading.

"The cross-segment price manipulation using stock options and stock futures, while also engaging in possible deceptive orders and coordinated/synchronised trading, is a novel manipulative, fraudulent and unfair trade practice employed by the suspects to deceive other market participants and profit from price fluctuation artificially induced by them," Varshney said in the order. The case, which took place between December 2025 and June 2026, bears similarities to the kind of cross-market trading strategies adopted by the global proprietary trading firm Jane Street, which was banned from the market in July 2025.

Saudi Aramco halts oil supply to Indian refineries: Know why and for how long?

Kolkata. (Agency)

There is a new development in the crude oil supplies to India. Saudi Aramco has informed Indian refineries following attacks on its critical East-West pipeline, it will not be able to supply crude to them until further notice. According to reports, sources familiar with the development said that finding alternative sources would not be difficult but the rising prices and higher freight costs have become big headaches for Indian refineries. Saudi Arabia is a major crude oil supplier to India and account for 9-14.5% of the country's total crude imports. It varies from month to month. The East-West pipeline served as the primary alternative route for Saudi Arabia's crude oil supplies following disruptions to the maritime route through the Strait of Hormuz. It was shut down late last week after drone attacks by Iraqi forces. Oil prices have surged since then; on Wednesday, Brent futures were trading at approximately \$108 per barrel.

Aramco has stopped all supplies to India via both the Red Sea and the Strait of Hormuz routes. However, experts mentioned that Saudi Arabia has sold some spot cargoes to traders. These could deliver smaller volumes of oil to Indian refineries via the Strait of Hormuz. Traders purchase Iraqi crude oil at steep discounts and transport it from the Strait to the Gulf of Oman, where they perform ship-to-ship transfers to deliver the cargo to Indian and other customers. Obviously this circuitous route will involve higher costs.

Gold hallmarking gets costlier by 67% as BIS raises fee from Rs 45 to Rs 75, silver stays at Rs 35; new rates take effect ahead of festive season

New Delhi. (Agency)

Ahead of the festive season, the price of hallmarking gold articles has been raised by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). Earlier gold hallmarking cost was at Rs 45. Now it has been raised to Rs 75. The hallmarking charge for silver articles remains unchanged at Rs 35. The revised rates have come into force immediately, just ahead of the festive season. The change was notified through the BIS (Hallmarking) Amendment Regulations, 2026, dated September 14, 2026. BIS hallmarking is used to establish the purity of precious metal articles and certify them under the Bureau of Indian Standards system. A hallmarked article carries three key markings: the BIS logo, the karat or millesimal fineness and a six-digit alphanumeric Hallmark Unique Identification (HUID) number.

New gold hallmarking charges

Under the revised Schedule IV, jewellers will now have to pay Rs 75 for hallmarking each gold article, with a minimum charge of Rs 200 for every consignment. For silver articles, the fee payable by jewellers to recognised Assaying and Hallmarking Centres (AHCs) remains Rs 35 per article, subject to a minimum consignment charge of Rs 150.

The increase has drawn concern from the All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC), which has called on the government and BIS to reconsider the decision and continue with the existing fee until stakeholders have been consulted.

EPFO wage ceiling hiked to Rs 25,000: 5 benefits employees should know

The government said the decision is another step towards building a more inclusive social security system, with social protection keeping pace with economic growth, rising wages and the expansion of formal employment.

Kolkata. (Agency)

The government has widened the EPFO net, bringing more employees under the mandatory social security system. The wage ceiling for mandatory EPF contribution has been raised from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000 a month. The move is expected to bring more than 51 lakh additional employees under the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation

(EPFO). The Union Cabinet has approved the increase as part of efforts to expand social security coverage and align the system with rising wages. EPFO said in a post on X that the higher wage ceiling will broaden the scope of social security in line with the changing workforce and rising wage levels. So, what does the higher wage ceiling mean for employees? Here are five key benefits.

MORE EMPLOYEES UNDER EPFCOVERAGE

One of the biggest changes is that more employees earning between Rs 15,000 and Rs 25,000 a month will be brought within the mandatory EPF framework, subject to the applicable rules. Under the present ceiling, a new employee joining a job with wages above Rs 15,000 was not automatically covered under mandatory EPF. However, the higher limit will now widen the pool of workers who can access



formal social security benefits. For employees, this means a larger part of the workforce will have access to structured long-term savings through the provident fund system.

HIGHER ACCESS TO RETIREMENT SAVINGS

EPF is designed to help employees build a retirement corpus through regular contributions during their working years.

With the wage ceiling now raised, more workers will be able to participate in the EPF system.

Regular contributions can help employees build long-term savings while they are earning, providing financial support after retirement or during eligible withdrawals. The move also brings the contribution framework closer to current wage levels.

PENSION BENEFITS

UNDEREPS

The wider EPFO coverage also means eligible employees can get access to pension protection under the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS), subject to the scheme's rules. EPS provides a pension benefit to eligible members after retirement, while certain provisions also cover situations such as disability and family pension.

Sensex, Nifty rise after Fed hike, but IT drag and FII selling cap

HONG KONG. (Agency)

Benchmark indices opened higher on Thursday despite the US Federal Reserve raising interest rates by 25 basis points, with domestic equities attempting to extend the previous session's recovery. However, elevated crude oil prices, continued foreign selling and a busy primary market kept gains in check. The BSE Sensex opened at 74,182.62 and was trading at 74,524.58 at 9:34 am, up 188.13 points or 0.25% from the previous close. The Nifty 50 opened at 23,195.25 and was at 23,298.40, up 80.80 points or 0.35%. The Fed raised rates by 25 basis points in a unanimous decision, its first increase

in more than three years. Its latest projections showed that 16 of 18 policymakers expect at least one more 25-basis-point rate hike by the end of the year.

IT STOCKS DRAG AS FED TIGHTENS POLICY

IT stocks were among the key drags on the market. Nifty IT was down 0.58% at 9:36 am, as higher US interest rates could weigh on software demand and spending. Among Sensex stocks, HCLTech fell 0.90%, TCS declined 0.82%, Infosys slipped 0.57% and Tech Mahindra dropped 0.47%. HDFC Bank was also down 0.75%. At the same time, several heavyweight stocks supported the

benchmarks. Eternal was the top Sensex gainer, rising 1.78%, followed by Bajaj Finance at 1.69% and BEL at 1.58%. M&M gained 1.01%, Bajaj Finserv rose 1%, SBI advanced 0.75% and IndiGo was up 0.69%. ITC, Axis Bank, NTPC, L&T and Power Grid also traded higher.

MOST SECTORS IN THE GREEN

The sectoral picture was broadly positive at the open. Nifty Auto rose 0.94%, while Nifty PSU Bank gained 1.29%. Nifty Financial Services Ex-Bank advanced 0.96%, Nifty Chemicals rose 0.69% and Nifty MidSmall Financial Services gained 0.54%. Nifty Metal rose 0.49%, Nifty Realty gained 0.74%, Nifty Financial Services.

NSE IPO open for bidding: GMP crashes 43% from last week. Should you subscribe?

MUMBAI. (Agency)

The much-anticipated IPO of the National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) opens for subscription today, September 17, with investors looking at one of the country's biggest public offerings even as the grey market premium (GMP) has taken a sharp hit ahead of the opening. The GMP is being closely tracked by investors because it gives an early indication of the



premium investors are willing to pay for an IPO in the unofficial market and, consequently, the listing gain they may be expecting. While GMP is unofficial and does not guarantee the actual listing price, a sharp fall can indicate that the expected listing premium has narrowed.

