



MAHANAGAR METRO

VOICE OF THE CITY, PULSE OF THE NATION

MAHANAGAR METRO

For News Coverage,
Press Releases &
Advertisement Bookings,
Please Contact Our Office

PAWAN MAKAN
+91-9638877700

mahanagarmetro7@gmail.com

Rs 16,000 crore bonanza for coastal Karnataka

MANGALURU(Agency)

The state cabinet on Friday unveiled a development package worth over Rs 16,000 crore for coastal Karnataka, approving an ambitious mix of tourism, infrastructure, higher education, healthcare, fisheries, road connectivity and urban development projects at its first-ever meeting held in Mangaluru.

Chairing the meeting, Chief Minister D K Shivakumar announced a series of decisions aimed at positioning the coast as a major tourism and blue economy hub while strengthening civic infrastructure and public services across Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttara Kannada districts.

Tourism emerged as the centrepiece of the cabinet decisions with the approval of the Coastal-Malnad Karnataka Tourism Policy-2026. The policy envisages the creation of nine tourism circuits and treats tourism projects as infrastructure projects, enabling investors to avail longer loan repayment periods and other incentives. Shivakumar said amendments to Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) norms would be pursued to facilitate tourism-friendly development along the coast.

The cabinet approved the upgradation of the College of Fisheries, Mangaluru, into a Fisheries and Blue Economy University, increasing student intake from 60 to 200. An allocation of Rs 11.5 crore has been sanctioned and a special officer will be appointed to oversee the transition.

Gehlot faults tame Congress strategy for poor results in urban body elections

JAIPUR. (Agency)

Former Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot's criticism of the Congress's civic poll strategy has brought the party's internal differences back into focus. Gehlot questioned whether a more aggressive campaign could have helped the Congress, and why a large number of voters chose Independents.

Gehlot said the Pradesh Congress Committee should have planned roadshows and a stronger campaign against Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma and other senior BJP leaders.

Had there been proper planning, I believe the anti-government sentiment would have benefited the Congress. We could have won more seats," he said. Gehlot also pointed to the party's 'Sangathan Srijan' programme, saying that despite the organisational network created through it, the large number of independent victories raised questions for the Congress.

The remarks come as the BJP and Congress remain closely matched in vote share across Rajasthan's 309 urban local bodies. The BJP won 4,179 of the 10,235 declared wards, compared with 3,613 for the Congress and 2,273 for Independents. The BJP pulled 35.18% of the vote, against 34.24% for the Congress, a gap of just 0.94 percentage points.

The strong showing by Independents has also complicated the formation of civic boards, with several bodies producing no clear majority and leaving Independents in a decisive position.

Attack on PDA: Akhilesh hits out at Yogi govt after ABVP, SP student leaders clash

Lucknow(Agency)

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday attacked the Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government over a confrontation between workers of the party's student wing and members of the RSS-affiliated ABVP at a college in Rae Bareilly, alleging that "sajatiyavad" (casteism) was running the state.

In a post on X, the former UP Chief Minister said, "Uttar Pradesh does not have a government; 'sajatiyavad' is running the state," while sharing a video clip of a news report on the incident. He also said, "Those in power are continuously attacking the PDA to show their authority. Every attack on the PDA will always keep the BJP away from power."

"PDA" refers to the "Pichhda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak" social formula which is central to Samajwadi Party's. The remarks came as a large number of SP workers, led by the party's Rae Bareilly district president Engineer Virendra Yadav, marched to the offices of the superintendent of police and the district

magistrate to protest over the episode.

The protest followed a confrontation on Thursday between SP's student wing, the Samajwadi Chhatra



Sabha, and workers of the RSS-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad at Firoz Gandhi Degree College.

The SP student wing was carrying out an awareness

campaign when its members came face-to-face with ABVP workers, leading to an argument.

Police reached the spot and pacified both sides. Virendra Yadav, along with other office-bearers of the party, also arrived there, and an argument reportedly took place between him and the police station in-charge.

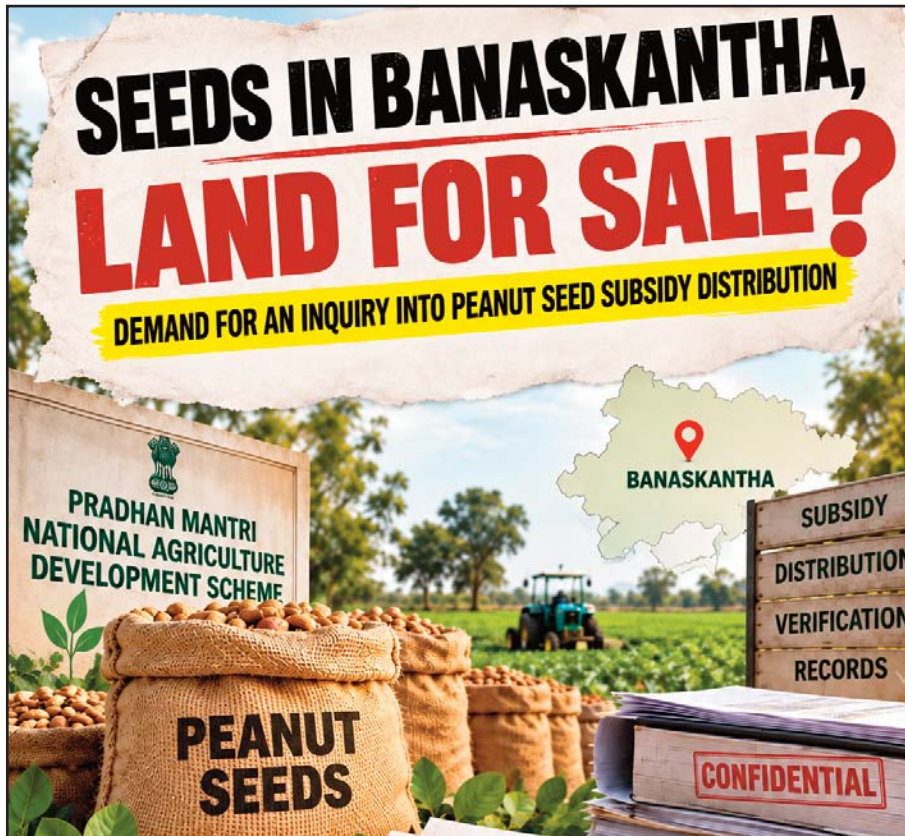
SP leaders and workers later reached the office of the superintendent of police, from where police allegedly removed them and manhandled some of them, including a party MLA. On Friday, SP workers gathered again in public before proceeding to the offices of the superintendent of police and the district magistrate. Party state secretary, Shashikant Sharma, Harchandpur MLA Rahul Lodhi and Bachhrawan MLA Shyam Sundar Bharti were among those present. Virendra Yadav said the district magistrate heard their concerns and assured them of an inquiry.

Earlier, Circle Officer (City) Ashish Nigam said both sides had submitted their demands and objections through memoranda and complaints to the college administration and officials. He rejected allegations circulating on social media that police had assaulted students or workers, calling them "completely false, misleading and baseless."

Rs 17 Crore Peanut Seed Scam in Banaskantha under PM National Agricultural Development Scheme?

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Palanpur / Banaskantha: Sensation-provoking allegations have surfaced that a massive seed subsidy scam worth crores of rupees has been carried out in the border and farmer-dominant Banaskantha district under the name of the 'Prime Minister National Agricultural Development Scheme' (Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana). Large-scale corruption in the state treasury in the name of poor peanut-growing farmers in Banaskantha has come to light, creating a stir across the state's politics and agricultural sector. The state government had announced assistance of Rs 40 per kilogram for up to a maximum of 2 hectares for peanut-growing farmers in the Banaskantha district. However, serious allegations have been made that crores of rupees were embezzled through the collusion of cooperatives and officials even before this assistance reached the farmers. 40,610 Quintals of Seeds Missing? How Did the Scam Happen? According to startling information received, it was claimed that 40,610 quintals of peanut seeds were distributed in the district through co-operatives. However, the ground reality is quite different. Distribution on Paper Only without Ground Verification: According to the rules, Gram Se-



vaks are required to visit farmers' fields for verification. However, sensing corruption, many Gram Sevaks flatly refused to sign or conduct verification. Official Reports Suppressed: The local District Agriculture Officer had submitted an inquiry report to the

state government stating that major corruption had taken place in the peanut seed subsidy. However, it is alleged that higher-ups sitting in Gandhinagar suppressed this report. Collusion of Cooperatives and Companies: There is a major mystery

regarding which company the seeds were purchased from and whether that quantity actually reached the district. 5 Dangerous and Direct Questions from Mahanagar Metro to the Ministry of Agriculture: Mahanagar Metro demands clear answers from the state Ministry of Agriculture against those who have committed this scam and looted the rights of farmers: Reality of Quantity: How many physical quantities of peanut seeds were given by the state government to the District Agriculture Officer for the farmers of Banaskantha, and what quantity actually reached there? Beneficiary List: To how many farmers in Banaskantha has the state government disbursed financial assistance so far, and what is the total amount given? Account of Procurement: From which cooperative institution, which private or public company, at what price, and what quantity of peanut seeds were purchased by that institution? Bank Transfer Statistics: How much money has the District Agriculture Officer's office deposited into the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) accounts of farmers so far? Agricultural Area: How many hectares of peanut cultivation are actually registered in the Banaskantha district, and how much seed subsidy was withdrawn against it?

Rahul Gandhi calls Nandigram candidate's arrest revenge, BJP hits back

The Bengal BJP has rejected Rahul Gandhi's charge that Milan Pradhan's arrest in Nandigram was political revenge. The arrest has triggered a wider row, with Mamata Banerjee also questioning its timing before the bypoll.

New Delhi(Agency).

The BJP's Bengal unit has hit back at Rahul Gandhi, hours after the Leader of the Opposition accused the BJP-led Bengal government of seeking "political revenge" and "murdering democracy" over the arrest of Congress candidate Milan Pradhan in the Nandigram bypoll. Responding to Gandhi's allegations, the Bengal BJP's official handle said Pradhan had multiple cases registered against him and that the police arrest was not vindictive but was aimed at ensuring law and order. "Before alleging 'political vendetta' and 'murder of democracy', Congress must

answer some inconvenient facts," the party said.

"Four warrants are reportedly pending against its Nandigram by-election candidate, Milan Pradhan, in connection with the following



cases: 1. Nandigram PS Case No. 75/07 (30.04.2007): Sections 147, 148, 149, 448, 302 and 506 IPC, and Section 27 of the Arms Act. 2. Nandigram PS Case No. 221/07 (15.11.2007): Sections 147, 148,

149, 326, 364, 302 and 201 IPC. 3. Nandigram PS Case No. 188/07 (08.11.2007): Sections 147, 148, 149, 324, 307 and 302 IPC, and Sections 25/27 of the Arms Act. 4. Khejuri PS Case No. 44/07 (30.07.2007): Sections 148/149 IPC and Sections 25/35 of the Arms Act," it further added.

It also mentioned that the first three cases against Pradhan involve murder-related provisions, while the last case includes arms-related offences. The party also said the arrest was made after the Ritabrata Banerjee-led Democratic Trinamool Congress's Nandigram candidate, MD Ehteshamul Haque Siddiqui, lodged a complaint with the local police about the pending cases.

FTAs opening new career opportunities for Indian youth, says PM Modi

PM Modi said that the talent and skills of India's youth have won the trust of the entire world, which has great expectations from Indian innovators, entrepreneurs and the country's youthful strength.

New Delhi(Agency).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) signed by India with various countries are opening up new career opportunities for the youth. Addressing a 'Rozgar Mela' (Jobs Fair) virtually, the prime minister also said that the talent and skills of India's youth have won the trust of the entire world, which has great expectations from Indian innovators, entrepreneurs and the country's youthful strength. "India signed 40 Free Trade Agreements. These FTAs are opening new doors of possibilities for our youth. Such trade agreements pave the way for new partnerships for our entrepreneurs, open paths to new markets, and create new possibilities in careers for our youth," he said. At the function, the prime minister

distributed more than 51,000 appointment letters virtually to newly selected youth, who will join various government departments and organisations.

Referring to the just concluded BRICS



Summit, Modi said India's effort has been to ensure that BRICS cooperation does not remain limited to governments alone. "Our entrepreneurs, our farmers, our women, our youth - everyone should become an active partner in this partnership," he said.

Golf Course road rage: Accused men sent to 14-day judicial custody

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A local court on Friday sent the two men arrested for knocking down a biker with their car in the middle of the busy GCR Road to 14 days' judicial custody.

Kalyan Singh Bainsla (33) and his cousin Lovneesh (32) were produced before the court after their two-day police custody ended. Kalyan's counsel, Lalit Bindal, said the custodial interrogation of both accused had been completed. "Police informed the court that their investigation in terms of custodial interrogation had been completed. Following this, the court sent both accused to 14 days' judicial custody. The next date of hearing has been fixed for October 1," he said. The biker, Shivani Chauhan, said there were two more men in the Maruti Ciaz which hit her. Bainsla and Lovneesh identified them as Anup Kumar Awasthi and Shrinath Vishwakarma and police said efforts are on to trace them.

The incident took place on Sept 13. Chauhan said she was being followed by the Ciaz for nearly two kilometres before it hit her bike near the Sector 55-56 metro station. Footage from a camera mounted on Chauhan's motorcycle shows the Bainsla's car repeatedly attempting to get alongside her. After the collision, the bike slid across the road and Chauhan was knocked down to the ground. She escaped without any injuries because she was wearing protective gear, police said. Chauhan told police that before the collision, the driver had made obscene gestures at her. She posted the footage from her dash camera on her social media, which was circulated widely, after which police took suo motu cognisance of the matter. Based on her statement and video evidence, police added sections 78, 79 and 109(1) of the BNS, including the attempt to murder charge, to the FIR initially registered under sections 281 and 125.

73 condos get notices over mosquito breeding risks

Noida.(Agency)

The health department has issued 73 notices to housing societies and residential establishments for lapses that could encourage mosquito breeding and increase the risk of dengue and malaria. Officials said 15 housing societies were specifically served notices for failing to take preventive measures.