The Rs 22,561.57 crore NSE IPO is a pure offer for sale (OFS), with 12.64 crore shares being offered by existing shareholders. NSE itself will not receive any proceeds from the issue. The IPO will remain open until September 21, with allotment expected on September 22 and listing tentatively scheduled for September 24 on the BSE. The price band has been fixed at Rs 1,700-1,785 per share. The lot size is eight shares, meaning a retail investor applying at the upper end of the price band will need Rs 14,280. But while the IPO has attracted huge interest, its grey market premium has fallen sharply. NSE IPO GMP FALLS SHARPLY

The latest available GMP for the NSE IPO is Rs 125, according to the data shared as of 6:58 am on September 17. At the upper price band of Rs 1,785, this implies an estimated listing price of around Rs 1,910, or a 7% premium to the issue price. That is a significant cooling from last week. The GMP stood at Rs 218 on September 11, according to the trend data provided. It then moved to Rs 208 on September 12, Rs 210 on September 13, Rs 208 on September 14, Rs 160 on September 15, Rs 145 on September 16 and Rs 125 on September 17. That means the GMP has fallen Rs 93, or around 43%, from Rs 218 on September 11 to Rs 125 on the morning the IPO opens.

Centre cuts windfall tax on petrol, diesel and ATF exports

New Delhi. (Agency)

The government has reduced the windfall tax and export levies on petrol, diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) as part of its fortnightly review of duties on petroleum products. According to a Finance Ministry notification, the duty on petrol exports has been cut to Rs 0.5 per litre, comprising Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) of Rs 0.5 per litre, while the Revenue Integration Charge (RIC) remains nil. For diesel, the duty has been reduced to Rs 20 per litre, comprising



SAED of Rs 20 per litre, with no RIC.

In addition, the levy on ATF exports has been lowered to Rs 15 per litre through SAED.

However, there has been no change in the existing excise duty rates on petrol and diesel cleared for domestic consumption, the ministry said.

The government reviews the windfall tax on domestically produced crude oil and export duties on petroleum products every fortnight, depending on movements in global crude oil prices and refinery margins. The latest revision follows several changes to petroleum export duties in recent months amid volatility in international oil prices and geopolitical tensions. In the previous revision effective September 1, the government had reduced the export levy on diesel to Rs 1 per litre from Rs 3 per litre and cut the windfall tax on diesel exports to Rs 19 per litre from Rs 24 per litre. In August, the government had raised the export duty on petrol to Rs 3.5 per litre from Rs 2.5 per litre. The total duty on diesel was increased to Rs 25.5 per litre from Rs 15.5 per litre, while the ATF export levy was raised to Rs 22 per litre from Rs 14.5 per litre.

Onions at Rs 70 despite govt intervention. What's keeping prices high?

The government is releasing onions at Rs 35 a kg, yet many households are paying almost twice that. So why isn't the intervention bringing prices down?

New Delhi

The government is selling onions from its buffer stock at Rs 35 a kg, but consumers in several parts of the country are still paying around Rs 60-70 a kg, and prices could be even higher in some markets. The all-India average retail price of onion stood at Rs 53.84 per kg on September 16, up nearly 94% from Rs 27.71 a year ago, according to the Department of Consumer Affairs. The average wholesale price was Rs 45.65 per kg. The sharp gap between the government's Rs 35 onion and the price

many households are paying highlights the challenge of getting buffer stocks from producing centres to consumers at scale. The government began releasing onions from its Price Stabilisation Fund buffer on August 24. It has been using NCCF, NAFED, Kendriya Bhandar and mobile vans to sell onions at Rs 35 a kg, while railway rakes and trucks are being used to move supplies from producing regions to major consumption centres. The government says the intervention is already having an impact in some markets. It has expanded the buffer-stock operation to 19 cities, using the Kanda Express railway service and more than 30 trucks to move onions to consumption centres.

The government itself has identified the rabi-to-kharif transition as a period when onion prices typically rise. Stored rabi onions gradually run down before the next crop arrives, creating a temporary supply squeeze. It may be noted that the

government's own guidelines say buffer onions are released during the lean season, typically from September to December, to help keep prices affordable. This year, the transition has been complicated by delayed kharif



sowing in some major producing regions. In July, the government said kharif sowing in the Nashik region was around 15 days behind schedule, while sowing in the Chitradurga-Challakere belt of Karnataka was estimated at around 60% of normal. Weather has added to the uncertainty.

The government had earlier flagged the effect of delayed monsoon conditions and said speculative buying by some traders was also contributing to market sentiment around onion prices.

The government, however, maintains that India does not have an overall onion shortage. Its 2025-26 production estimate stands at 307.37 lakh tonnes, broadly unchanged from 307.67 lakh tonnes the previous year. It had also said stocks in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat were adequate when it assessed the situation in July. It had set a target of procuring 2 lakh tonnes of rabi onions for the 2026-27 buffer and had procured around 1.21 lakh tonnes. The buffer is meant to provide supplies during lean months and prevent sharp

seasonal price spikes. The government has also raised the procurement price paid for onions entering the buffer from Rs 1,875 to Rs 2,125 per quintal, or Rs 21.25 a kg, to provide farmers better returns while strengthening buffer procurement.

NEWS BOX

Gujarat confidential: Ambedkar and a Vadodara Link

Ahmedabad (Agency). LEADER OF Opposition in the Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC), Chandrakant Shrivastav, has made a political push to have September 23, ‘Sankalp Din’, featured prominently on Vadodara’s civic calendar as well as ground arrangements for the same. In a letter to the Vadodara Municipal Commissioner, Shrivastava requested that the civic body make arrangements for visitors to arrive in Vadodara’s Sankalp Bhoomi to mark the day – associated with the account of Dr B R Ambedkar sitting under a tree in Sayajibaug after being “insulted at a guest house” and reportedly resolving to work towards uplift and awakening of the oppressed. Shrivastav pointed out that programmes are already organised in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and other states to observe days associated with Ambedkar. His pitch to the civic administration is that if the corporation makes arrangements for programmes centred on political leaders, it should also provide the necessary facilities for an event commemorating Ambedkar’s legacy in the city. The civic administration’s response to the request is awaited.

Appeal challenging EC to stone quarry admitted by NGT

BENGALURU(Agency). CUTTACK: The National Green Tribunal (NGT)’s East Zone bench has admitted an appeal challenging the environmental clearance (EC) granted to a private lessee for operation of the Aruha Black Stone Quarry in Jajpur’s Dharmasala tehsil, observing that there is prima facie no ground to dismiss the appeal at this stage. The bench of judicial member Justice Arun Kumar Tyagi and expert members A Senthil Vel and Ishwar Singh admitted the appeal filed by Dushman Kumar Bal, a resident of Aruha village. The appellant has sought quashing of the EC granted by the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Odisha, on August 17, 2026, for the 7.64-hectare quarry (Cluster Serial No. 2/3). Bal has alleged that the quarry falls under the B-1 category as its area exceeds five hectare and therefore required a public hearing before grant of EC. However, he claimed that no such hearing was conducted. Bal was represented by advocates Sankar Prasad Pani and Ashutosh Padhy. The tribunal said, “Prima facie, there being no ground at this stage to dismiss the appeal, the appeal is admitted for hearing on all questions including limitation and maintainability.” The bench directed notices to the member secretaries of SEIAA and Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB), Jajpur collector, deputy director of Mines, Jajpur, and the private lessee. The respondents have been given two weeks to file their responses after service of notice. The matter has been posted for further hearing on September 30.