Some of the highrises which have been served notices are Kalypso Court and Wish Town in Sector 128, Amrapali Silicon City in Sector 76, Amrapali Heartbeat City in Sector 107, Grand Ajnara Heritage in Sector 93B, Apex Golf Avenue, Ajnara Homes, Galaxy Vega, Supertech Ecovillage-3, Panchsheel Greens in Greater Noida West, Samriddhi Grand Avenue, ACE Aspire, The Great Value Sharanam in Sector 107, Best Tech Park in Sector 137, Irish Pearls and Amrapali Leisure Valley in Greater Noida. This year, the district has recorded 91 dengue cases and 50 malaria cases. Last year, the district saw 650 cases of dengue and 189 cases of malaria. "The department is carrying out regular inspections across housing societies and residential establishments since June to identify and eliminate potential mosquito-breeding sites. Wherever stagnant water or other lapses are found, notices are being issued and the establishments are being asked to take immediate corrective measures. Preventive action by residents and maintenance teams is particularly important during the monsoon to reduce the risk of dengue and malaria," said district malaria officer Sruti Verma.

Factory on fire after AC short circuit

Noida.(Agency)

A fire broke out on the fourth floor of a garment factory in Sector 63 on Friday morning, prompting a firefighting operation that lasted nearly 90 minutes. Everyone inside the building was evacuated safely soon after the blaze was detected, and no injuries or casualties were reported. The employees of Om Sai Garments factory reached the premises around 7:30 am and noticed the blaze after they opened the fourth floor. Factory security tried to extinguish the fire, but the flames quickly broke containment and spread. The fire department and local police were informed around



7:50 am. Eight fire tenders, an articulated water tower and a hydraulic platform were sent to the location, said Pradeep Kumar Chaubey, chief fire officer of G B Nagar. The water jets were deployed using a hydraulic platform, and two teams entered the factory from two separate entry points. The blaze was confined to the fourth floor, preventing it from engulfing the entire factory or spreading to adjacent properties. Following standard protocol, the fire department evacuated people from neighbouring facilities while continuously spraying nearby buildings to keep the flames at bay. A preliminary investigation points to an electrical short circuit in the floor's air-conditioning system. A team has been tasked with inspecting the remaining electrical installations to confirm the exact cause. The exact scale of loss has not been reported yet, and an assessment of damaged stock and equipment is underway.

World Alzheimer's Day 2026: Early Diagnosis, Greater Possibilities, and Living a Dignified Life with Dementia

Mahanagar Metro Desk

New Delhi: World Alzheimer's Day is observed as part of a global awareness campaign led by Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI), Illinois, USA. The World Health Organization (WHO) also promotes public health awareness and care initiatives related to Alzheimer's disease. The theme for 2026 is "The Earlier You Know, The More You Can Do: A Dementia Diagnosis Matters." This theme emphasizes the benefits that early diagnosis can provide to individuals living with dementia, their caregivers and families, and society as a whole. Alzheimer's disease is a progressive neurodegenerative disorder that affects the brain and is the most common cause of dementia. It may gradually affect memory, thinking, language, decision-making, and the ability to perform daily activities. Symptoms and disease progression may vary from person to person. Signs such as repeatedly forgetting the same information, difficulty performing familiar tasks, trouble finding appropriate words, confusion about time or place, or significant changes in behaviour should prompt individuals to seek medical advice. Not every instance of forgetfulness is



a sign of Alzheimer's disease; appropriate medical evaluation can help identify other possible causes. Early diagnosis can help individuals and their families understand the condition, plan future care, and access necessary healthcare services. It also enables individuals to make timely decisions regarding their personal preferences, daily living, financial matters, and legal arrangements. Diagnosis is not simply about identifying a disease; it provides an opportunity to begin care and support tailored to the individual's needs. Family caregivers also require guidance, training, and emotional support. In this regard, Dr. Amit M. Patel (Ph.D.), Senior Academician and Professional, and an expert core committee member associated with

various reputed international health and sports organisations, states, "The care of individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and dementia requires not only medical treatment but also multidisciplinary healthcare that addresses their physical, psychological, social, and daily living needs." Some individuals living with Alzheimer's disease may experience difficulty walking, reduced balance, decreased muscle strength, and an increased risk of falls. In such situations, physiotherapy can support the maintenance of functional abilities and quality of life. Physiotherapists can assess an individual's physical condition and provide appropriate exercise programmes, balance training, gait training, strategies to maintain mobility, and safety guidance to prevent falls. A physiotherapy rehabilitation programme should be designed for each individual by considering their physical abilities, disease progression, and safety. The objective of physiotherapy is not to claim a cure for Alzheimer's disease, but to help individuals maintain their existing abilities and preserve as much independence as possible in their daily lives. A multidisciplinary team plays an important role in

the care of individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Physicians, physiotherapists, nursing staff, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, psychologists, dietitians, and medical social workers can collaborate to address the diverse needs of individuals. Occupational therapy can assist with daily activities and environmental safety. Speech and language therapists can assess communication and swallowing difficulties, while medical social workers can provide guidance and support to family caregivers. In India, government initiatives such as the National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE) are operational to address the healthcare needs of older adults. The programme aims to provide healthcare services, referrals, and rehabilitation support to older individuals across different levels of healthcare. The availability of services may vary depending on the state and the level of the healthcare institution. The Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) and government healthcare centres can help promote health awareness, initial assessment, and referrals to higher levels of healthcare services, as required.

A departed soul requires no material grandeur or extravagant rituals, because true tribute is measured by compassion, not by how much money is spent.

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Author: Rupesh Solanki, Bhachau, Kutch Death is an inevitable truth of life. When a loved one leaves us, it is natural to feel grief in our hearts. However, in today's time, in some families, displays of status, expensive rituals, and social pressure are becoming more prominent at funerals than genuine mourning. It is as though the depth of one's love for the departed is measured by the expense and grandeur of the rituals performed! A deceased person no longer needs material possessions. What the living family members need is consolation, sympathy, and humanity. Therefore, instead of unnecessary expenses and social showmanship at the time of death, providing support to the grieving family is far more meaningful. "What is the



value of grandeur after death, if a person was not loved while alive? Tribute is not offered through flowers, but through good and compassionate conduct." We need to think about how contradictory it is when a poor family,

worried only about what society will say, takes on debt to perform expensive funeral rituals. Instead of increasing the financial burden on a family during a time of grief, helping to reduce that burden is the true responsibility of soci-

ety. At a funeral, there is a need to demonstrate humanity, not expensive rituals. Helping someone in need in memory of the deceased, planting a tree, contributing to the education of a poor child, or providing financial and emotional support to the bereaved family—such gestures can become a far more meaningful tribute than any form of display. Let us create a tradition where, after a person's death, it is not the amount of money spent but the personality and values they lived by that are remembered; where sensitivity speaks louder than showmanship; and where humanity remains alive rather than mere rituals. It is time to transform the occasion of death from a "competition of appearances" into an "expression of humanity."

was a man on a mission to acquit himself

Noida.(Agency)

Surinder Koli was four hours from death on Sept 7, 2014. The black warrant bore his name and gallows protocol had been activated at Meerut district jail. It had been five years since a Ghaziabad CBI court pronounced the first of 13 death sentences against the man on trial for the Nithari killings of 2006. Hope of clemency had waned after it was upheld by the high court and Supreme Court and President rejected his mercy petition. After an intervention by lawyer Indira Jaising and a midnight hearing in Supreme Court, Koli was brought back from the gallows. In the years that followed, the convictions against him were overturned by Allahabad high court. On Nov 11, 2025, Supreme Court acquitted Koli — who for nearly two decades was called 'Butcher of Nithari' — in the last case that had kept him in jail. The next day, he walked out a free man. That freedom lasted less than a year. Koli was found dead in Haridwar on Friday. Koli's time in jail was defined by one overriding purpose: to acquit himself. For a large part of trial proceedings in the CBI court, he argued his own cases. As a

prisoner in Ghaziabad's Dasna jail, he drowned himself in sheaves of papers where he purportedly wrote out legal arguments that he presented in court. Sept 2014 was his closest call. Koli had been transferred quietly from Dasna jail in Ghaziabad, where he had been lodged since his arrest in Dec 2006, to Meerut. His execution was set for 5 am on Sept 8.

After his mercy plea was rejected, Koli had written to lawyers Yug Mohit Chaudhary, Payoshi Roy and Siddharth Sharma for help after being advised by someone in jail to approach the trio, who were known to take up death-penalty cases. Chaudhary alerted Jaising four hours before the execution. At last, Jaising appeared before Justice H L Dattu, who woke up another judge, Justice Anil Dave. Court staff were summoned from their homes. At 1.50 am, Supreme Court stayed Koli's execution. The intervention came nearly eight years after Koli's arrest on Dec 29, 2006. Lawyers told TOI his journey through the criminal justice system had been compromised right from the beginning. Ravindra S Garai, Supreme Court

advocate-on-record who represented Koli in the trial court in 2016 in one of the cases — the murder of Nanda Devi, a 25-year-old house helper — had earlier told TOI, "This case had almost no evidence



at all. It was astonishing to see that even the complainant in the case was not cross-examined, the police never produced him in court, and solely based on DNA proof, it was established that this victim went missing and was murdered by Koli." Between 2009 and 2022, Koli was sentenced to death in 13 cases. He was accused of rape, murder, necrophilia and cannibalism. The first conviction came in the Rimpia Haldar case. "What prompted us to take his case

up in 2014 was how a poor defenceless man was falsely implicated and made a scapegoat to protect the rich and powerful.

And despite such shoddy evidence, the prosecution almost succeeded in numbing judicial scrutiny and executing an innocent man," Roy had earlier told After Supreme Court stayed the execution, it allowed a fresh review petition to be heard in open court. Ram Jethmalani appeared pro bono before Justices Markandey Katju and Gyan Sudha Misra, arguing that Koli's confession was "false and unreliable", had been extracted under duress, and that crucial forensic evidence, including autopsy findings, had been suppressed. Supreme Court rejected the review petition on Oct 28, 2014. However, the proceedings highlighted gaps in the case. On Jan 28, 2015, a high court bench led by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud commuted Koli's death sentence to life imprisonment. While the legal battle continued, Koli withdrew into his notes. Prisoner No. 522/09 led a reclusive life. Jail authorities bound the A4 sheets he made copious notes on in the order he wanted before each hearing.

Punjab police ASI on patrol shot dead; govt announces Rs 1 cr ex gratia



Amritsar (Agency).

An Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) of the Amritsar Commissionerate Police was shot dead by unidentified motorcycle-borne assailants in the early hours of Friday while performing night patrol duty. The deceased officer, identified as ASI Harjit Singh, was a resident of Tarn Taran deployed with the Police Control Room (PCR) under the jurisdiction of the Gate Hakima police station. The incident occurred at around 2:30 AM near the Bhagatnala grain market when two assailants riding a motorcycle opened fire on him. Singh sustained

critical gunshot wounds and was immediately rushed to a nearby hospital in Amritsar, where he succumbed to his injuries during treatment. Following the attack, police teams quickly arrived at the scene to secure the area and collect forensic evidence. The investigation is ongoing with the authorities examining nearby CCTV footage to establish the motive behind the crime and track down the assailants.

The state government announced an ex-gratia grant of Rs 1 crore, while HDFC Bank will provide an additional insurance compensation of Rs 1 crore.

New temple in 'memory of Ram Mandir movement' to open in Ayodhya soon

The Memorial Temple, situated in the Ayodhya Ram Temple premises, is a tribute to the '27-year-long journey of Ram Lalla', said sources.

Lucknow (Agency).

On March 25, 2020, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath carried the idol of 'Ram Lalla' to a makeshift temple within the Ayodhya temple premises, before construction of the main mandir began at the main site. Now, the Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust has erected a memorial temple at the site of the makeshift temple. Dedicated to the 27-year journey of the Ram Temple movement and Ram Lalla's journey "from a makeshift tent to the grand temple", the Memorial Temple will soon open its gates to the public. Temple Construction Committee Chairman Nripendra Mishra said, "The construction of both the makeshift temple and a memorial next to it is complete. It would be open to the public soon as a symbol and remembrance of the history."

What visitors will see

The memorial temple has been built with teak wood and has carvings. Its outer structure has been created to match the red sandstone design of the main temple. At the centre is an electric "akhand jyoti" or "eternal fire" — a

symbol of "remembrance" of the Ram Janmbhoomi struggle, said officials.

Explaining the decision to use an electric jwala, Mishra said the memorial is a wooden structure and the flame needed to generate no heat to avoid the possibility of an accident. A makeshift tent that initially housed the idol



will also be placed in the temple in a foldable form, said officials. Sources said the memorial temple also has an old idol of Lord Hanuman. It was reportedly brought here along with the Ram Lalla idol and kept under the same tent. However, after the completion of the Ram Temple, the Ram Lalla idol was

shifted to its main 'Garbhagriha' (sanctum sanctorum). The Lord Hanuman idol would remain inside the memorial temple, sources said.

A separate memorial pillar

Alongside the memorial temple, a memorial pillar dedicated to "those who sacrificed their lives for the Ram Temple movement over decades" has also been constructed, officials said. Atop the 'Stambha' is a sun-shaped element, with an engraved pictorial display of Lord Ram as well as the Trust's slogan, "Ramo Vighrahan Dharma", meaning "Ram is the embodiment of Dharma".

Opening date yet to be decided

Asked when the memorial temple and pillar will open to the public, Mishra said, "Both structures are complete. It is upon the (Trust) CEO to decide when and how they would be opened to the public." Sources said the Memorial Temple is near the Sapta Rishis temple near the Pilgrim Facilitation Centre. The Trust is still looking into the security and pilgrim footfall at the main temple before the memorial opens.

Amreli man kills 5-year-old daughter, stuffs body in fridge, ends life: Police

Multiple suicide notes recovered from the spot linked the man's step to 'severe financial constraints', police said

Ahmedabad (Agency).

A MAN allegedly killed his five-year-old daughter, put her body inside a refrigerator and died by suicide citing a financial crisis in Amreli district, police said on Friday. The police on Thursday booked the deceased man, identified as Kishor Natha Dhanak, for the murder of his daughter, Himanshi alias Diku. Dhanak allegedly killed his daughter and then died by suicide at his residence on Wednesday night. Multiple suicide notes recovered from the spot linked the man's step to "severe financial constraints," police said. The incident took place in Hadiya village of Savarkundla in Amreli while the child's mother was at her parents' home in another village.

An FIR was filed by Dhanak's wife and Himanshi's mother, Manju. Manju said she married Dhanak around seven years ago after her divorce from her previous husband. They were living in Hadiya for the past three years. Manju was a housewife and Dhanak had worked as a site supervisor in construction projects.