Conservancy operations at risk as GCC dues pile up

CHENNAI(Agency). The city corporation’s pending dues to contractors have piled up to Rs 2,109 crore, a large part of which is owed to agencies handling solid waste management. With mandatory payments pending from the civic body since March, sanitary operations in the city may soon take a hit, as per sources. A senior corporation official said that a meeting with the finance department was held on Wednesday, where the civic body sought special ways and means assistance. In five months, the outstanding payments may increase by another Rs 2,800 crore, officials said, adding that Rs 2,000-crore assistance from the state government would help ease the situation. Sources told that while pending dues are not new to the Chennai corporation, this time even mandatory payments for conservancy operations remain pending, with the contractors already struggling to pay salaries to their sanitary workers. They said that for at least the first two months of this year, the mandatory 50% payment mentioned in the concessionaire agreement, apart from payments as per Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), was released, but from then until now, the GCC has allegedly not released funds even for mandatory payments. Deputy Mayor M Magesh Kumaar told TNIE that the pending dues of over Rs 2,000 crore were for bills which have already been cleared. “Additionally, ongoing works will amount to another Rs 1,500 crore.”

Bags open, dogs out: Sena UBT leader makes a ‘stray’ move at panchayat office

The Sena UBT chief opens the bags and lets the dogs out on Niphad civic chief's table. Startled by the move, Vikram Randhave, who was sitting in his chair, slides back a little.

Mumbai (Agency). Shiv Sena (UBT) Yuva Sena district chief Vikram Randhave on Tuesday, September 15, released four to five stray dogs inside the office of Niphad Nagar Panchayat chief officer Dheeraj Bhamre to highlight what he described as the administration’s failure to tackle the growing menace of stray dogs. A video of the incident has surfaced on social media and purportedly shows the politician carrying bags inside Vikram Randhave’s office. Moments later, he opens the bags and lets the dogs out on his table. Startled by the move, Vikram Randhave, who was sitting in his chair, slides back a little. The dog, clearly frightened by being locked inside the bag, moves away and settles into a corner on another table, while the Sena UBT leader gets into a heated exchange with the Niphad civic chief. Randhave also placed a garland made of currency notes around the chief officer’s table to protest the civic administration’s handling of the issue. He claimed that more than 400 stray dogs roam the Nagar Panchayat limits and that over 100 residents suffer dog-bite injuries every month. The Sena UBT chief also alleged that repeated complaints had failed to prompt an effective system to catch and sterilise stray dogs.



The menace has particularly affected children, senior citizens and motorists, he said, adding that victims have to undergo painful treatment after being bitten. At the Niphad sub-district hospital, five to six patients bitten by stray dogs reportedly seek treatment every day. “Five to six patients bitten by stray dogs come to the hospital every day for treatment. This means there are more than 100 dog-bite cases every month. Anti-rabies vaccine is currently available at the hospital,” said Dr Rajiv Tambale of the Niphad sub-district hospital. Randhave warned that if the Nagar Panchayat failed to take concrete measures to control the stray-dog population, the dogs would again be released inside the chief officer’s office in the presence of citizens. He said the dogs were released in the office to demonstrate what the residents had been facing for a long time.

The deadly secret behind a Kanpur family’s closed doors

Lucknow (Agency). It was a humid evening in Kanpur on September 5. Subrat Minocha (32) had returned from work; he worked at his father’s pharmacy on Birhana Road, 14 km from his home. Most days, he would be back by 8 pm. He and his wife, Shalu, lived with their five-year-old son and Subrat’s elderly parents – Vineet (63) and Puneeta (61) in a three-bedroom apartment in the upscale Kalyanpur area of the city. Vineet was still at work while Puneeta was away in Ghaziabad. Subrat also has a sister, who lives in Gurgaon. At 9.35 pm, Subrat and Shalu, all dressed up, locked their flat and left. They were heading to a lounge in Tilak Nagar to attend a ‘kitty party’. They took their son with them. The couple would organise such parties regularly with a group of more than a dozen other families across the city. These families were among the affluent Kanpur residents and would regularly socialise. This kitty party had

been planned almost a week ahead. Subrat’s flat — C104 — was on the first floor inside the gated compound, Ratan Orbit Apartments. A security guard stood at the entrance, keeping watch round the clock. At 10.55 pm, Vineet



returned home. He had been at his pharmacy since noon. He knew about the kitty party. He knew his son and his family would be away till late. He wasn’t in the mood to stay up till they returned. He was exhausted after a long day and wanted to go to bed soon. So, he changed

his clothes, took out the food kept in the fridge for him and sat for a quick dinner alone. As he finally headed to his bedroom, he noticed that the door to his son’s room was partially open. Vineet stopped and entered his son’s room. He switched on the light. Two men were standing inside. He recognised one of them immediately, demanding to know how he had got into the house. Before he could raise an alarm, the men struck — they allegedly stabbed him 26 times with two knives. The two assailants left the flat around 11.30 pm. Nearly five hours later, at 4.20 am, the family returned home. They sat in the guest room before Subrat got up to fetch water from the kitchen. That was when he noticed a trail of blood coming from his room. He called out to Shalu and rushed in. Vineet was lying in a pool of blood on the floor. They were shocked, Subrat told the police. It was another 15-20 minutes before Subrat called the police control room to report his father’s murder inside their home.

‘Brainwashed into Islam’: Father’s claim fails to sway Allahabad High Court

Lucknow(Agency). Observing that an adult person has the right to decide on the faith to follow and one’s life partner, the Allahabad High Court on Wednesday ordered that Shamli resident Ayush Malik, who had earlier embraced Islam and married a Muslim woman, was at liberty to practice a religion of his choice and decide about his matrimonial relationship. After hearing the justifications given by Ayush’s father to restrain Ayush, the single bench of Justice Sandeep Jain said, “The concern expressed by the father regarding the welfare of his son is understandable in the context of the familial relationship. However, such concern cannot, by itself, override the constitutionally protected autonomy of an adult person who is competent to take decisions concerning his faith, residence and choice of life partner.” Ayush’s friend, Sultan, had filed a habeas corpus petition in the High Court alleging that the Shamli youth had been illegally

detained by his father, Devraj Singh Malik, at his house in collusion with the State. Sultan, through his counsel, informed the court that Ayush had embraced Islam and married Chandni Qureshi. Ayush’s father had got an FIR registered against Chandni and her father on various charges, including the provisions of the anti-conversion law in June, and both were put in jail. Hearing the petition, the bench on September 9 had directed Malik and the State government to produce Ayush before the court on September 16. In compliance with the court’s order, Ayush was produced before the court on Wednesday by Shamli police. What the father and son told the judge During his interaction with the judge in the court, Ayush said he was about 31 years of age and educated up to B.Pharma. He stated that he voluntarily embraced Islam in 2014 and that his decision to do so was taken of his own free will, without any coercion, threat, undue influence or inducement from any

person. He further stated that, after embracing Islam, he has been following its essential practices, though his decision was not acceptable to his parents and other family members.



He also told the court that he decided to marry Chandni Qureshi and intended to solemnise the marriage with her, which was not acceptable to his parents. According to him, owing to his decision to marry Chandni Qureshi, an FIR was registered on June 6 on various charges, including sections of the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of

Religion Act at Shamli police station against Chandni Qureshi and her relatives. He asserted that criminal proceedings against Chandni and her relatives were a consequence of his said choice. He also told the court that he was subjected to threats and unlawful confinement and was kept under house arrest from June 4. The High Court also interacted with his father, Devraj Singh Malik. The latter refuted the allegations made by his son and stated that he has been “influenced or brainwashed” by certain persons and has not, according to him, voluntarily embraced Islam. The father expressed concern about the welfare of his son and, for that reason, did not approve of his decision to embrace Islam or solemnise marriage with Chandni. Ayush, however, categorically disputed the assertions made by his father and reiterated before the court that his decisions have been taken voluntarily, independently and after due deliberation.

‘May again indulge in stunts’: Bombay HC refuses to release 17-year-old in Ghatkopar crash

The applicant, a Class 12 student who was 17 years and eight months old at the time of the February 5 incident, claimed he had no intention of hitting the couple’s bike.

Mumbai(Agency). The Bombay High Court last week upheld a Sessions Court order cancelling the bail granted by the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) to a then 17-year-old boy in the Ghatkopar crash case, saying that the 17-year-old may again indulge in stunts if he’s released on bail. The boy was allegedly driving an SUV when he rammed into a bike, killing 33-year-old Ghatkopar businessman Dhruvil Patel and injuring his wife earlier this year. A single-judge bench of Justice Shivkumar G Dige observed that the applicant had attained majority and may again indulge in a “stunt act with his friends, causing danger to others” if released on bail. The HC, on September 9, rejected the criminal revision application filed by the juvenile accused against the Sessions Court order. The applicant, a Class 12 student who was 17 years and eight months old at the time of the February 5 incident, claimed he had no intention of hitting the couple’s bike. Seeking relief on the grounds of his age, completion of the investigation and filing of the chargesheet, and having spent 10 days in an observation home, the plea argued that



“no purpose will be served keeping him in observation home.” Additional Public Prosecutor Balraj B Kulkarni, appearing for the police, along with advocates Atharva Dandekar, Ruben Mascarenhas and Tejas Gupta,

appearing for the victim, opposed the plea. They argued that the applicant habitually performed stunts in vehicles on public roads and uploaded videos on social media, which he later deleted, amounting to destruction of evidence. Justice Dige found “no infirmity” in the Sessions Court order, which observed that releasing the applicant within a short period, despite his involvement in the “company of spoilt and affluent children” performing stunts on two- and four-wheelers, “would undermine the confidence of society.” “It is necessary to curb such activities... Though he is a student, keeping him in a reformative home would make him understand gravity of his act,” the HC noted. It observed that the police’s inability to find him at the Navi Mumbai residence where he was supposed to reside under his earlier bail conditions showed his “scant respect” for court orders. “Applicant would be exposed to moral, physical and psychological danger due to lack of parental control. He may again indulge in stunt act with his friends, causing danger to others. It will defeat the ends of justice,” the HC noted, upholding the Sessions Court’s “well-reasoned” order.

Disbanded in 1932, Mumbai’s mounted cops saddle up for Ganeshotsav duty

Mumbai (Agency). The Mumbai Police’s mounted unit, discontinued in 1932 to make way for “more cars hitting the city” and revived and disbanded again over the years, is now moving from a ceremonial role to an operational one for the Ganeshotsav festival.

The unit, which was restarted in 2024, has so far been used mainly for ceremonial purposes, including Republic Day and Raising Day celebrations. This year, the 22 horses that currently form the mounted police unit will be deployed on a rotational basis at various immersion points around the city’s beaches, where large crowds will gather and vehicles cannot enter because of the sand. An official said the police had been gradually preparing the unit over the past year, including through a training session at Juhu beach in May. “Now we are confident the horses are equipped to be used for crowd control and related purposes during the Ganesh festival. We have passed on instructions to police stations that have these immersion points under their jurisdictions to keep space on the beach where horses can be kept,” the official said. The official added that due to several factors, including the Covid-19 pandemic, the mounted unit could not be utilised to its maximum capacity in the past few years. “One of the issues that we were facing was that officers from police stations who chose to work with the mounted police unit would eventually be transferred as per service rules and the process would have to begin again,” the official said. “Earlier this month, based on our proposal, the Maharashtra government approved the creation of 70 new posts in the sportsperson horse-rider cadre for the Mounted Police Unit. These personnel would be chosen from the sports category, those formerly in the Armed Forces and others who have worked with horses before.

NEWS BOX

Abhishek, Samson should open in next 10 T20Is, Sooryavanshi can wait: Ex-India batter



New Delhi. (Agency)

Former India batter S Badrinath has backed Abhishek Sharma and Sanju Samson to continue as India's opening pair in T20Is, urging the team management to give the duo an extended run instead of repeatedly switching between Samson and teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

Badrinath believes India should settle on a combination and assess its performance over a sustained period. With Samson returning to the side for the ongoing T20I series against Afghanistan, Sooryavanshi has had to wait for his opportunity despite an impressive run in his previous assignment against Zimbabwe. Abhishek Sharma and Sanju Samson should open in the next 10 T20Is after this series. After that, if Sanju Samson fails, drop him and pick Sooryavanshi. They should follow this process instead of alternating between the two from one series to the next. I feel this has been unfair to Samson," Badrinath said on his YouTube channel, Cric it with Badri. Abhishek, meanwhile, has continued to justify his place at the top. He hammered 82 off just 32 balls in the first T20I against Afghanistan, including seven sixes and seven fours, as India chased down 157 with 38 balls to spare.

'GIVE SANJU AN EXTENDED RUN'
Samson made a strong statement in the second T20I against Afghanistan in New Delhi. After managing only 10 in the series opener, Samson smashed a 22-ball 57 in the second match, his first T20I half-century since the 2026 T20 World Cup. He struck at more than 250 during the knock, underlining his ability to provide India with an aggressive start. "Samson has performed well and is coming off a half-century. I feel he should get an extended run till the end of the year. He has scored two centuries and won India the World Cup. Though he hasn't delivered extraordinary performances like Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, he was already there in the line.

Chelsea get new owners as Todd Boehly sells stake after four years

New Delhi. (Agency)

Chelsea have new owners after Todd Boehly sold his stake in the club to Clearlake Capital, bringing his four-year tenure as chairman to an end. The American businessman will leave his position as Clearlake takes full control of the Premier League club. Chelsea announced the ownership transition on Wednesday, with Boehly and fellow co-owner Mark Walter selling their respective stakes to Clearlake. Speaking after the change was confirmed, Boehly described his time as chairman as an honour and



thanked those involved with the club. "It has been an honour to serve as chairman of Chelsea," Boehly said. "I would like to thank the many who helped secure a bright future for the club, including the English Premier League, the coaches and players, the talented leadership and staff at Chelsea, and the legions of dedicated fans."