On September 14, Manju said she went to another village to meet a relative while Himanshi and Dhanak were at their home. On September 15,

when she reached her home, it was locked. When she called her husband, he said he was at a friend's house in Mahuva, Bhavnagar. He asked her to go to her parents' home and that he would pick her up on the way home the next day. The FIR said, "On the morning of September 16, Dhanak called Manju and told her that he was going to collect a pending payment



and that she should leave for home after his call around 3 pm. But when he didn't call back till 6 pm and didn't receive her calls, she sent her brother to check. However, the brother came back and said that nobody opened the door. Then Manju, her brother and father all went to Hadiya."

However, when they reached Hadiya, a neighbour advised them not to go inside the house and instead, call the sarpanch. The sarpanch accompanied them into the house and when he

opened the door for them, Kishor's body was found hanging in the room. They began searching for the child. They soon found her body in the refrigerator, said the FIR.

When the police reached there after being informed, they allegedly found three suicide notes. One of them said that he was "owed Rs 7.25 lakh" which he was not getting back. The second one was his alleged confession to killing the child and placing her body in the refrigerator. The third was also an apology note, the FIR said. In a video statement, DySP Nayana B Goradiya of Savarkundla Division said, "The sarpanch of Hadiya village informed Savarkundla Rural Police that Kishor Dhanak and his daughter had died. When the police reached there, they found suicide notes that claimed that Kishor had faced problems in his work and had not received payments, leading to financial constraints. So he killed his daughter by strangling her and then died by suicide."

"We filed a murder case and launched an investigation. The FSL have taken possession of the suicide notes and another team has gone to Mahuva," she added.

Rains tackled, now Mumbai prepares for war on pollution: What city plans as winter approaches

Lucknow (Agency).

The monsoon in Mumbai is nearly over, and as the city gears up for the festive season and winter months, another challenge brews in the background — pollution and air quality. To prevent Mumbai's air quality from worsening as winter approaches, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has announced a special 15-day campaign from October 1. The civic body's move comes a week after the Union ministry released the National Clean Air Programme, which ranked Mumbai 28th in a list of 48 major metropolitan cities. Mumbai stood at 25th position last year, 28th the year before, and 10th in 2023.

BMC's new campaign

At a review meeting on Friday, Mumbai's municipal commissioner Ashwini Bhide instructed officials to strictly implement the civic body's 28-point guidelines to control air pollution. Across Mumbai, nodal officers will be appointed to monitor work sites at major infrastructure projects to keep a check on their dust emissions, which could further deteriorate air quality.

"Currently, the air quality index (AQI) in the Brihanmumbai area is under control. However, necessary measures should be taken in advance to ensure that it does not deteriorate in the coming period and citizens do not have to face its impact," said a civic official. According to the Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) dashboard, Mumbai has recorded

The BMC will launch a 15-day campaign to check dust emissions and prevent a deterioration in Mumbai's air quality as the monsoon withdraws.

satisfactory air quality since June, with rain helping wash away air pollutants. However, the AQI is likely to worsen once the monsoon withdraws. Under El-



Niño climatic conditions, the situation is set to deteriorate further. Meanwhile, during Friday's meeting, Bhide also reviewed the implementation of the BMC's 'Pedestrian First' campaign.

Won't register any FIR against farmers: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann

'We have no such intention to register FIRs against farmers, so please manage your stubble accordingly so that we do not reach such a situation'



Ludhiana (Agency).

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday said that the state government will not register any FIR against farmers. Addressing farmers during Kisan Mela at the Punjab Agricultural University in Ludhiana, Mann said that the paddy harvesting season was about to commence and once again Punjab farmers would be blamed and defamed for "spreading air pollution" by burning stubble — from New Delhi to Lahore.

"I told the Centre that first you boast that Punjab is the highest contributor of the paddy — 180 lakh metric tonne — to the central pool, but then you don't see how

much stubble this much paddy produces... I told the Centre that the only solution to stubble is cash incentives for farmers, maybe around Rs 1,500 per acre..." he said, adding that "parcha (registering FIRs) or satellite surveillance won't work".

"Parcha purcha karan da dil ni karda yaar... aiyan kiven parcha kar daange... par lod hi na pave oss hisaab naal kar leyo... (We have no such intention to register FIRs against farmers, so please manage your stubble accordingly so that we do not reach such a situation," Mann said, while urging farmers not to burn stubble in the coming paddy season.

Price of Maharashtra TET leaked paper? Rs 1 lakh — but first, hand over your original documents

Thane police chargesheet reveals candidates were asked to hand over original educational documents before buying leaked TET papers.

Mumbai (Agency). Candidates who agreed to buy leaked Maharashtra Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) papers for as much as Rs 1 lakh were made to hand over their original marksheets and other educational documents as security, with the documents to be returned only after they paid for the papers following the examination, the nearly 3,500-page chargesheet filed by the Thane City police has revealed.

The students, in turn, would agree to pay for these papers only after taking the exam, when they would know whether they had been given the same paper. The papers were sold at different rates ranging from Rs 80,000 to Rs 1 lakh.

While defining the roles of the 18 accused

persons, 16 of whom have been arrested, the chargesheet said, "Prakash Pawar, the



arrested accused, met wanted accused Ashokkumar Sao in Delhi and handed over original educational documents of 26 students. These documents were later

seized during the memorandum panchnama made from the residence of another accused." Explaining this, an officer in charge of the probe said the arrangement was that candidates, and through them agents, would pay those providing the leaked question papers only after taking the exam, to ensure they had been given the same paper. "This also left a loophole that the student or the agents would later not pay despite giving the same paper. To avoid this scenario, the arrangement was that the accused agents would collect marksheets and other original documents from the students and hand them over to those selling the paper. After the exam, the payment would be made and the documents returned," the officer added.

Mumbai Metro 4 site deaths: Rs 6 crore penalty slapped on contractor, consultant

Mumbai (Agency). A day after The Indian Express reported the deaths of two construction workers at an under-construction Metro Line 4 station in Bhakti Park, Wadala, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) on Friday imposed a Rs 6 crore penalty on the contractor and general consultant responsible for the project.

The two workers, Nahij, 33, and Sakim, 37, died after an iron staging, used as scaffolding, collapsed while they were climbing down from the first floor of the under-construction Bhakti Park station at around 7.30 pm last Saturday.

The contractor, Reliance Infrastructure and Astaldi SPA Joint Venture (RAJV), was fined Rs 5 crore, and the general consultant,

a joint venture of DB Engineering & Consulting, Hill International and Louis Berger, was fined Rs 1 crore. The action



comes days after the incident, which MMRDA did not disclose until after The Indian Express reported the deaths. The Wadala TT police registered an FIR on September 15, three days after the incident,

against site supervisor Tarikh UI Islam under Section 106(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for causing death by negligence. The workers were reportedly winding down for the day and preparing to return to their rooms when the staging gave way. Both were from Tetia village in West Bengal. Their bodies have since been sent to their families. Fellow workers rushed them to Sion Hospital, where Nahij was declared brought dead. Sakim died later that night while undergoing treatment. MMRDA said it conducted a detailed examination of the incident and held the contractor and general consultant accountable.

Narendra Modi and the generation he set free

Picture a young Indian, 10 years ago, saying she wanted to build a rocket. Not join ISRO. Build one. Her own. The room would have gone quiet, and someone kind would have explained that this was not something a person like her could do. Space belonged to the government. Dreams that size were for other countries. On July 18, a rocket built by a private Indian company reached orbit. Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1, developed by a young Indian startup, became the first privately developed Indian orbital rocket to successfully reach space. India became the third country to achieve orbital launch capability through private enterprise.

The girl who was told no can now say she wants to be Elon Musk and mean it as a plan, not a punchline. She can simply begin. Nothing about the talent had changed in those 10 years. India always had the talent. What changed was the answer. For most of our history, the answer to a big dream in India was "you cannot". Not because you weren't good enough, but because the door simply did not exist. The quietest and largest achievement of Narendra Modi's leadership is that the answer became "why not." It is worth understanding how deep that shift goes. For decades, ambition in India ran into a wall of permissions.

To do almost anything that mattered, you needed a licence, a clearance, a contact or the right family name. The country was never short of dreamers. It was short of doors. And when doors are few, they open first for people who already have keys. The young, the poor, the ones without a surname that opened rooms, waited outside. PM Modi's real insight was to look at that wall and see it for what it was. He put the shift in a simple line: government moving from "prohibited unless permitted" to "permitted unless prohibited". That is the steady idea behind much of his decade's work: take down the wall of permissions and build in its place a country of open doors. A country where it does not matter whose child you are, only what you are willing to build. Look at what has been opened. Space went first, in 2020, after decades of government dominance, when reforms opened the sector to private participation across space activities. IN-SPACe was created to enable and regulate private companies, giving Indian entrepreneurs a route into an industry that had long been the preserve of the state. Then came more. The liberalised Drone Rules of 2021 replaced a system that had been criticised for excessive paperwork and permissions, opening the way for wider use of drones in agriculture, mapping, infrastructure and other fields. Some changes were quieter, but mattered just as much. In 2021, maps were freed for private innovation. In 2023, a single law removed criminal penalties from more than a thousand provisions, many tied to paperwork. The message was clear: a missed filing should not land an Indian in jail. And the numbers began to change. When Startup India began in 2016, India had only a few hundred recognised startups. Today, it has crossed two lakh, spreading beyond Bangalore and Delhi into smaller cities and towns. More than a hundred thousand have women founders, putting ambition into the hands of a new generation. But opening doors is only half of it. An open door means little if you have no way to reach it. This is where the fairness in the idea shows itself. Financial inclusion, digital payments and targeted credit have brought millions of Indians who were once outside the formal economy into it. A vegetable seller and a startup founder can now move money through the same digital infrastructure. A young entrepreneur in a small town can access tools that once belonged almost exclusively to people born into the right networks. Even the way the young are taught has been rethought. The National Education Policy challenges the old idea that the stream chosen at 16 must determine the rest of a person's life.

Congress must strengthen its grassroots organisation

Sonia Gandhi and Rahul have done little to introduce new faces to their organisation or to craft an intellectual challenge to the BJP

THE Congress party, out of power for more than a decade, should reflect on the fact that the party that has lost elections often lacks good leadership and organisation and, thus, it does not know how to deal with the flaws of the incumbent government. The Congress, led by Sonia and Rahul Gandhi, has criticised the Modi government over the grievances of farmers, unemployment and poor educational facilities. These problems were never absent, but they have increased since the Congress-led alliance was voted out of office in 2014. If the Congress wants to win regional elections in 2027 and the national election in 2029, it must build its grassroots organisation and inform the public about its political vision and how that that vision will be fulfilled if it is elected. The Gen Z protests in July appear to have alerted the Congress to the extent of such challenges — and also of corruption and poor governance. For, India's youth have linked political accountability with economic prospects. But even if the Congress supports the youth protests, the question arises whether its identification with youth discontentment is a case of better late than never. Congress leaders were surely aware of such problems. So why have they failed to craft a strategy to impress on prospective voters how the Congress would deal with the challenges?

The organisation of the Congress and its allies in the INDIA bloc will count if they are able to translate popular hopes into reality, and if the Congress is able to avoid looking like a firm dominated by the Gandhis. Sonia was elected the party President in 1998; Rahul was elected unopposed party President in 2017 and served until 2019, when the BJP coalition trounced the Congress and its allies for the second time. That revealed how far the Congress had come since the mid-sixties, after the death of Jawaharlal Nehru. India's first Prime Minister, Nehru, together with Mahatma Gandhi, was one of the pre-eminent leaders of India's freedom movement.

Before and after Independence, Nehru's strategic and organisational skills were amply demonstrated as the Congress communicated with people of all classes, living across all regions. It was also able to present its case for transforming their hopes into policies if it was elected. Nehru's Congress also represented Indians from all communities and forwarded the message that secularism not only meant the separation of state and religion but also the equality of all religions. The bottom line was that all citizens were equal before law. A man of intellectual and political calibre, Nehru brought strong — and on occasion even fractious — regional leaders into the Congress, who could help establish links and communicate with each other on national and regional



issues. They included K Kamaraj (Tamil Nadu), BC Roy (West Bengal), YB Chavan (Maharashtra) and S Nijalingappa (Karnataka). His strategy of drawing in powerful regional leaders helped transform the diverse country into a single political community, capable of democratic governance. The decline of the Congress started with Indira Gandhi, who, despite her involvement in local and regional party committees during Nehru's premiership, centralised power as PM and made partymen hugely dependent on herself for favours. Rahul has served as its General Secretary, Vice-President and President. But he has started at the top of the party ladder. He has yet to display the organisational skills needed if the Congress is to return to power. As party chiefs, Sonia and Rahul have done little to introduce new faces to their organisation or to craft an intellectual challenge to the BJP. There is no knowledge if any debates are held within the party on issues like education and unemployment. In fact, the Congress has hardly discussed any possible good policies or presented stronger Congressmen, who could contest elections at all levels on the different issues to which India's youth have drawn attention.

The Congress must put its own house in order — fast — if it is to convince voters that it is capable of tackling the related crises of poor governance, weak rule of law and

education. Voters rightly want to know more about its political, social and economic vision, and how that vision will be implemented through institutions of accountable democratic governance. Additionally, the Congress must also understand the doubts about many people that the distinction between party and government was blurred by the National Advisory Council (NAC), which she headed when Manmohan Singh was Prime Minister. Eventually, the Congress lost much popular support partly because it conveyed the impression that Sonia gave instructions to Manmohan Singh's government.

Last but not least, the "dynasty" has never guaranteed electoral success for the Congress since 1977, when Indira was voted out of office because of the unpopularity of the Emergency that she had declared in 1975. That marked the first-ever defeat for the Congress in a national election. Later, the Congress led by Rajiv, Sonia and Rahul have also lost national and many regional elections. Congress leaders of all hues must come together to change the ways in which their party works so that it can be more responsive to the needs of citizens. Will the Congress realise its flaws as the first step in overcoming them? Only then will it be able to deliver a credible political, ideological and administrative response to voters in elections.

Strengthen global net to catch animal smugglers

It's evident that India cannot fight this illicit global trade on its own

More than a week after the rescue of five baby orangutans from Odisha's Balasore district, the whodunit continues to baffle the nation. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, a central agency, and the state's special task force are on the job. But very little has surfaced in terms of clues to trace the apes' route from their home in the rainforests of Indonesia and Malaysia to an alien land far away.