"I have valued my partnership with Clearlake and the wider ownership group, and the collective decisions and investment we have made to support the immediate and long-term success of the club," Boehly added. "I am confident that Chelsea is well positioned for continued success under Clearlake's leadership." Boehly, Walter and Swiss billionaire Hansjorg Wyss each held a 12.8% stake in Chelsea, while Clearlake previously owned 61.5%. The latest transactions have given Clearlake full control of the club, although Chelsea said there will be no changes to its day-to-day operations, leadership or strategy.

WHO ARE CHELSEA'S NEW OWNERS?
Clearlake Capital is a US-based private equity firm led by co-founders Behdad Eghbali and Jose E.

AFG vs IND 3rd T20I: Sooryavanshi waits as India's bench gets the spotlight

India have nothing left to prove in the series after two commanding wins, but the final T20I in Delhi offers a different kind of intrigue. The big question now is whether Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and India's waiting players finally get their moment.

PARIS. (Agency)

India have already wrapped up the T20I series against Afghanistan, but the final match in Delhi still has plenty of intrigue.

With back-to-back seven-wicket wins, the spotlight now shifts to India's strength and whether Vaibhav Sooryavanshi will finally get his much-awaited chance on home soil. The result may no longer be up for debate, but India's team selection certainly is, with several players waiting for an opportunity. Speaking after the second T20I, captain Shreyas Iyer hinted that the management could rotate the squad to give those players some much-needed time in the middle. "Definitely, we want all of them to get used to the wicket and get some practice, so it will be a good opportunity to give a chance to the guys sitting out," Iyer said. That comment has naturally put Sooryavanshi right at the centre of the conversation. The 15-year-old was India's Player of the Series in Zimbabwe, where he played all three T20Is, but Sanju Samson's return has kept him on the sidelines during the Afghanistan series. Samson, meanwhile, has made a

rather strong case for retaining his place after smashing 57 off just 22 balls in the



second T20I. Abhishek Sharma has also been part of India's preferred opening combination, meaning Sooryavanshi's inclusion would require the management to shuffle things around rather than simply making a like-for-like change.

There are other pieces to India's selection puzzle too. Washington Sundar is yet to feature in the series, Yash Thakur could get

another opportunity, and India have already lost Varun Chakravarthy to a side strain, giving the management another reason to look beyond the combination that has comfortably won the series. With nothing left to settle in the series standings, Delhi could therefore become a testing ground for India's next set of questions. India could even go in with four specialist bowlers and ask their batters to compensate for the reduced batting depth, making the final T20I more useful than just another chance to add a win.

IS IT FINALLY SOORYAVANSHI TIME?

This is the question that has followed Sooryavanshi since Samson returned to the squad, and the third T20I offers perhaps the most natural opportunity to finally provide an answer. The teenager has already experienced international cricket during the Zimbabwe tour, but playing in front of a home crowd would add another interesting chapter to his rapid rise.

Raphinha runs riot as Barcelona make history with 7-2 Santander rout

New Delhi. (Agency)

Raphinha continued his sensational start to the season with a hat-trick as Barcelona thrashed Racing Santander 7-2 on Wednesday. The Brazilian's latest masterclass helped Barcelona make it seven wins from seven games for the first time in the club's history. Barcelona restored their three-point lead over Real Madrid at the top of LaLiga, with Raphinha once again at the centre of their attacking display. Speaking after the victory, Hansi Flick praised the team's intensity and collective work while stressing that their impressive start will only matter if they can maintain it until the end of the season. "It's always good to start well, but what matters is how you finish. It gives us confidence, and I like the momentum and the intensity," Flick said. "Everyone presses, everyone is involved. How we work as a team is crucial," the Barcelona manager added. Raphinha was substituted after 67 minutes having scored twice from the penalty spot and once from open play. The treble took his tally to 11

goals in all competitions this season, while he had already registered six goals and three assists in his first five LaLiga appearances before Wednesday's game.



NO STRIKER, NO PROBLEM FOR BARCELONA

Barcelona had entered the season with questions over their centre-forward options after Robert Lewandowski and Ferran Torres left, while their pursuit of Julin Alvarez did not materialise. Raphinha has instead flourished in a

central role and has become one of the main driving forces behind Flick's prolific attack. The Brazilian had already scored in four of Barcelona's first five league games, including braces against Rayo Vallecano and Valencia, before producing another two-goal display against Feyenoord in the Champions League. He also provided two assists in the 4-2 win over Levante before his latest hat-trick. Lamine Yamal added a goal and two assists against Santander despite missing a first-half penalty, while Gabriel Jesus also scored after replacing Raphinha. Karim Adeyemi provided an assist, giving Flick another option in an attack that has scored 33 goals across seven matches.

WHAT NEXT FOR FLICK'S BARCELONA

Barcelona's attacking numbers have been extraordinary, but their defensive vulnerabilities remain a potential concern. They have conceded five goals across their last three matches, while goalkeeper Joan Garcia was forced off against Santander and Wojciech Szczesny was punished after being caught in possession.

Lionel Messi leads Inter Miami to Campeones Cup win, takes trophy tally to 49

New Delhi. (Agency)

Lionel Messi added another trophy to his remarkable collection as Inter Miami defeated Cruz Azul 2-0 to win the 2026 Campeones Cup. The Argentine scored his 100th goal for the club and then turned provider, putting his fingerprints all over another Inter Miami trophy. Inter Miami made the breakthrough in the 24th minute through a rather unexpected Suarez-Messi combination. Luis Suarez found himself out on the right and sent a cross into the box, with Messi rising brilliantly to beat his marker and head the ball into the net. GOOOOAL! Messi's 100th comes in a final. pic.twitter. The goal was Messi's 100th for Inter Miami in 115 appearances since arriving in 2023. There was something fitting about the milestone too, as the Argentine once again found a way to make himself the centre of attention when a trophy was up for grabs.



Messi was not finished after getting on the scoresheet. In the 81st minute, he whipped in a corner that found Casemiro in space, with the Brazilian making no mistake with his header to double Inter Miami's advantage and put the result beyond doubt. The victory means Inter Miami

have now picked up four trophies since Messi's arrival in South Florida. The Leagues Cup came first in 2023, followed by the Supporters' Shield in 2024 and MLS Cup in 2025, before Messi added another winner's medal to the collection with the Campeones Cup.

Steve Smith recalls traumatic ball-tampering scandal: Felt thrown to the wolves

New Delhi. (Agency)

Steve Smith has opened up about the lasting impact of the 2018 ball-tampering scandal, recalling how he felt isolated during the fallout and describing his emotional return to Australia as one of the most traumatic experiences of his life. The former Australia captain is preparing to return to South Africa for Test cricket for the first time since the scandal, eight years after the incident at Newlands in Cape Town that resulted in lengthy bans for Smith, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft. "I felt like I was kind of thrown to the wolves through (Johannesburg) airport. I didn't have any support there at all," the 37-year-old told the Sydney Daily Telegraph. "(The press conference) was a traumatic

experience in my life and I still get little flashbacks, when I hear a camera and flashes, I relive it in a way ... They're intertwined in a way."

SMITH'S FALL FROM GRACE IN CAPE TOWN

The scandal erupted during the third Test against South Africa at Newlands in March 2018. Television cameras caught Bancroft using sandpaper to rough up the ball before attempting to conceal the object in his trousers. Smith later admitted he had been aware of the plan but had failed to prevent it.

Smith and Warner were subsequently banned by Cricket Australia for 12 months, while Bancroft received a nine-month ban. Smith was also stripped of the Australia captaincy, with the trio sent home from the

South Africa tour. After arriving back in Sydney, Smith broke down during an emotional press conference as he apologised



for his role in the controversy. The images of the tearful former captain became one of the defining moments of the scandal and have remained closely linked to his memories of

the episode. Smith has previously acknowledged that he felt his punishment was harsh, although he accepted the sanctions and later said he enjoyed some aspects of the enforced break from the intensity of international cricket.

He returned to Australia's squad for the 2019 ODI World Cup before making his Test comeback during the Ashes later that year. Smith marked his return to Test cricket with centuries in both innings of the first Test at Edgbaston. Now, Smith is looking forward to facing South Africa again. Australia are scheduled to play three ODIs followed by three Tests, with the Test series beginning in Durban on October 9 and the third Test scheduled for Cape Town from October 27.

Koffee With Karan 9

Janhvi Kapoor

Varun Dhawan Shoot Episode; Arjun Kapoor Makes A Cameo?

Karan Johar has kickstarted the shoot of Koffee With Karan 9 last Sunday. As per reports, the first episode will feature Salman Khan in a rare solo appearance. Speculations are also rife that Shah Rukh Khan and Aryan Khan will also be gracing the couch this season. While there's no official confirmation on these heresays, we've some exclusive update for you!

We hear that an episode of this season has already been filmed. A little birdie tells News18 exclusively, "The episode was shot at Yash Raj Films' studio with Janhvi Kapoor and Varun Dhawan. This is the first time that they appeared on the chat show together. Karan and his protégés had a blast. A special guest also made a cameo, leaving Janhvi and Varun surprised."

The source further adds, "Arjun, who became the unofficial mascot of season 5, will be making a special appearance in this particular episode with the Bawaal and Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari co-stars. Varun's camaraderie with Arjun is no secret and when they came to the show as a duo back in 2016, they left Karan, the crew members and the audience rolling in laughter." We also hear that the recently shot episode was a rollercoaster ride with Arjun, Varun and Janhvi trading hilarious anecdotes. The trio let their guard down, and teased one another, resulting in several candid moments. Needless to say, Karan was in splits throughout. On a related note, Arjun went on to earn a Special Koffee Award for appearing a total of four times on season 5.

He had made three unannounced cameos across the season. He made a surprise pop-in to sit between Ranbir Kapoor and Ranveer Singh for a game segment called 'Kiss the Arjun'. He was brought in again for another round of the segment in the episode featuring Katrina Kaif and Anushka Sharma. He also stayed to act as a guest judge for the 'Rapid Fire' round.

Coming back to season 9, this is the fourth time that Janhvi is making an appearance on Koffee With Karan. She had made her debut on the show in 2018 along with Arjun. She went on to share the couch with Sara Ali Khan on season 7 and her younger sister Khushi Kapoor on season 8. Varun, on the other hand, has been a regular since 2013 and has already been a part of it six times.



Kareena Kapoor

Reveals Why She, Saif Ali Khan 'Fight' About Work: 'I'm Instinctive, He Likes To Prepare'

Kareena Kapoor, who will soon be seen in Daayra, recently opened up about how she and her actor-husband Saif Ali Khan differ in their approach to acting. She credited her sister and superstar Karisma Kapoor for teaching her everything she knows. Kareena also reflected on her kids, Taimur and Jeh, noticing her advertisements everywhere.

Kareena said at a recent SCREEN event, "We always end up fighting. Two actors in the house will always end up fighting. I might not like a promo of his, or he might not like mine. We are pretty different when it comes to that. I am more instinctive, while Saif likes to prepare a lot more. He will read a lot more and get into it. Whereas I want to be switching on and off."

She said that Karisma has been her mentor. "I credit her with everything. But, if there's one thing that she has always taught me is just that hard work and perseverance. Because in the 90s, there was a constant push they had to do, just be there and prove themselves. She tells me to never lose faith, no matter how great an actor or bigger star you are," she said.

In the same chat, she also revealed she finds it

strange when Taimur and Jeh see her ads. "It's a lot, because now they are constantly watching ads. I don't know what I feel when my ads show up in front of them. Whether I want them to see too much or... There is a constant battle," she said.

The actor recalled an incident with Taimur and added, "I feel weird sometimes, like at airports. If I



see myself pouting in some ad, Taimur asks, 'Why are you doing that?' I ask him to move on; it's an ad, that's fine. But he asks why I am doing that. I just ask him to leave it and let it be."

Meanwhile, on the work front, Kareena's Daayra will be out in theatres on September 18. The film is directed by Meghna Gulzar and also stars Prithviraj Sukumaran.

Amitabh Bachchan Slams Retirement Rumours: 'Iska Matlab Hota Hai Sone Jaa Raha Hu'



Amitabh Bachchan has dismissed retirement rumours. Days after the Bollywood superstar expressed his desire to quit Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC) and mentioned that he "wishes to retire", he has now clarified that he only meant about going to bed after finishing writing his blog. "I wrote in the blog.. 'it's late, time to retire..' which we all know means retire to bed it's late.. and this is the Media—the CONSCIENCE of a NATION—THE ULTIMATE INFORMER!!" Big B wrote in this latest blog while sharing a newspaper cutting of a report about his 'retirement'.

He further explained what he meant by 'retirement' and added, "Ji nahin huzoor, main kaam se retire nahin ho raha hoon; Angrezi mein iska matlab hota hai main ab sone jaa raha hoon. Aur wahan maanyavar aapko aane ka nimantran nahin hai. (No sir, I am not retiring from work any time soon; (retire) in English means going to sleep. And you are not invited there.)"

What Did Amitabh Bachchan Say About Retirement?

Just a few days back, Amitabh Bachchan dropped a big hit about his longtime association with Kaun Banega Crorepati.

The Bollywood actor, who is currently hosting the 18th season of the show, indirectly expressed his desire to quit the show. Big B mentioned that it has become 'difficult' for him to continue hosting duties because of contestants' heartbreaking stories.

"... some contestants come with such grave personal stories, that it becomes difficult to conduct not just our feelings for them but also to continue hosting the show..I shall not indulge more because it would take away some elements from the understanding that a host gives to the Channel.. but it has been a heart-breaking experience.. I wish to retire now.. it is late.. and the night invites.. Love," he wrote.

It should be noted that Amitabh Bachchan has been the host of KBC since its inception in 2000, except for the third season, which was hosted by Shah Rukh Khan.

Shah Rukh Khan Calls Ranveer Singh's Dhurandhar 'Fantastic': 'Loved Both The Parts'



The Hamza fever is far from over. Ranveer Singh's Dhurandhar franchise has not only delivered a massive box-office run but has also created a strong wave of conversation around his performances as Hamza and Jaskirat. Now, the franchise has received a shoutout from none other than Shah Rukh Khan, who has revealed that he has watched both films and enjoyed them. During a recent #AskSRK session, a fan took the opportunity to ask Shah Rukh about the biggest blockbusters to come out of Hindi cinema in recent times. The user asked him directly: "Have you seen Dhurandhar? #AskSRK" Shah Rukh Khan replied, "Loved both the parts....fantastic by the whole team!!!"

Dhurandhar: What Is The Film About?

Dhurandhar is a Hindi spy-action thriller written and directed by Aditya Dhar, who previously made Uri: The Surgical Strike. The film is set against the backdrop of Karachi's criminal underworld, political networks and India-Pakistan tensions. It follows Hamza Ali Mazari, played by Ranveer Singh, an undercover Indian intelligence operative who enters Karachi's Lyari area and slowly builds his position inside the local underworld.