It appears to be a smuggling operation gone wrong, with traffickers dumping the babies near the eastern coast. Orangutan smuggling is not new in India. A spate of seizures in Mizoram, Assam and Maharashtra in recent years shows that the illegal trade uses the Myanmar-Thailand-Bangladesh route to feed demand in the country. It's possible that with the enforcement agencies focused on known smuggling corridors in the Northeast, the traffickers were trying a new route through Odisha.

The investigation requires the support of international agencies working against wildlife trafficking. Rehabilitating the baby apes is also desirable, but their lineage must be established and the primates repatriated as



per UNEP's Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. Orangutans are facing the scourge of expanding palm plantations and climate change eroding their natural habitats. Yet home is where they belong, not in our zoos. Their smuggling, meanwhile, must raise an alarm for Indian authorities. The Directorate of Revenue

Intelligence's 2024-25 report noted that lucrative profits of exotic pet trade is a key driver of wildlife smuggling in the country. The worldwide trade is billed at a massive \$20 billion, whereas seizure data for 2015-21 places South Asia at 9 percent of the global total. India also acts as a source for trade in pangolin scales, elephant tusks, tiger and leopard skins as well as turtles, while serving as a transit space for other exotic species. Much of the trade is contracted online. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime's 2024 report cited a case where a trafficker in Indonesia had placed bids for tigers and star tortoises to be delivered in Thailand, with the network spanning India, Pakistan and Malaysia operating through social media platforms. It's evident that India cannot fight this illicit global trade on its own. The orangutans are reminding us that this requires stronger collaboration with regional countries to intensify surveillance, intelligence and crackdown on the menace.

Who teaches our teachers?

— We are vigorously debating curriculums, exams, education budgets, language learning and syllabus rewriting. But little light is being shed on the quality and capability of teachers, without which all intentions falter. Our teachers themselves don't have good teachers. A brief history tells us why

The ongoing metacritique of the Indian education system—and it comprises an avalanche of aphoristic and brocardic critiques that will, in time, exceed Edward Gibbon's magnum opus in length, breadth and depth—is taking everything into its purview: syllabuses, curriculums, design and methodology of examinations, government budgetary spending on education, mytho-historicisation, institutional de-sciencing, phraseology, macaronic texts (or formal code-switching).

India surely does not lack in the number or excellence of knowledgeable critics—nor of carping 'criticasters'. However, what is missing from the common discourse are honest critiques of teaching, teacherisms and teachability. In short, pedagogy. Trenchant criticisms of the National Education Policy, board exams, NEET, CUET and JEE need to be supplemented with anatomisation and appraisal of whether teachers are up to the vastly-responsible and endlessly-taxing task of tutelage, of informing young minds while retaining their pliability, of translating hardened words into ideas, of precision and interpretation.

When syllabuses are inadequate or warped, a trustworthy, well-grounded pedagogy can relieve the moral stress that underlies doctrinal falsity, the teaching of the untrue. But do our teachers have it—or even the drive to teach that which is uncontroversial and included in schoolbooks, or to familiarise themselves with the contents of the studybooks, and to examine students on the basis of incontestable content? Until and unless we ask this single question—"Are our teachers broadly capable?"—we will never arrive at a determination of exactly what is wrong with our education system, how deep the rot goes, whether

it is rescuable, or if the whole shebang needs to be dumped cyclopaedically in toto and rebuilt from scratch.

The indications point to a ground-up builders' approach, from toughening up pedagogical instruction to re-curriculating. Allow me to present two real-life examples of why both are imperative. During a 10th-class half-yearly examination, this question was asked: "How does Antony's agreement to execute his nephew, Publius, illustrate his political cunning?" The reference is to Mark Antony in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. The problem is the question-setter's unfamiliarity with the play. Mark Antony's nephew, mentioned by relationship just once in the play, is never named. Publius is the name of two characters, an elderly senator present at Caesar's assassination, and an exiled brother of one of the conspirators who asks for Caesar to pardon him. In point of fact, 10th-class question papers—a test-run for the pre-boards later in the year, which are themselves gateways to the boards the following year—have been found to be riddled with errors. Students are kicked up from the spoon-feeding, rote-learning regime up to class 9 to graduate-level questions (tougher than those in the board exams) that demand analysis and lateral thinking—but the first in the language of the textbooks (which means a repeat of mugging), and the second disparaged as unorthodox despite being solicited through class advisories by teachers (which, in India's monodirectional teaching system, should be read as orders, not guidelines, and even

less as 'dope' on examination). At the root of subpar teachership are substandard teacher training institutes. Both private and government-run teacher education colleges have low standards AND lack proper faculty—teachers themselves don't have good teachers—or are unrecognised by the National Council



for Teacher Education (NCTE), a statutory body set up under a 1993 law whose secretariat is located in the Department of Teacher Education, and the National Council of Educational Research and Training. That's where the root of the rot is. Decades ago, when tutelary pedagogy was still evolving in the country and opportunities for low-hanging diminution and shaving of rules were minimal because the only way was up, the Central Institute of Education (which was renamed the Department of Education in 1979 when it was

amalgamated with Delhi University), was the flagship teachership institute in the country. Its founding in 1947 had been guided hands-on by Jawaharlal Nehru and his education minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. As the authorities then saw it, teachership had to be governmentalised. Pedagogy had to be regulated. Far too

many college professors, university faculty and schoolteachers had played a critical underground combative role during Indira Gandhi's Emergency. School, college and university authorities had become carriers of government propaganda overnight, advocating the necessity for the Emergency to impede the "foreign hand" and resist the enemies within.

After this brutality ended in March 1977, the authorities took more than two years to plan how to superintend academia, from school to university. The Department of Education was brought under Delhi University in December 1979, in the cusp of the anti-Indira Charan Singh government and the reascension of Indira Gandhi in January 1980.

But the killer of pedagogy in the country was the NCTE (Amendment) Bill, 2017, which amended the National Council for Teacher Education Act, 1993. The NCTE plans and coordinates the development of the teacher education system throughout the country, and ensures the maintenance of norms and standards.

When pedagogical standards fall, it is difficult to slow the speed of descent, leave alone halt it. The focus now seems to be on filling the more than one million schoolteacher vacancies, not much on quality.

Crunches serve as one of the basic exercises to tone and define your core, specifically the muscles of the rectus abdominus and transverse abdominus. With the festivities just round the corner, this simple, equipment-free exercise will help you flaunt the perfect abs in a saree. Instead of going in for the usual crunches which have been there for a while, we suggest a few interesting ones that will aid you tone your abs.

C-curve hold with pulses

This exercise works on your entire rectus abdominus and strengthens your core.

How to do it: Sit with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Lower your elbows and tuck your tailbone by pressing your lower bone firmly on the floor. Breathe in so that you can feel your stomach going in. Lift your elbows and put your hands forward while slowly placing them on the sides of your thighs. Pulse your upper body up an inch and then down an inch. Continue this thrice, each with a 45-second interval. If you wish to go a bit harder on yourself, you can release your hands from the side of your thighs while you are pulsing.

Side lying swivel crunch

This exercise will involve your whole core and will help improve balance and posture.

How to do it: Lie down on one side with the forearm of that side on the floor, with hips and feet stacked. Extend the other arm overhead and squeeze your glutes, while drawing your navel inwards. Contract your abs and lift your legs, three inches above the floor. Now, roll the glute on which side you are lying down, and lift the leg to about a 45-degree angle. Now, change sides and repeat the exercise for three sets in

Ways to upgrade Your basic crunches

about 45-60 seconds per interval.

Bird dog crunch

This workout will improve your flexibility and will strengthen your abs and lower back.

How to do it: Bend down on all fours with your wrists under the shoulders and knees under your hips. Look down towards the floor and keep your head and neck in a neutral position. Breathe in and hold your breath. Maintain a flat back and extend your left arm and right leg straight out. Now, bring your left elbow to your right knee and hold position for about 2 seconds, then return to position. Change sides and repeat this exercise 12-15 reps per side.

Standing oblique crunch

This helps improve your oblique and strengthens your sides.

How to do it: Stand with your feet wide; hip width apart. Extend your right leg out to the side and tuck your tailbone, engage your glutes and breathe in, so that your navel goes inside. Tilt to the left side while your right hand reaches overhead towards your left shoulder. Exhale while crunching to your right, while bringing your right elbow and right knee together. Inhale and then repeat exercise. Plank knee tuck

Tones your lower abdomen

How to do it: Start in plank position with your toes pressing into a towel. Breathe in and hold your navel and tuck your hips slightly higher than your shoulder level. Exhale and slowly pull your knees in until they are about 2 inches in front of your hips. Inhale and then reverse back to start position. Repeat the exercise.

Focus on your diet as well...

Apart from exercising, one must also remember that the best way to get well-toned abs is by following a strict and a well-formed diet. Eat lots of green vegetables along with soups and salads. Avoid eating carbs post 7 pm. Also, remember to drink at least 2-3 litres of water everyday. This will help flush the toxins from your body, thereby giving a glow on your skin.

Let's workout in between work!

"What is this life if, full of care, We have no time to stand and stare;" so missing daily exercises and looking after your health is inevitable. So Ashishh Gupta, fitness expert and director at Gold's Gym in Gurgaon, has come up with some tips where one can work-out, while at work. "You may never know, you might end up motivating people around you and many more may join you for same," he said. To start with, take stairs instead of lift and try to stand as much as possible and start to move around as much as possible. According to Ashishh apart from this, these sets of exercises for 15 minutes daily might work for you.



then slowly push back up, and repeat several times. Challenge yourself by adding to the number of reps you complete each day.

Secondly, glutes are of real help. Believe it or not, some exercises can be kept under wraps, and this isometric glutes exercise is one of them. To start toning, simply squeeze your buttocks hold for five to 10 seconds, and release. Repeat until the agenda wraps up or the glutes tire. The results will be uplifting in more ways than one.

Thirdly, try leg curl. While seated, straighten one or both legs and hold in place for five or more seconds. Then lower the leg back to the ground without letting the feet touch the floor. Repeat (alternating legs if raising them separately) for 15 reps.

Fourthly, go for tricep dips. Stand at the edge of the desk, facing backwards. Place your hands on the desk, shoulder width apart. Now push your legs a bit in front and with the help of your body weight, go up and down in 90 degrees

Fifthly, do shrugs. Stand against a wall with your back straight. Push your shoulders up and freeze for five seconds. You shall feel the shoulder trap muscle working.

Repeat these eight to ten times in three sets and get into the groove.



Panchakarma Treatment

for a week may reduce heart disease risk

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



risk, the results of a clinical trial have shown.

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

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

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

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

microbiome, genome and physiology are not fully understood.

"Our programme of research is dedicated to addressing these gaps in the literature," first author Christine Tara Peterson said.

"Panchakarma refers to a detoxification and rejuvenation protocol involving massage, herbal therapy and other procedures to help strengthen and rejuvenate the body,"

Peterson pointed out.

The study involved 119 healthy male and female participants between 30 and 80 years of age who stayed at the Chopra Center for Wellbeing in Carlsbad, California.

Slightly more than half were assigned to the Panchakarma intervention and the remainder to a control group. Blood plasma analyses, using liquid chromatography and mass spectrometry, were taken before and after the six-day testing period.

The researchers found that in the Panchakarma group there was a measurable decrease in 12 specific cell-membrane chemicals (phosphatidylcholines) correlating with serum cholesterol and inversely related to Type-2 diabetes risk.

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

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



Standing

desks may help
reduce weight in kids



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



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

Mark Benden, Associate Professor at the Texas A&M School of Public Health, US. Moreover, these standing desks might also help students who aren't overweight maintain their BMI, while at the same time help those who are overweight or obese get to a healthier weight, said the paper published in the American Journal of Public Health. "Research has shown that standing desks are positive for the teachers in terms of classroom management and student engagement, as well as positive for the children for their health, cognitive functioning and academic achievement," Benden added. Previous studies have also shown that children who stand burn 15 per cent more calories, on average, than those who sit in class. For the study, the team followed 193 students from three elementary schools in US, from their third grade to the end of fourth grade. At each school, four classrooms were outfitted with stand-biased desks (which allow students to sit on a stool or stand at will), and four classrooms in each school acted as a control and utilised standard classroom desks.

Are you fit to work?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fit for Work launches



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

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

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

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

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

Wearable activity trackers may not boost

Weight loss



One week of Panchakarma programme -- an Ayurvedic-based well being programme that features a vegetarian diet, meditation, yoga and massages -- can lead to measurable decreases in a set of blood-based metabolites associated with inflammation, cholesterol regulation and cardiovascular disease risk, the results of a clinical trial have shown. "It appears that a one-week Panchakarma programme can significantly alter the metabolic profile of the person undergoing it," said senior author Deepak Chopra, Professor at the University of California San Diego School of Medicine and a noted

proponent of integrative medicine. The findings, published in the journal Scientific Reports, represent an attempt to use metabolic biomarkers to assess the reported health benefits of integrative medicine and holistic practices. "As part of our strategy to create a framework for whole systems biology research, our next step will be to correlate these changes with both gene expression and psychological health," Chopra said. The research team from the University of California San Diego School of Medicine noted that alternative and integrative medicine practices, such as meditation and Ayurveda, are extremely popular, but their effects on the human microbiome, genome

and physiology are not fully understood. "Our programme of research is dedicated to addressing these gaps in the literature," first author Christine Tara Peterson said. "Panchakarma refers to a detoxification and rejuvenation protocol involving massage, herbal therapy and other procedures to help strengthen and rejuvenate the body," Peterson pointed out. The study involved 119 healthy male and female participants between 30 and 80 years of age who stayed at the Chopra Center for Wellbeing in Carlsbad, California. Slightly more than half were assigned to the Panchakarma intervention and the remainder to a control group. Blood plasma analyses, using liquid chromatography and mass spectrometry, were taken before and after the six-day testing period. The researchers found that in the Panchakarma group there was a measurable decrease in 12 specific cell-membrane chemicals (phosphatidylcholines) correlating with serum cholesterol and inversely related to Type-2 diabetes risk. "These phospholipids exert broad effects on pathways related to inflammation and cholesterol metabolism," Peterson explained. "Plasma and serum levels of the metabolites of phosphatidylcholine are highly predictive of cardiovascular disease risk," Peterson noted.



4 stretches you must do every morning

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

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

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

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

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

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



73-year-old motorist arrested after his car drags bike in Delhi's RK Puram

A video of the incident has been doing the rounds on the Internet, showing the car dragging the bike for about 100 metres before finally coming to a halt on the side of the road.

Delhi. (Agency)

A 73-year-old man was arrested after his car allegedly hit a biker on the Africa Avenue Road in the national capital's RK Puram area, police said on Friday. Police said a blue-coloured sedan, allegedly driven by Venu Gopal, a Vasant Kunj resident, hit the motorcycle around 10 pm on Thursday while travelling from the Bhikaji Cama Place towards the RK Puram Metro Station in South Delhi. At that time, 21-year-old Tanish Tokas, a Munirka village resident, was sitting on his parked motorcycle on the roadside. Due to the impact, Tokas fell from the motorcycle, which was then dragged by the car for some distance. Though Tokas wasn't dragged by the



vehicle, he underwent a medical examination, which revealed that he had not suffered any serious injury in the incident. A video of the incident has been doing the rounds on the Internet, showing the car

dragging the bike for about 100 metres before finally coming to a halt on the side of the road.

A crowd was seen gathering around the vehicle and confronting the driver, who subsequently pulled out of the car. People were heard telling him that he should have stopped much earlier, while some can also be heard alleging that he was drunk.

Police received information about the accident around 10.22 pm, after which personnel rushed to the spot.

A case was registered under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita at RK Puram police station, following which Gopal's car was seized, and he was apprehended. The accused was also medically examined, and no alcohol was detected, police said.

Delhi Metro records highest-ever daily passenger boardings at 82 lakh

Delhi. (Agency)

The Delhi Metro recorded its highest-ever passenger boarding of 82,44,903 on Thursday amid enhanced services to cater to additional passenger footfall due to the ongoing Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) bus strike, the DMRC said.

The figure was 1,73,273 higher than the 80,71,630 passenger boardings recorded on Wednesday. "DMRC records highest-ever passenger boardings of 82,44,903 on September 17," the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation said in a post on X.

DTC bus drivers have been on a strike since Tuesday, demanding daily-wage hikes, medical facilities and overtime payment. The DMRC said among individual corridors, the Yellow Line recorded the highest passenger boardings at 20,89,465, followed by the Blue Line with 17,28,658.

The Pink Line recorded 9,41,527 passenger boardings, while the Red Line registered 8,80,059, according to the data. The overall figure also includes ridership on the Airport Express Line and Rapid Metro Gurgaon services, taking the combined count to more than 82 lakh.

The DMRC had increased 20 train trips across its network to manage the anticipated surge in passenger movement amid the DTC strike.

Eight additional trains were operated on Wednesday as per operational requirements, particularly to accommodate increased passenger movement during peak hours. On September 16, eight extra trains were inducted and operated between 8 am and 8 pm to accommodate increased passenger movement.

The DMRC had announced that the enhanced arrangements would continue to support commuters during the period of increased passenger footfall. It also advised commuters to plan their journeys accordingly.

Woman dies after husband allegedly shoots her during altercation in Delhi's Tigri area

Delhi. (Agency)

A 30-year-old woman died after her husband allegedly shot her during an altercation in Delhi's Tigri area, Delhi Police said. A Police Control Room (PCR) call was received at around 8 am on Thursday regarding a woman having sustained a gunshot injury. Police reached the spot and found the woman injured with a gunshot wound to her abdomen. She was shifted to a hospital for medical treatment, where she was declared brought dead, police said.

Preliminary inquiry revealed that Poonam and her husband Kamlesh were involved in an altercation and Kamlesh was allegedly under the influence of liquor, according to police.

During the altercation, Kamlesh allegedly took out a country-made pistol and fired a shot while threatening to kill himself and his wife, resulting in Poonam sustaining a gunshot injury, police said.

Kamlesh was apprehended at the spot, and the weapon of offence was recovered, according to Delhi Police.

A case has been registered, and further investigation is underway. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, a 24-year-old man was arrested on September 16 for allegedly murdering his wife in Delhi's Anand Parbat area, with police claiming to have solved the case within 16 hours through technical investigation and local intelligence. According to Delhi Police, information regarding a suspected murder was received at PS Anand Parbat on September 14. A police team reached a room in Punjabi Basti, Baljeet Nagar, where a 32-year-old woman was found lying unresponsive.

During the preliminary enquiry, police learnt that the woman was living with her husband, two minor daughters and her mother. Her 10-year-old daughter allegedly told police that she woke up around 3:45-4 am and saw her father near her mother, checking her breathing. The man then left the house, after which the girl noticed that her mother was not responding.

Police said no apparent external injury was initially visible on the woman's body, except nail-like marks on the left side of her neck. The Crime Team/FSL team inspected the scene and documented it.

DUSU polls counting: ABVP leading presidential post in seventh round

More than 2,000 police and paramilitary personnel have been deployed across Delhi University, with restrictions imposed on key roads and heightened security around the counting centre.

Delhi. (Agency)

In the ongoing counting for the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) elections, ABVP candidate Yash Dabas is currently leading the presidential race with a margin of 609 votes against NSUI's Vijay Shankar Meena after the seventh round of counting.

For the vice-presidential position, Independent candidate Deepanshu Shokeen is in the lead with 11,347 votes as counting progresses.

As of now, Dabas has secured 8,825 votes, while Meena has garnered 8,216 votes in the presidential contest.

In the race for the secretary position, the ABVP has received 7,584 votes compared to NSUI's candidate, who has polled 5,445 votes. For the joint

secretary role, ABVP has obtained 5,386 votes, NSUI 5,339 votes, and Samajwadi Chhatra Sabha candidate Vishesh Yadav leads with 6,165 votes.



The results will determine the composition of the DUSU central panel for the 2026-27 academic session, in a contest that has drawn keen interest as the RSS-affiliated ABVP, Congress-backed NSUI and

the Left alliance of AISA-SFI vie for dominance in one of the country's most high-profile student union elections.

Last year, the ABVP won the posts of president, secretary and joint secretary, while NSUI secured the vice-president's post.

Counting of votes for the four central panel posts as well as college union representatives began at 8 am at the Multipurpose Hall of the University Sports Stadium, with anticipation running high over the fate of key outfits, especially in light of the recent student agitation over the paper leak issue.

Polling for the elections was held on Friday across several colleges. A total of 1,000 electronic voting machines (EVMs) were deployed for the elections, of which 960 were used for polling and 40 kept in reserve, university officials said.

Delhi University campus turns into a carnival with long queues, ballots & buzz

Soon after the voters came out from the voting centres, some of them were even offered samosas and chai.

Delhi. (Agency)

Under a scorching September sun, Delhi University's polling day unfolded not like a routine electoral exercise but more like a carefully choreographed student politics. Outside college gates, party supporters stationed themselves with cartons of ORS, packets of lassi (buttermilk) and bunches of bananas, offering quick relief to voters waiting in long queues, before quietly leaning in to whisper ballot numbers into their ears.

Soon after the voters came out from the voting centres, some of them were even offered samosas and chai.

Across north campus, particularly outside the law centres, the buzz was

unmistakable. Queues snaked past gates and spilt onto roads, with students waiting patiently despite the heat. While the first few hours saw a slow start, with sparse turnout early in



the morning, momentum picked up steadily after 11 am. By noon, most polling stations were witnessing heavy footfall, with queues stretching till well past the scheduled closing time of

1 pm.

Candidates and their supporters turned the day into an exercise in last-minute outreach. For many, it felt less like walking into a polling station and more like entering a reception line, where they were greeted with "Namaste ji, vote kardiji yega ji..."

The security arrangements remained tight, particularly along the Arts Faculty stretch, which was heavily barricaded. Drones hovered overhead capturing visuals of the exercise, while police personnel were deployed in large numbers. According to Additional DCP (North) Pukhraj K Gupta, the campus was divided into five zones and 23 sectors, each under designated officers, with pickets and checkpoints installed at key entry points.

Delhi government approves Rs 300 crore for e-bus charging infrastructure at 7 depots

Delhi. (Agency)

The Delhi government has approved Rs 300 crore for the development of e-bus charging infrastructure at seven depots in South West areas of the city, officials said on Friday. Officials said the move will help electrify its entire public transport bus fleet. The Delhi Transport Corporation currently operates over 5,000 e-buses and the government plans to expand its fleet to 14,000 e-buses by 2029.

In a recent meeting of the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) chaired by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, an amount of over Rs 300 crore was sanctioned for developing cutting edge charging infrastructure at DTC and cluster bus depots in Dichaon Kalan, Kair, Kharkhari Nahar and Ghumanhera areas of South West Delhi. According to a detailed project report prepared by the power discom BSES Rajdhani



Power Limited, the work is likely to be completed in 18 months.

Of the total project cost of Rs 300.61 crore, 40% (Rs 120.25 crore) is to be disbursed initially to the discom in the current year. An amount of Rs 120.07 crore has already been allocated for the project under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment scheme, according to an official document. The remaining expenditure of Rs 180.36 crore will be covered by the budget for the next year.

The charging infrastructure will include 66KV in-feeds, three 66/11 KV grids, and seven 11KV switching stations across the seven depots, officials said.

The power load allocations will be 4 MVA at DTC Dichaon, 8 MVA at Cluster Depot Dichaon, 14.2 MVA at Cluster Kair, 7 MVA at DTC Kharkhari Nahar, 5 MVA at DTC Depot Ghumanhera, 9.6 MVA at Cluster Ghumanhera-1, and 11.4 MVA at Ghumanhera-2.

Delhi airport's third runway to become operational from September 20

Since its commissioning in 2008, the runway has been in continuous service for 17 years. It underwent regular maintenance, including minor rehabilitation in 2017.

Delhi. (Agency)

The third runway of Indra Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) will be recommissioned on Sunday (September 20), airport operator Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) announced. Its comprehensive rehabilitation programme has been completed, and all necessary regulatory approvals have been obtained.

The third runway, 11R/29L, was shut on February 25, 2026, for rehabilitation works. It was scheduled to reopen in early July but was delayed.

"The enhancements effected here are expected to improve runway efficiency, optimise aircraft movement, reduce runway occupancy time and further

strengthen operational reliability during varying weather conditions," DIAL said.

The rehabilitation project involved extensive strengthening and upgrade works aimed at enhancing operational safety, efficiency, resilience and long-term capacity at one of India's busiest aviation gateways, the release said.

"The upgraded runway is now ready for operational use after undergoing all required inspections, validations and regulatory clearances," DIAL said.

Among the enhancements are major airside infrastructure upgrades, including runway resurfacing, permanent threshold displacement of

runway 29L, construction of a new Rapid Exit Taxiway (Z1), upgrades to airfield ground lighting systems, pavement strengthening works, and



associated civil and electrical infrastructure improvements.

DIAL worked closely with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation,

Airports Authority of India, Air Traffic Control, airlines and other stakeholders throughout the project to ensure that all safety, operational and regulatory requirements were met. Following the successful completion of the prescribed procedures, approvals have now been received to recommence operations on the runway from September 20. DIAL CEO Pradeep Panicker said, "The recommissioning of Runway 11R/29L marks an important milestone in Delhi Airport's continued journey towards building future-ready aviation infrastructure. The successful completion of this complex rehabilitation programme reflects our unwavering commitment to safety, operational excellence.

Net direct tax collections rise 12.96 per cent to Rs 12.12 lakh crore

MUMBAI. (Agency)

India's net direct tax collections rose 12.96% year-on-year to Rs 12.12 lakh crore as of September 17, 2026, driven mainly by higher corporate tax collections, according to data released by the Income Tax Department on Friday.

Gross direct tax collections rose 15.19% to Rs 14.32 lakh crore during the period, from Rs 12.43 lakh crore a year ago. Refunds, however, increased 29.19% to Rs 2.20 lakh crore from Rs 1.79 lakh crore last year. "Direct tax collections continue to signal healthy underlying economic activity and the strength of the tax base. While higher refunds have moderated net tax collection growth, they also reflect improved efficiency in refund processing, ensuring timely relief and liquidity for taxpayers. The steady growth in advance tax payments remains a positive indicator of taxpayer confidence, business performance and expectations of sustained income growth," said Richa Sawhney, Partner – Tax, Grant Thornton Bharat. Corporate tax collections before refunds rose more than 16% to Rs 6.94 lakh crore as of September 17, 2026, from Rs 5.95 lakh crore in the corresponding period last year. Non-corporate tax collections increased 12% to Rs 6.97 lakh crore from Rs 6.21 lakh crore. Securities transaction tax (STT) collections rose more than 50% to Rs 40,214.36 crore from Rs 26,305.72 crore during the same period last year. Advance tax collections increased 16.18% year-on-year to Rs 5.21 lakh crore as of September 17, compared with Rs 4.49 lakh crore in the corresponding period last year.

NSE's Rs 22,568 IPO fully subscribed on second day



MUMBAI. (Agency)

The Rs 22,568.94-crore initial public offering (IPO) of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) was fully subscribed at 1.16 times on the second day of bidding on Friday. According to exchange data, the IPO received bids for 10.28 crore shares against 8.86 crore shares on offer. Demand was led by non-institutional investors, whose portion was subscribed 1.68 times, followed by Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) at 1.53 times. The retail portion was subscribed 72 per cent.

NSE shares also witnessed a decline in their grey market premium (GMP). The latest premium indicated a potential listing gain of nearly 6 per cent, compared with 12 per cent a few days ago, according to InvestorGain. On Wednesday, NSE allocated 37,793,739 equity shares at Rs 1,785 per share to anchor investors, raising Rs 6,746.18 crore. According to market sources, demand for the anchor book was nearly Rs 1.2 lakh crore, around 20 times its size. Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), NSE's largest shareholder with a 10.72 per cent stake, participated in the anchor book through LIC, LIC Mutual Funds and LIC PeNSE has fixed a price band of Rs 1,700-1,785 per share for the IPO. The issue size was reduced to Rs 22,569 crore, making it the country's second-largest public issue after Hyundai Motor India's Rs 27,870-crore offering in 2024. NSE's new Funds, investing more than Rs 500 crore.

VAT on CNG and PNG slashed: Both fuels to become cheaper in this city; check details

Kolkata. (Agency)

Fuel prices have come to torment the general public, thanks to the lingering West Asia war. In this scenario, the administration of one Union Territory has come forward to slash the VAT (Value Added Tax) on both automotive and cooking fuel, providing relief both to the commuter and numerous kitchens. Union Territory of Chandigarh has reduced the Value Added Tax (VAT) on natural gas. In one stroke it has reduced VAT rate from 12.5% to 5%. It has come into effect from midnight of September 18.