The film is inspired by real geopolitical events, including the 1999 IC-814 hijacking, the 2001 Parliament attack, the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks and the gang wars in Karachi's Lyari region. However, it is a fictionalised spy thriller and not a direct biopic of any one real-life intelligence officer. The story explores how an undercover agent infiltrates a dangerous criminal network while hiding his real identity and mission. Ranveer Singh plays Hamza Ali Mazari, whose deeper identity is later revealed to be connected to his Indian intelligence mission. Unlike a conventional spy who operates in uniform, his character works from inside the enemy's criminal network. The film's central conflict comes from the risks involved in gaining the trust of gangsters, politicians and terror-linked figures while trying to protect his own identity.

NEWS BOX

"Remember Where Bin Laden Hid": India Asks UN To See Reality Of Terror

NEW YORK.(Agency)

India has once again shredded Pakistan for supporting terror as a state policy and reminded the international community that many of the world's most wanted terrorists were eventually found not in "some ungoverned frontier" but ordinary places right in the middle of civilian dwellings. Alluding to Pakistan, India told the UN Security Council (UNSC) that al-Qaeda terrorists behind the 9/11 attacks including Osama bin Laden, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Ramzi Binalshibh, Walid bin Attash and Mustafa Ahmed al-Hawsawi were found settled in urban locations and not some remote hideouts.

"The leaders of al Qaeda who conceived and directed these 9/11 attacks did not escape justice in the wilderness of some ungoverned frontier. Osama bin Laden, who ordered and financed the plot, was tracked down and killed in a fortified compound within a settled, guarded community under Operation Neptune Spear," India said, referring to the US raid in Pakistan's Abbottabad that killed bin Laden in May 2011. A big problem is that the same permissive environment now shelters the terror groups Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), India's permanent representative to the UNSC Harish Parvathaneni said. These two terror groups were among the targets of India's Operation Sindoor. Their infrastructure such as training camps and terror launchpads deep inside Pakistan was levelled by Indian cruise missiles in May 2025.

Climate Change Likely Behind Glacier Collapse That Caused Nepal Floods: Scientists

world.(Agency)

Climate change is highly likely to have contributed to the catastrophic glacier collapse that flooded parts of Nepal and Tibet in late August, killing around 1,400 people and leaving thousands still missing, scientists said on Thursday. Rapidly warming temperatures in the region have caused glaciers to thin and have melted ice and permafrost buried deep in the bedrock of the Himalayas, according to the World Weather Attribution (WWA) group of researchers. While it is difficult to ascertain the precise role played by climate change in the collapse of around 2 sq km (0.8 sq miles) of rock wall and glacier ice on the Langtang Lirung mountain last month, soaring temperatures created the preconditions that made it more likely, researchers involved in the study said. There's absolutely no doubt that human induced climate change played a role here in the preconditioning of the disaster through permafrost thawing, through thinning of the glaciers, through having more rainfall instead of snow," said Friederike Otto, a climatologist at Imperial College London. WWA uses peer-reviewed methods to assess the role played by global warming in extreme weather events, according to its website. The study said mean temperatures were around 5 degrees Celsius (9 degrees Fahrenheit) higher than normal in the Himalayan region in August, with 1.5 C of the increase coming from climate change. Unusually high levels of snowfall in October and November of last year also added to the volume of meltwater once temperatures began to rise, which could have helped glaciers in the region have been thinning by about half a metre per year (about 1.6 feet) since the year 2000, changing stresses on the rock. Melting permafrost is also likely to have weakened the rock wall, the study said. A 7.8 magnitude earthquake that hit the same mountain in 2015 could have played a role by weakening the underlying bedrock as well, but its precise impact is unclear, trigger the glacier collapse, according to the study. We conclude that this was a geologically vulnerable slope, potentially weakened by the 2015 earthquake, but it was destabilised.

Ignored Orders, Concealed Mistakes: OpenAI Reports New AI Safety Incidents

PARIS.(Agency)

OpenAI said on Wednesday it would begin regularly publishing reports on unexpected or unauthorized AI behavior, while warning that the industry has yet to solve key alignment challenges as systems grow more powerful. The company released a new framework to track, investigate, and disclose cases of AI model misalignment, along with six reports detailing unexpected or concerning model behavior. Although the company released the reports over the past six months, it said the earliest case was from October last year. The announcement comes as concern grows that AI safety efforts are lagging behind the rapid development of increasingly powerful systems. Researchers have warned that as AI agents become more autonomous, they may develop behaviors that diverge from their creators' intentions and become harder to monitor or control. OpenAI and other AI labs have faced mounting scrutiny since July, when OpenAI disclosed that during training its AI agents bypassed internal controls and coordinated actions that OpenAI described as "an unprecedented

cyber incident" involving software platform Hugging Face. The incident intensified debate over the risks posed by increasingly capable AI systems and whether companies developing them can provide adequate oversight. Since the Hugging Face hack, other incidents involving OpenAI-linked agents were publicly reported, sparking debate over whether the full scope of the incidents has been identified. That debate accelerated in early September after Reuters reported that OpenAI's agents hijacked a dormant German wiki site this spring. OpenAI officials knew about the episode but chose not to disclose it, Reuters reported. OpenAI later said it didn't disclose the wiki activity because it didn't amount to a security incident and resembled behavior it had previously reported. OpenAI said it would then develop criteria for reporting unauthorized activity that fell short of a security breach.

The company, led by Sam Altman, has acknowledged some of those incidents only after third parties publicly reported them, including a recent intrusion into the RubyGems software package repository.

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

The US military honor guard has been rehearsing and the new White House helipad is ready. But will Xi Jinping and Donald Trump achieve lift-off at their summit next week? Warnings of an AI apocalypse hang heavy over the Chinese president's first talks at the White House with his US counterpart, with both countries racing for supremacy in this technology. Trump's Iran war casts a long shadow too, as China seeks to avoid US sanctions against countries dealing with Tehran, despite reports that Beijing supplied Tehran with intelligence for a strike on US troops. A trade war is of even greater concern and the world's two largest economies are still seeking to mitigate the fallout from Trump's global tariffs. The threat of war over Taiwan looms large as well. Behind it all is a desire to manage tensions between a superpower keen to keep its place at the top and a rapidly rising rival determined to make the 21st century a Chinese one. "I'll be discussing almost everything with him,"

Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One on Sunday, ahead of their meeting on September 24. 'Don't expect much' - But the two leaders are more likely to simply extend a relative truce rather than produce any concrete results, like when Xi hosted Trump in Beijing four months ago, experts said. "I don't expect much to come out of this," Jonathan Czin of the Brookings Institution told AFP.

"In many ways, this is going to be a recapitulation of Trump's visit to Beijing back in May, where the focus was really on the ostensible rapport between the two leaders. "With fears about AI making global headlines, agreement to cooperate on regulation or a slowdown is expected to be a major topic of discussion between Trump and Xi. But any major deals are "politically out of reach for now," said Wang Dong, a professor at Peking University, as Beijing and Washington both fear losing out in the race for AI dominance. Tensions over Iran will also come up. US Treasury Secretary

Scott Bessent is due to meet his Chinese counterpart He Lifeng this weekend for pre-summit talks including on Iran sanctions. Trump has, however, played down reports that Chinese entities



supplied Iran with satellite imagery for an attack on a US military base in Jordan, saying Xi had "behaved reasonably well" and that "we spy on them, too." On trade, there is "room for progress on tariffs, agricultural purchases and selected export controls", Yue Su of The Economist Intelligence Unit told AFP.