Benefits from reduced VAT

According to an official statement, this decision will provide significant tax relief to consumers using Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and Piped Natural Gas (PNG) in the Union Territory of Chandigarh. A lower VAT rate means lower taxes on natural gas, which will immediately reduce the cost of CNG and PNG, potentially reducing the burden on consumers. This decision will further encourage the development and expansion. Since fuel is an integral part of the retail inflation basket, the rate of inflation in this region will also come down. The actual price reduction will depend on how gas suppliers pass on the tax benefits to customers. For CNG users, if suppliers pass on the full benefit of the lower tax to customers, it could reduce the cost of refueling vehicles. Meanwhile, for households using PNG for cooking, the lower VAT could also reduce their gas bills, depending on how suppliers decide to set prices. of natural gas infrastructure in the city.

CBI books Reliance Capital in LIC fraud case; Anil Ambani denies wrongdoing

The CBI has registered an FIR against Reliance Capital, Anil Ambani, Satish Seth and others over alleged diversion of LIC investment funds. Anil Ambani has denied wrongdoing as investigators examine the alleged conspiracy and the end-use of Rs 3,900 crore invested by LIC.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The CBI registered a case against Reliance Capital Limited (RCAP), its former chairman, former group managing director Satish Seth, unidentified public servants and others over an alleged Rs

2,684.57-crore fraud involving investments made by the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC). However, Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambani on Friday denied any wrongdoing. A spokesperson for Ambani, in a statement, said, "The FIR registered by the CBI pertains to Reliance Capital Limited. Ambani served as a Non-Executive Director/Chairman of the Board of Reliance Capital Limited from 2005 until November 2021, when the Reserve Bank of India superseded the Board of Directors of the company and appointed an Administrator." "Ambani denies any wrongdoing, whatsoever, and reserves all rights available to him in law," the spokesperson said.

The CBI registered the FIR on the basis of a written complaint from LIC against RCAP, Ambani, Seth, unidentified public servants and others. According to the CBI,

LIC alleged that between April 12, 2012, and March 9, 2018, it subscribed to five non-convertible debentures issued by RCAP, involving a total investment of Rs 3,900 crore. The investments were made



for general corporate purposes, funding requirements and refinancing of existing debt. LIC has alleged that the accused entered into a criminal conspiracy and committed offences including cheating, criminal breach of trust, criminal

misconduct, diversion or misappropriation of funds and falsification of accounts.

The agency said LIC alleged that it was dishonestly induced to invest in RCAP through misrepresentation and that the funds were subsequently fraudulently diverted. The alleged acts caused a wrongful loss of Rs 2,684.57 crore to LIC, with a corresponding wrongful gain to the accused and other beneficiaries, according to the CBI. The CBI said its investigation will examine the role of all those involved, including public servants and private individuals. It will also probe the alleged criminal conspiracy and trace the end-use or diversion of the invested funds. The agency said it had earlier registered eight FIRs against Reliance Communications Limited, Reliance Capital Limited.

Corporate health insurance: Why your company cover may not be enough; Check limits, family coverage and more

New Delhi. (Agency)

It is important to understand that the company-provided health coverage lasts as long as the employment. Once you lose the job, the safety net is gone. Sometimes, people have to leave their jobs for health-related reasons, which comes with substantial medical expenses. However, losing a job means losing corporate health insurance. Thus, a person becomes simultaneously ill and without health cover. Also, with constantly increasing medical costs and expensive treatments, it is better to have insurance with comprehensive and complete coverage, which corporate insurance usually fails to deliver.

-- The major limitation of such coverage is that it is tied to your job

and is merely an employment benefit, which does not provide lifelong coverage. Once the job is gone, the safety net vanishes.

-- Rising medical expenses demand substantial coverage for emergency needs, which may arise out of the blue. Many company-based policies cover only a limited sum insured, whereas an ICU stay in a metro city may cost Rs 25,000 to Rs 50,000 a day, and cardiac surgeries may go as high as Rs 10 lakh. -- A person often aims for health insurance with family cover, which gives a cushion to the individual as well as family members. Corporate health insurance may not cover parents, with possible limitations on spouse- or children-related expenses. Thus, it is better to look out for a family health insurance policy. -- The

employee usually has no say whatsoever in the policies available to them. These policies are predefined and tied to the plan by the establishment. The person is not free to choose the insurer or the network of hospitals.

Buying personal health insurance is important at a young age since it may have waiting periods of up to 3 years for pre-existing conditions before it kicks in. Once that young age passes and health issues start kicking in, the agonising waiting period may already be over. Corporate health insurance is not useless but insufficient on its own. It might help to layer it with personal health insurance, where it may cover minor health issues or be a safety net during the waiting period of the personal cover.

Govt likely to extend SEZ duty relief beyond a year amid low uptake



MUMBAI. (Agency)

The government is likely to extend the special duty relief for Special Economic Zone (SEZ) units selling goods in the domestic market beyond a year, as the benefit has seen limited uptake, sources aware of the matter said. Commerce ministry is coordinating with other departments to seek an extension of the relief, which was introduced from April 1 for one year. The ministry has flagged that more than 90% of current supplies from SEZs to the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) receive only about one percentage point of customs duty benefit. "It may get extended beyond a year. We have flagged how the scheme is not benefiting as was

intended," an official aware of the matter said.

Under the notification, SEZ units selling goods in the DTA can avail concessional basic customs duty rates instead of paying the full applicable duty. For instance, a unit that would otherwise pay 7.5% customs duty would pay 6.5%, resulting in a benefit of only one percentage point in such cases. "The benefit in some cases is only about one percentage point, while the compliance burden remains. Companies did not find the benefit substantial enough to justify the additional compliance requirements," the official said. The Union Budget 2026-27 had announced a one-time relief window for eligible manufacturing units in SEZs to sell in the DTA at concessional basic customs duty rates for one year. A Commerce Ministry official said exporters were already facing weak capacity utilisation amid the West Asia crisis and uncertainty over US trade. An extension of the relief beyond a year could provide temporary support until a broader review of the SEZ framework is completed. An inter-ministerial committee has been constituted to examine possible changes to the SEZ framework and their impact on domestic industry. The ministry is also considering allowing reverse job work, under which SEZ units could undertake job work or production services for companies in the DTA. The committee is expected to submit its report within the next two months.

FCNR (B) deposit scheme may generate Rs 5 lakh crore notional profit for banks: SBI Research

New Delhi

The FCNR (B) deposit scheme mobilised \$127 billion within a short span of less than 3 months, which could generate a notional profit of around Rs 5 trillion (Rs 5 lakh crore) for banks over five years, and to RBI another Rs 0.5 trillion (Rs 50,000 crore), according to a report by SBI Research. Even though the regulator took a wise decision to curtail the scheme preponing its closure, the mammoth fund flows eclipsed the frontier calculations, with the needle immediately shifting to the cost(s) architecture as being pushed by the lobby of naysayers," the report argued. The report tested the hypotheses of "august school of naysayers" on four quadrants individually and then retraced back to the overarching factors converging into pillars of resilient macros that travel beyond what meets the ordinary eyes. "Firstly, the cost of the Scheme and

Benefits to Banking System. The cost and price attributed to the scheme is a distraction at best going by common prudence and evolving landscape of elevated borrowing costs across global markets," said the SBI report. The 'cost' of the FCNR (B) scheme has primarily two components; interest outgoes through the contractual maturity period at contracted rates of interest and the hedging cost. In fact, the vaulting yields in dollar terms across global markets is hovering around 7.5-8.0 per cent for AAA rated corporates, given elevated borrowings by multiple actors, thus making these deposits at 6-6.5 per cent quite attractive and also the elevated cost of bulk borrowing in local markets (38 per cent through bulk deposits) should calm down somewhat through these liquidity pools, having a sobering effect on overall systemic pricing of wholesale deposits/CDs.

Secondly, the logic of the naysayers regarding hedging cost and adding back depreciation and ascribe it to a notional loss of Rs 5 trillion is "completely incorrect". "This is because once the



liabilities have been hedged by the counter parties (a back-to-back hedging is prevalent), the direction of the currency becomes immaterial on the due date of maturity and hence double counting the same exposure (cost of hedging PLUS cost of depreciation) does

not serve any meaningful interpretation but purely a work of fiction," the report further argued. Thirdly, the gush of (unanticipated) liquidity is being portrayed as a challenging feat to the system. "However, if we look at the levers anchoring its end usage, there is little reason to ponder much or panic as the festive season demand, credit disbursal pipeline, new advances sanctions, outflows on account of advance taxes and GST flows make it align to an elevated systemic liquidity, anchoring robust credit management by banks," the report noted.

Fourthly, for the RBI, the deployment of say \$100 billion globally investible avenues at a yield of say 4 per cent, over 5 years, should accrue profits of \$20 billion, which offsets the outgo on hedging (\$15 billion) and actually adds some profitability of say \$5 billion/Rs 50,000 crore to the RBI B/S also at current estimates.

NEWS BOX

Karnataka Prison department launches 'bakery-on-wheels'

BENGALURU (Agency).

The Karnataka Prison and Correctional Services Department on Thursday launched 'Nava Sankalpa Bakery on Wheels' and inaugurated 'Nava Sankalpa Bakery' at the Bengaluru Central Prison in Parappana Agrahara. The bakery-on-wheels facility will sell bakery products prepared by inmates at various court complexes and bus stations across Bengaluru. The initiative was inaugurated by Alok Kumar, Director General of Police, Prisons and Correctional Services, in collaboration with the HCL Foundation.

According to the press release, the initiative aims to provide inmates with vocational training and help them build a livelihood after their release. Newly-trained inmates will also be issued certificates after completing training in preparing bakery products. The officials inspected the bakery products prepared by inmates and appreciated their taste and quality. They also advised inmates to give priority to quality and hygiene while preparing food products. The bakery unit is among the modern bakery facilities established in prisons across the country. The department said selling bakery products to the public would generate revenue for the government while helping released inmates rebuild their lives.

Bengaluru parents donate organs of 19-yr-old accident victim

MYSURU (Agency).

The parents of a 19-year-old, who was declared brain dead following a collision between a KSRTC bus and his motorcycle, have donated his organs, giving meaning to their son's untimely death amid their grief. Bharath Kumar, a fruit vendor and the only son of Shivamadu and Lakshamma of Moodalahundi village in Mysuru district, was riding his motorcycle from Mysuru towards his village on the afternoon of September 8. Near a curve at Tantigullu on the Mysuru-Bannur road, a KSRTC bus travelling from Malavalli to Mysuru collided with his motorcycle.

The impact threw Bharath onto the road, leaving him with severe head injuries. Passersby rushed him to a private hospital, where he was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Doctors informed his parents on the first day itself that he was brain dead. However, the family continued to hope for his recovery and treatment was continued for a week. As there was no improvement in his condition, his parents, after consulting doctors and well-wishers, agreed to donate his organs.

The organ retrieval was subsequently carried out and the body was handed over to the family. The body was later taken to the mortuary at the Mysuru Medical College and Research Institute for a post-mortem examination. The last rites were later performed on the family's farmland in Moodalahundi in the presence of relatives, friends and villagers. A complaint regarding the accident has been registered at the Arakere police station.

Five promise Rs 1cr land for Rs 10 lakh, held in Hoskote

BENGALURU (Agency).

The Hoskote police have arrested five people for allegedly cheating several people of crores of rupees by promising to get them Rs 1 crore in return for an investment of Rs 10 lakh. The accused have been identified as Shashikumar, a resident of Yelachenahalli and the alleged mastermind, along with Nagesh, Pramila, Ambuja and Venkataravanappa.

According to police, Shashikumar allegedly gained the trust of several people in and around Hoskote by showing them land and claiming that properties worth Rs 1 crore could be purchased for just Rs 10 lakh. He allegedly targeted real estate businessmen and financially stable individuals and took them to various locations, claiming that the properties were benami properties. In some cases, he allegedly claimed that the benami properties were linked to former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa, the police said, adding that Shashikumar had been gaining the trust of his friends and residents for several years.

The case came to light after a complaint was registered against Shashikumar last month in connection with an alleged cheating incident. During the investigation, the police arrested and questioned him, following which he revealed the involvement of the other accused. The police subsequently arrested the remaining four accused.

Maharashtra TET papers smuggled from Agra press hidden in shoe insoles for Rs 8,000, chargesheet says

According to the chargesheet, the source of the leak was traced to Mahim Patran Pvt. Ltd., an Agra-based printing press tasked with printing the confidential TET examination materials.

Mumbai (Agency).

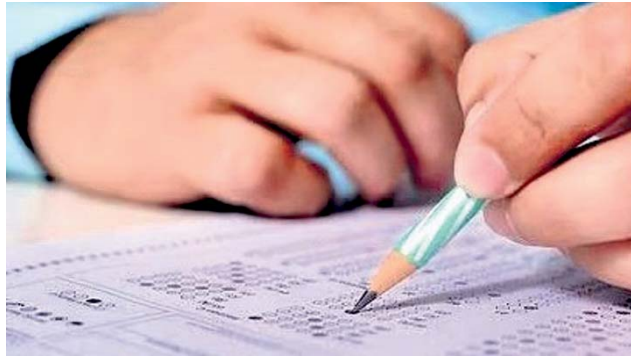
Two employees allegedly smuggled Maharashtra Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) question papers out of an Agra printing press for just Rs 8,000, by hiding them inside shoe insoles, according to a nearly 3,500-page chargesheet filed by Thane City police.

The chargesheet, submitted before a local court in Bhiwandi on Friday, names 18 accused, including alleged mastermind Bijendra Gupta, who was previously implicated in an Odisha paper leak, with 16 suspects already arrested and two key accomplices, Ashok Sav and Prakash Misal, remaining absconding as investigations continue. A senior police official said that a supplementary chargesheet will be submitted as further investigation progresses.

The racket unravelled a day before the examination scheduled on June 28 after Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone II) Pavan Bansod received a tip-off about three men attempting to sell exam papers to a Bhiwandi resident.

Police laid a trap using decoy personnel in the

Kongaon area, detained the suspects, and seized four sets of question papers. Subsequent verification with Maharashtra State Council of Examination (MSCE) officials confirmed that the seized material matched the actual question paper. The accused have been charged under relevant



provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) related to cheating, criminal breach of trust, and criminal conspiracy, along with Maharashtra state laws on examination malpractices and unfair means. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) is probing the case.

According to the chargesheet, the source of the

leak was traced to Mahim Patran Pvt. Ltd., an Agra-based printing press tasked with printing the confidential TET examination materials.

Between June 15 and June 17, two employees and a former staffer of the press allegedly concealed folded question papers in their shoe insoles to bypass security guards, who frisked their clothes but neglected the footwear. To maintain exam integrity, the state had prepared four separate sets across two TET papers so that one could be randomly selected on exam day. But the perpetrators managed to sneak out all four sets past the security safeguard. The press workers were paid a mere Rs 8,000 each and promised land plots in Agra in exchange for stealing the exam materials, the chargesheet stated.

Police have identified Gupta, a former coaching class teacher, as the alleged mastermind of the interstate racket. He was previously implicated in another examination paper leak in Odisha, the official said. In addition to money trails and technical logs, the police have cited the recovery of an original question paper from the Bihar residence of Gupta's relative as a key piece of physical evidence establishing the supply chain.

Karnataka milk farmers demand Rs 8 per litre hike, threaten protest

BENGALURU (Agency).

Members of the Karnataka Milk Producers Association on Friday submitted a memorandum and held a meeting with Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) officials seeking a hike in milk prices by Rs 8 per litre with immediate effect. Association President P Nagaraj said, due to severe drought this year, there has been a drastic reduction in the availability of fodder, which has directly affected the milk procurement.

Three months back, KMF procured 1.11 crore litres of milk a day; this has now reduced to 1.03 crore litres a day. The quality of milk and the total solid fat content in the milk have also started to reduce, impacting the milk and curd quality. They said they have

given the KMF and the state government three days' time to take a decision, failing which they will stage a state-wide protest on



September 22.

He said the last milk price hike was done in April 2025. But since then, there has been a 40% hike in milk packaging cost. It costs

around 70 paise to package each milk packet. The processing cost has also increased. The rate of conversion of milk into powder and other items has also reduced, he said, adding that there was a pressing need to hike the rate.

Comparing the cost of a litre of Nandini milk in Karnataka to that of other states, Nagaraj said, it was the lowest. He said a litre of milk in Delhi is Rs 62, in Maharashtra Rs 59 and Rs 62 in Rajasthan. Reacting to this, an official from KMF, not wanting to be named, said, "The demand to hike the milk prices has been a long-pending demand. Drought has made things difficult. The management will take a decision, but the final approval needs to be given by the state government. Hiking by Rs 8 could be a challenge, but a hike is required."

Keralam to implement mandatory time gaps between bus trips from Nov 1 to curb 'road race'

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM (Agency).

In a major regulatory overhaul to curb reckless driving, overspeeding, and cut-throat competition among buses, the State Transport Authority (STA) has finalised a rollout plan to enforce mandatory, GPS-monitored time gaps between stage carriage trips starting November 1.

Under the new system, buses — private and KSRTC — on the same route must maintain a strict minimum interval — 5 minutes in urban limits and 10 minutes along rural stretches — preventing drivers from tailgating or racing to 'steal' passengers. Onboard satellite-linked GPS hardware will track real-time locations through apps and other digital platforms and dynamically enforce these departure and stop-by-stop intervals. Currently, there are around 7,000 private and 4,468 KSRTC buses plying on state roads.

TNIE has learned that Regional Transport Authorities (RTAs) across the state have

already begun an exhaustive data-gathering drive — collecting trip schedules from both private operators and the KSRTC to feed into a central digital scheduling platform. "RTAs have been directed to compile all active route timings immediately," a senior official told.

"The software requires every existing trip log, both private and KSRTC, so the algorithm can map out safe, realistic intervals before the November 1 launch," the official said.

The transition intends to eliminate physical meetings between officials and operators on timings within three months, replacing them with digital platforms like KERALA BUSZ or BusTIME. The system will provide live tracking for commuters and precise stop-by-stop hold timings for drivers, eliminating fatal accidents caused by route racing. "If there is a sufficient gap between services and realistic running time, buses can be operated

smoothly," said Hamsa Erikunnnan, general secretary of the Kerala State Bus Operators Federation.

'Proper gap mgmt will reduce accidents'

"Proper gap management will optimise fuel



use, lower maintenance costs, and reduce road accidents," Hamsa said. Bus operators have long blamed RTAs' unscientific policies of for route bunching, alleging that permits are issued without verifying existing trip intervals. While operators sought guidelines for fresh permits, STA

made dynamic scheduling mandate applicable across all existing and new permits alike.

On KSRTC's inclusion, officials maintained that no operator can be exempted if road safety is the goal. "KSRTC buses racing against private operators or running in bunches creates severe hazards. The dynamic time gap will apply to all," an official said.

Private operators raised flaws with STA's minimum time gap rule, noting that applying urban rules to routes that start in municipalities but predominantly cover rural panchayats will harm rural connectivity. "We are yet to fully understand the working of this proposal," Hamsa noted. "For instance, with a 10-minute time gap in rural areas, only two services can operate in a 20-minute window. If a corridor has six or seven operational services during peak hours, what will happen to the remaining buses?" he said.

Found with phone in exam hall, IIT Bombay student ends life, protests rock campus

According to an official statement issued by the institute, he had uploaded the examination question paper on ChatGPT to seek answers.

Mumbai (Agency).

A second-year student of IIT Bombay died by suicide Friday, hours after he was found using a mobile phone in an examination hall. The 19-year-old's death led to a protest by over 400 students on the campus and the postponement of the ongoing mid-semester examinations. The student, from the Department of Energy Science and Engineering, was allegedly found using a mobile phone in the exam hall.

According to an official statement from the institute, the student had uploaded the examination question paper on ChatGPT to seek answers. "Earlier in the day, during an examination, the student was found using a mobile phone in the exam hall. He had uploaded the examination question paper on ChatGPT to seek answers. No disciplinary action was initiated against the student. The matter was also discussed with the student by the instructor and the Head of the Department, who counselled him and assured him that the incident would not adversely affect his academic career. The student



subsequently returned to his hostel room. Later in the evening, he was found dead in his room," the statement said. A police officer of the Powai police station said, "The exam was until 4 pm and after that the student went to his hostel room. He died by suicide. He was found hanging in the room." A police team was conducting a panchnama of the room. The body was sent to Rajawadi Hospital for a post-mortem examination. The student was a resident of Hostel 4. As word spread on campus, more

than 400 students gathered near the main building of the institute and raised slogans against the administration.

The protest continued until the Director of IIT-B, Prof Shireesh Kedare, came to meet the students around 10.30 pm. Following the meeting, the gathering was shifted to the convocation hall, located opposite the main building. According to students at the protest, the ongoing mid-semester examination was postponed in view of the incident. "Students have always had one complaint with the administration that it continues functioning as it is, even after a serious incident like suicide. Tonight, many questioned this behaviour, following which it was declared that the mid-semester exam is now postponed," a student said. The official statement issued by the administration said, "IIT Bombay is deeply saddened by the loss of a student. The Institute is extending support to the student's friends, classmates, faculty members, and others affected by this tragic incident. The circumstances surrounding the death are being looked into by the appropriate authorities."

Andhra Pradesh RTC unions oppose private operation of 1,450 e-buses

VIJAYAWADA (Agency).

Andhra Pradesh PTD (RTC) Employees' Unions Joint Action Committee (JAC) has opposed the proposed move to hand over the operation and maintenance of 1,450 electric buses to private operators in the second phase.

JAC conveners Y Srinivasa Rao and Palishetti Damodara Rao submitted letters to the RTC Vice-Chairman and Managing Director and the Executive Director (Administration and Engineering) on Friday, urging the authorities to withdraw the proposal.

The union representatives said they were not opposed to introducing electric buses to



boost public transport services but objected to their operation by private agencies. They demanded that the government or RTC purchase electric buses directly and operate them using RTC employees.

JAC said they had conveyed their objections to the government and RTC management and urged the officials not to proceed with measures that could lead to privatisation.

The JAC demanded orders on agreements reached between the government and employees' unions. It said the government should focus on strengthening RTC as a public transport organisation and ensure that all electric buses remain under RTC management. JAC leaders said there would be no compromise on protecting the RTC and safeguarding employees' jobs.

NEWS BOX

Rachin Ravindra injured in promo shoot accident, India T20Is in doubts



New Delhi. (Agency)

Rachin Ravindra's participation in New Zealand's upcoming five-match T20I series against India has been thrown into doubt after the all-rounder dislocated his right shoulder during a promotional shoot in Auckland. Ravindra suffered the injury on Wednesday while attempting a diving catch during filming and landed awkwardly on a safety mat. Medical specialists assessed Ravindra on Friday and ruled out major structural damage. However, his return-to-play timeline will depend on his progress during the early stages of rehabilitation, leaving his availability for the India series uncertain. India's tour of New Zealand is scheduled to begin next month, with the hosts set to announce their squad next week. New Zealand Performance Manager Mike Sandle said Ravindra's injury was an unfortunate accident and that the priority would be his recovery. "It was a really unfortunate injury," Sandle said. "We're gutted for Rachin and our key priority is making sure he recovers well and gets back on the field as soon as he can."

"As with all commercial shoots involving our players, the activities were agreed in advance by all parties, with appropriate safety measures in place. It was a bit of a freak accident, and we'll continue to review our processes around events like this in the future." **NEW ZEALAND CAUTIOUS WITH RACHIN RAVINDRA'S INJURY** Ravindra has established himself as an important part of New Zealand's white-ball setup, offering value with both bat and ball. He has played 52 T20Is, scoring 759 runs at a highest score of 69, while also taking 26 wickets, with best figures of 4/27. The 26-year-old's absence would leave New Zealand without one of their key all-round options for the India series, although his rehabilitation will determine whether he can recover in time.

From the depths of despair: Avinash Sable carves a road back for the Asian Games



New Delhi. (Agency)

How does a person feel when they crash down from the top of the world? Ask Avinash Sable, India's premier 3000m steeplechase runner. He knows. Sable is a legend of sorts in Indian athletics. In the men's 3000m steeplechase, he is the closest thing India has to a Neeraj Chopra. A subedar in the Indian Army, Sable has broken the national record 10 times. He won gold at the 2023 Asian Games and became the only Indian to have raced in an Olympic steeplechase final. By 2025, Sable was at the pinnacle of his career. He had reached a point where everything seemed to be falling into place. Then, at the Monaco Diamond League, he came crashing down at the water jump.

While attempting the water jump, Sable failed to land correctly and tore his Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL), a career-threatening injury for the then 31-year-old. In the space of a few seconds, everything he had built was thrown into uncertainty. "It was not even my fault," Avinash Sable told a group of reporters in Delhi, right before the Asian Games. Included in the Asian Games athletics contingent, Sable had come to New Delhi to prove his fitness. If he did well and beat the cut-off (8:36.57), he could board the flight for Aichi-Nagoya in Japan. The crowd, then, settled in for seven and a half laps.

THE MAGIC OF STEEPLECHASE

A 3000m steeplechase is a fascinating race in itself. An athlete has to hurdle 28 barriers and seven water jumps over 7.5 laps, all while maintaining the rhythm and endurance required to run three kilometres.

Yuvraj Singh's 6 sixes off Stuart Broad: 19 years of an historic T20I moment

Yuvraj Singh's six sixes off Stuart Broad on 19 September 2007 remain one of Indian cricket's most iconic moments. Nineteen years later, that over still stands as a benchmark for fearless T20 hitting.

PARIS. (Agency)

Nineteen years ago on this day, Yuvraj Singh produced one of the most iconic moments in Indian cricket, smashing six sixes in an over against England at the inaugural T20 World Cup. Long before India's new-age power hitters began rewriting records, Yuvraj gave the world a breathtaking display of just how destructive a batter could be in the shortest format. It was September 19, 2007, and

India were facing England in a crucial Super Eight clash at Kingsmead in Durban. Having lost their opening Super Eight match against New Zealand, MS Dhoni's young side needed a win to keep their campaign alive. India were in a strong position when Yuvraj came to the crease, but things soon became heated. After exchanging words with Andrew Flintoff, Yuvraj's mood was clear, and England captain Paul Collingwood handed the ball to 21-year-old Stuart Broad for the 19th over. Broad's first ball disappeared over midwicket. The second was launched over backward square leg, before Yuvraj sent the third over deep extra cover. The fourth followed a similar trajectory, while the fifth disappeared over midwicket again. The final delivery was smashed over long-on.

Six balls. Six sixes. Thirty-six runs. Yuvraj had raced to his fifty in just 12 balls, with the six that completed the sequence

bringing up the milestone. He eventually fell for 58 off just 16 balls, having smashed seven sixes and three fours. India finished on 218/4 and went on to beat England by 18 runs.

THE OVER THAT BECAME HISTORY



The six sixes were not just about the numbers. They captured Yuvraj at his most explosive, taking on a young Broad with a level of confidence and clean ball-striking that made the over feel almost surreal.

Yuvraj became the first batter to hit six sixes in a T20 international over, following Herschelle Gibbs' six-sixes feat in an ODI against the Netherlands earlier in 2007. His 12-ball fifty also became one of the defining records of the early years of T20 cricket. That was the kind of batter Yuvraj was. He did not need a long period to settle in or a string of boundaries to build momentum. Give him a few deliveries and he could change the entire complexion of a game. That legacy is easy to spot in the Indian team today. Abhishek Sharma has just smashed a 30-ball century against Afghanistan, the fastest T20I hundred by an Indian batter, while 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has already become the youngest player to score a century in men's T20 cricket. The records are different, but the intent feels familiar.

And perhaps fittingly, Yuvraj's influence has extended directly to Abhishek, who has spoken about the former India all-rounder as a mentor during his rise.

Thomas Tuchel admits Kobbie Mainoo's World Cup omission 'hurt' him

New Delhi. (Agency)

England manager Thomas Tuchel has admitted it "hurt" him that Kobbie Mainoo did not get a single minute at the FIFA World Cup 2026. The Manchester United midfielder has been recalled for the upcoming Nations League fixtures, with Tuchel saying it is now his responsibility to give the 21-year-old an opportunity.

Mainoo was part of England's World Cup squad but remained an unused substitute throughout the tournament. Speaking after naming his latest squad on Friday, Tuchel explained why he preferred Declan Rice and Elliot Anderson in midfield and why Mainoo would have played in the third-place match against France had he not been injured. "He didn't put a foot wrong in the World Cup. He was class in behaviour and in training, but it was a big

competition," Tuchel said. "Elliot Anderson is a fantastic player for us; Declan Rice is a very unique player, so we trusted them more than we trusted

chance to feature." "It was difficult for him. He got injured before the France game, so we couldn't give him minutes there, which hurt me," Tuchel said.