The son of jailed Hong Kong pro-

democracy media mogul Jimmy Lai made an appeal to President Xi from Washington that his 78-year-old father be released. Trump said in May that he had discussed Lai's fate with Xi, but his release was unlikely. But Beijing did release the founder of an underground church, Ezra Jin, after Trump raised his case with Xi.

Yet Trump has, as so often before, appeared more interested in the optics of his meeting with a powerful foreign leader than with the substance. "This is less a summit and more a spectacle. This is designed for deep public consumption," said Kurt Campbell, former US Deputy Secretary of State and now Chairman of The Asia Group. Trump pushed for a new granite helicopter landing pad on the White House South Lawn to be open in time for Xi's visit, which will include a grand state dinner. Troops in flashy uniforms have been rehearsing on the White House driveway this week ahead of the welcome ceremony.

Global powers that themselves violate international law sit in Security Council: Guterres

UNITED NATIONS.(Agency)

In a scathing commentary, UN chief Antonio Guterres has said that global powers that themselves violate international law sit in the Security Council, as he asserted that reform of the 15-nation global body "must be an absolute priority". Secretary General Guterres also underscored the need for "redistribution of power. We have geopolitical divides, and in these geopolitical divides, we have powers that themselves violate international law and sit in the Security Council. And that has been paralysing the Security Council, as we know," Guterres told reporters Wednesday. "That is why the reform of the Security Council must be an absolute priority. It is unacceptable to have a Security Council with a

composition that reflects the world of many decades ago instead of reflecting today's world.

"And that is a factor of paralysis," the UN chief said while addressing a press conference at the world



headquarters ahead of the opening of the high-level week of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly. Guterres said paralysis of the UN Security Council has created a situation in which "because the

example coming from the biggest powers is not a good example, every country around the world feels that they are entitled to do whatever they want. And they know that they will do it with impunity because the Security Council, that is the organisation that is supposed to maintain peace and security in the world, is paralysed.

"That impunity has created this environment in which we see more and more countries violating international law", international humanitarian law and human rights law, and "doing it in total impunity. And let's be clear. The question is a question of power.

And the question is that the way power is distributed and power is used in our world does not allow multilateral institutions to act effectively," he said.

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen says she wants Canada to become the bloc's 1st associate member

STRASBOURG, France.(Agency)

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen proposed Wednesday making Canada the European Union's first associate member, a striking overture as U.S. President Donald Trump's threats drive Ottawa closer to Europe.

Speaking in Charlotte, North Carolina, Trump suggested that allowing Canada to become an associate EU member could be a "hostile act" and threatened to respond to the proposed move by imposing more tariffs on the bloc.

Trump conditioned his threat on the "intention" of European leaders, saying that, "If it's a good intention, that's fine. If it's a bad intention, we'll put very heavy tariffs on Europe." He also suggested the U.S. could cut off trade with Europe in certain areas.

Trump called the prospect of Canada joining the EU "laughable" and

called America's neighbor a "terrible trade partner." He also on Wednesday ratcheted up his trade war by signing an order restricting the U.S. government's purchases of Canadian goods. Trump's tariffs and repeated talk of making Canada the 51st state



have soured the relationship between the North American neighbors. Canada is seeking to reduce its dependence on the United States, the destination for roughly 70% of its exports, and Prime Minister Mark Carney has called for a "unique

alliance" with the EU.

In her annual State of the European Union address, von der Leyen said Canada and the EU would build on their existing free trade agreement, known as CETA, with a broader "Alliance for the Future" aimed at creating "a common prosperity and economic security space."

She cast that closer relationship as rooted not just in trade but in shared democratic values. "Above all, dear Mark, Europe and Canada believe in democracy," von der Leyen said to Carney, who received a standing ovation at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France. He is due to address the Parliament on Thursday.

Canada seeks a relationship just short of EU membership

A Canadian official familiar with the discussions told The Associated Press last week that Ottawa was exploring ties with the EU that could stop just short of membership.

Australia To Ban Foreign Students From Bringing Families During Studies

world.(Agency)

Australia will stop foreign students from bringing their partners and children to accompany them while they study and tighten rules for temporary migrants to switch visas, media reported on Thursday, ahead of a minister's speech on immigration changes.

Net overseas migration numbers will be reduced to 225,000 by 2028, down from about 300,000 now, Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke will say in a speech at the National Press Club later on Thursday, public broadcaster ABC News reported, without citing sources. Burke's office did not immediately



respond to a request for comment. At present, spouses and partners of international students can work in Australia, although the number of hours they are permitted to work varies depending on the student's course of study. The student can also bring dependent children under the age of 18. The government's move comes after the hard-right One Nation party, which has been surging in recent polls, said this week that it would slash the number of temporary migrants by 750,000 over three years, to give Australians "breathing space." One Nation, which describes its approach as "Australia first" and whose policies have drawn comparisons to those of U.S. President Donald Trump, said it would aim to restrict net overseas migration to 130,000 after the initial three years, with the program expected to be reviewed annually. Australia's migration intake, driven largely by international students, backpackers and temporary skilled workers, surged after the country reopened its borders in February 2022 following nearly two years of COVID-19 restrictions. However, numbers have been trending lower over the past two years, even as critics argue the influx of migrants has increased pressure on housing and infrastructure and strained social cohesion.

Disguised As Students, North Korean Workers Build Drones For Russia

World.(Agency)

Russia is increasingly mobilising North Korean workers to build military drones for use against Ukraine in defiance of international sanctions, giving Pyongyang a key source of revenue to fund its unlawful weapons programs, the US and its allies said in a report. Up to 25,000 North Koreans are believed to be working in Russia's drone industry, including at facilities in Alabuga, Tatarstan, where unmanned aerial vehicles are assembled, the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team said in a report released Wednesday. The report said North Korean workers abroad are estimated to have earned up to \$800 million for the Kim Jong Un regime last year, providing funds for its unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile programs in violation of UN Security Council resolutions. The development underscores how the deepening military ties between Russia and North Korea are

expanding beyond weapons and troops into labor and industrial production. Russia gets a new pool of workers for industries supporting its war in Ukraine, while Kim's regime gains access to foreign currency that



helps finance its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, further eroding a sanctions framework Moscow itself once helped enforce. North Korean workers in Russia are disguised as students under a visa scheme to evade sanctions, the report said. A North

Korean worker there earns an average of \$7,500 in wages a year, most of which is confiscated by the Kim regime. In some cases, the forfeited amount exceeds their actual earnings, the report said.

Monthly wages earned by North Koreans working in Russia may be up to five times higher than what they can earn in China, making Russia an increasingly lucrative destination for Pyongyang. At the end of 2025, an estimated 20,000 to 70,000 North Korean laborers were working in China, while another 15,000 to 30,000 were in Russia, the report said. "DPRK authorities exercise extreme control over laborers' movement and interactions with outsiders in order to prevent defections, while laborers who do defect risk reprisals against family members remaining in North Korea," it said. DPRK is the abbreviation for North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.