MAINOO GETS ANOTHER CHANCE

Mainoo has retained his place in England's squad after starting the new season strongly for Manchester United. Tuchel was unequivocal when asked whether the midfielder would finally get minutes during the upcoming international window. "Yes, I expect him to be on the pitch, and it's my duty to put him on the pitch," he said. England have four Nations

League matches during the window, giving Tuchel plenty of opportunities to assess his midfield options. The Three Lions begin against reigning world champions Spain at Wembley on September 26.



Kobbie. "Mainoo was unable to get onto the pitch during England's World Cup campaign despite impressing the coaching staff in training. Tuchel said an injury before the third-place match against France denied the midfielder his final

Brydon Carse Derby assault case probe dropped by police, to face regulator probe

New Delhi. (Agency)

England fast bowler Brydon Carse will face no further police action after an investigation into an alleged assault in Derby last month was closed. The development removes one layer of uncertainty around the 31-year-old, although he remains subject to a separate investigation by the Cricket Regulator. Footage of Carse in handcuffs and surrounded by police officers emerged on social media after an incident in the early hours of August 23. Carse had been arrested on suspicion of being drunk and disorderly and was later de-arrested after officers took his details. Derbyshire Police subsequently confirmed that it was investigating an allegation of assault in Derby city centre. In a statement released on Friday, the force said: "An investigation into reports of an assault in Derby city centre has been closed."

The police added: "Officers attended Molly Malones in The Wardwick, Derby,



in the early hours of Sunday, 23 August. A man was arrested on suspicion of being drunk and disorderly and was then de-arrested after his details were taken by officers.

CARSE STILL FACES

REGULATORY PROBE

While the police investigation has now ended, Carse's situation is not completely resolved. The Cricket Regulator will continue to look into the incident, with the regulator yet to comment on the latest development. The England and Wales Cricket Board and Carse have also been approached for comment. The incident had already cost Carse his place in England's squad for the second Test against Pakistan. Test captain Joe Root said he was "hacked off" by the situation and revealed that he had addressed the England dressing room over the latest off-field controversy. Carse was subsequently left out of England's squad for the third Test against Pakistan and the white-ball series against Sri Lanka, despite being available for selection. The ECB said he needed to "work through the issues" surrounding the Derby incident and take time for "a proper reset".

UEFA, CONCACAF seek \$10m FIFA payout to every member association

New Delhi. (Agency)

UEFA and Concacaf have called on FIFA to distribute at least 10 million USD to each of its 211 member associations from its cash reserves. The demand is the latest escalation in the fallout over Gianni Infantino's now-abandoned FIFA Forward Enterprise proposal. The letter was signed by UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin and Concacaf president Victor Montagliani. They argued that FIFA is expected to end the 2023-26 cycle with reserves of around \$6 billion, which they believe is considerably more than the organisation needs through the 2030 men's World Cup. "FIFA currently holds billions of dollars in accumulated reserves," the letter read. "These resources belong to football and exist to serve the game and its 211 member associations."

Ceferin and Montagliani called for at least 10 million USD to be made available to every member association during the 2027-30 cycle. They said the money should be directed towards infrastructure and football development. The proposed one-off



distribution would cost FIFA around 2.11 billion USD and would come on top of its regular funding for member associations.

The demand follows strong opposition to Infantino's FIFA Forward Enterprise plan, which was scrapped just four days after being unveiled. The proposal involved creating a new company to manage the commercial and ticketing rights of FIFA competitions, including the World Cup, with

a 21 percent stake potentially being sold to an investment company. **UEFA, CONCACAF QUESTION FIFA PLAN** Infantino had told FIFA members they could receive 40 million USD if they backed the proposal, with federations given a September 19 deadline to accept the plans in order to access an initial 20 million USD.

However, UEFA and Concacaf said their analysis of FIFA's published financial

statements and budgets raised questions over whether the new structure was actually required to increase funding.

The two confederations said their assessment was "deliberately conservative" and called for an independent review of FIFA's finances, with access to the underlying figures and assumptions. Development is an institutional responsibility of Fifa, not a matter of individual discretion," they wrote.

PRESSURE BUILDS ON INFANTINO

The letter was also sent to the presidents of FIFA's other confederations, asking them to support the proposed distribution from reserves. The development comes a day after Football Association chair Debbie Hewitt wrote to Infantino and FIFA secretary general Mattias Grafstrom demanding the release of documents linked to the FIFA Forward Enterprise plan.

Hewitt, who is also a FIFA vice-president, also called for a written explanation over the cancelled suspension of United States forward Folarin Balogun during the World Cup.



will provide a considerably tougher test, with the continent's strongest table tennis nations in the field.

SATHIYAN, MANAV AND MANUSH LEAD MEN'S CHARGE

Sathiyani, Harmmeet, Manav, Manush and Payas Jain form the men's squad, with Ankur Bhattacharjee and Ronit Bhanja as reserves. Sathiyani, Harmmeet and Manav were part of India's 2018 Asian Games men's team bronze, giving the squad a direct link to the country's first medal in the sport. The spotlight will be on Manav and Manush, currently ranked No. 3 in the world in men's doubles. The Gujarat pair reunited as seniors in 2023 after playing together in their junior days and have since developed a productive right-left combination. Manav's counter-attacking game complements Manush's aggressive left-handed style. They narrowly missed a medal at the 2022 Asian Games after reaching the quarter-finals.



Anjali Arora

Hits Back At Trolls Over Playing Mata Sita In Mahakavya Shri Ramayan Katha: 'Sab Dance Karte Hai'

Anjali Arora has finally responded to the trolling she faced after being cast as Sita in the upcoming film Mahakavya Shri Ramayan Katha. The film, which also stars Dev Sharma and Rajnesh Duggall, had sparked a wave of reactions after its teaser was released a few weeks ago, with several social media users questioning the casting because Anjali is widely remembered for her viral Kacha Badam reel.

At the trailer launch of Mahakavya Shri Ramayan Katha on Thursday, Anjali addressed the criticism directly and said she does not feel upset about being judged. According to her, public figures have to accept that audiences will react both positively and negatively to their work.

Anjali Arora Responds To Trolling Over Playing Sita

When asked whether the backlash had affected her, Anjali said, "No, I didn't feel sad about it because we are public figures, and we have given the public a right to judge us. So, it is their wish to judge us positively or negatively. Everyone has the authority to like it or not like it."

She added that as an actor, her responsibility is to give her best to whatever role is offered to her. "We are actors; whatever character is offered to us, we will portray it by giving our 100 percent. Once it comes out in front of the public, it is their decision the way they want to look at it," she said.

Anjali also urged audiences to separate her social media image from the character she plays in the film.

"I have played the role of Sita Maa, and now, after watching the trailer, did you feel that she is the same Anjali whom we see on social media? My only aim is that when the audience watches the movie, they keep my personal life and personality aside," she added.

Anjali Arora On Being Judged For Her Kacha Badam Reel

A major part of the trolling around Anjali's casting has been linked to her Kacha Badam dance reel, which had gone viral on social media. Addressing that specifically, Anjali said she does not understand why people continue to define her by one old video. "Whatever happens on social media, it is just for some time, but I don't know why people still remember it (her Kachcha Badam dance video). I didn't do anything different; I just followed the trend," she said.

Anjali also acknowledged that the reel played a role in making her widely known. "I made that reel; people know me because of it, and I am very grateful for that. But that's not my whole life," she said.



Who Is Akriti Agarwal, Prithvi Shaw's Fiancee? Know The Actress As Couple Calls Off Engagement



Indian cricketer Prithvi Shaw and social media personality Akriti Agarwal left fans shocked on Thursday when they announced that they called off their engagement. The two, who exchanged rings earlier this year, confirmed their separation in an Instagram post, saying the decision was mutual and that they had realised their goals for the future were different.

The announcement has once again put the spotlight on Akriti Agarwal, who had been in the news earlier this year after Shaw publicly announced their engagement. While the couple had shared glimpses of their relationship on social media, Akriti had already built a following of her own as a digital creator and actress. Let's know more about Akriti and her career. Check it out here:

Who Is Akriti Agarwal?

Akriti Agarwal is a social media influencer, digital content creator and actress. Originally from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, she later moved to Mumbai with her family during her teenage years. Reportedly, she pursued a Bachelor of Management Studies at Nirmala Memorial Foundation College in Mumbai.

Akriti began creating content during the COVID-19 lockdown, posting dance and lip-sync videos on social media. Her online presence subsequently grew and today, she has over 3 million followers on Instagram. Her content includes fashion, lifestyle and entertainment-related posts, while she has also maintained a YouTube presence.

Apart from being a digital influencer, Akriti also made her acting debut earlier this year with the Telugu film Trimukha.

Why Did Prithvi Shaw And Akriti Agarwal Part Ways?

Akriti announced her separation from Prithvi Shaw through a heartfelt statement on Instagram. "With a heavy heart, I would like to share that my fiancé and I have decided to part ways due to different goals and circumstances for our future," she wrote and then stated that she and her fiancé had decided to part ways because of "different goals and circumstances" for their future. Along with announcing the breakup, Akriti appealed to people to respect their privacy during what she described as a difficult time. She specifically requested that people refrain from speculating or making assumptions about the reasons behind their decision.

Samay Raina To Marry Medha Shankr In December? Viral Post Makes Big Claim



It's been quite some time since the rumours of Samay Raina dating 12th Fail actress Medha Shankr have been dominating the headlines, but neither of the two has clarified if the speculations are true or not. Amid this, a report claiming that the two are set to marry in December has surfaced. While Samay and Medha are yet to react to it, a screenshot of a Reddit post is circulating widely on social media.

As per the screenshot, the Reddit post reads, "I'm very close to Samay Raina's family, and after speaking to his mother yesterday, I can say that Samay Raina and Medha Shankr are planning to get married this December. For now, they're both enjoying their vacation, but Samay wants to marry Medha as soon as possible."

Rumours of Samay and Medha dating have been doing the rounds for quite some time now, and their constant spotting together has added fuel to the fire. While Samay and Medha stay silent on the topic, a blurred photo purportedly showing the duo in Interlaken, Switzerland, went viral on social media.

Medha recently appeared on Samay's India's Got Latent Season 2. She joined the panel alongside Varun Dhawan and Sharon Verma, and her appearance on the show once again brought attention to the dating rumours surrounding her and Samay.

Samay On Dating Rumours With Sharon Verma

While Samay chose silence on the long-standing dating rumours with Medha Shankr, when the internet started speculating that something was brewing between him and Sharon Verma, he was quick to rubbish the rumour.

When a fan asked him on Instagram, "Are you dating Sharon?", Samay shared the question on his Story and replied, "No brother, just internet doing its thing."

Katrina Kaif

Gets Support From Sonarika Bhadoria After Postpartum Body-Shaming: 'It's Deeply Cruel'

Sonarika Bhadoria has called out the relentless scrutiny women face over their bodies after childbirth, at a time when Katrina Kaif has been subjected to comments about her appearance following a recent public outing. The Devon Ke Dev...Mahadev actress shared a strongly worded note on Instagram, asking people to stop treating a mother's changing body as something that needs to be



judged, explained or corrected.

While Sonarika did not directly name Katrina in her post, she made it clear that her message went beyond one celebrity or one instance of online trolling. "This isn't just about Katrina. It's about every mother judged while her body is still healing," she wrote.

Sonarika Bhadoria Calls Out Comments On Postpartum Bodies

Sonarika questioned why women are expected to look a certain way soon after giving birth, pointing out that pregnancy and childbirth put the body through enormous physical changes.

"Her body grew, carried and delivered a human being. It doesn't owe anyone an explanation for what it looks like afterwards," she wrote. The actress also pushed back against the pressure on new mothers to quickly lose weight or return to their pre-pregnancy appearance. According to Sonarika, women should not have to "shrink, change, or apologise" for the physical evidence of pregnancy and childbirth. "Your postpartum body is not your shame, it is your story, your strength, your proof," she added. Her note addressed several changes that can follow childbirth, including stretch marks, a softer stomach, changes in breasts, hair loss and exhaustion. Sonarika argued that these visible changes are often picked apart without any consideration for what a woman's body has actually endured during pregnancy, delivery and recovery.

'A Postpartum Body Is Not A Failed Version Of A Woman's Old Body'

Sonarika further described the scrutiny of mothers after childbirth as "deeply cruel". She stressed that a woman's postpartum body should not be treated as an inferior version of how she looked before pregnancy.



NEWS BOX

Trump extends H-1B fee amid push to restrict foreign hiring

World.(Agency)

U.S. President Donald Trump has signed an executive order extending a \$100,000 fee requirement for certain new H-1B visa applications through September 21, 2027.

The policy, first introduced in September 2025, is aimed at reducing employers' reliance on lower-paid foreign workers. It generally does not apply to foreign students already in the United States on student visas or to standard H-1B visa renewals.

The fee remains tied up in a legal battle. A federal judge in Massachusetts struck down the requirement in June 2026, ruling that it amounted to an unlawful tax. The U.S. government is appealing the decision, leaving the policy's enforcement uncertain.

The Trump administration has also proposed formal regulations that would make the fee permanent and raise it to \$103,265 for new cap-subject H-1B visas. Separately, a new executive order calls for increased scrutiny of employers that hire foreign workers, particularly companies accused of laying off U.S. employees while using the H-1B program. Business groups, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, have criticized the measures, arguing that they could make it harder for American companies to recruit skilled workers. The changes are also prompting some technology companies to expand operations overseas, including in India, as businesses adjust to the evolving U.S. immigration rules.

How A Faulty AI Report "Almost Started A War" Between US, China

world.(Agency)

The US military came close to boarding a Chinese vessel in the Middle East earlier this year based on a flawed intelligence report prepared with the help of artificial intelligence, CNN said Friday. US intelligence indicated the ship was carrying nuclear weapons-related components, leading American forces to prepare to intercept it, the broadcaster reported, citing four anonymous sources familiar with the incident. But the operation was called off after officials determined that an AI chatbot used by an analyst had misidentified the material the ship was carrying.

CNN quoted one source as saying the intelligence report was "entirely false" but "almost started a war." It did not specify what the vessel was actually carrying or where it was bound. US Central Command -- which is responsible for American forces in the Middle East -- did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the reported incident. The CNN report comes after a furor erupted earlier this month when a researcher publicly resigned from leading AI firm Anthropic over fears that the technology could escape human control. Another Anthropic employee, who did not resign, said publicly that "we really do earnestly believe AI could kill all humans," and that he thought the chances were greater than "10 percent within the next decade." Despite the warnings, US President Donald Trump and some of his key allies have voiced opposition to drastically curbing the development of artificial intelligence. In a separate incident involving the US military and China, Politico reported Friday that F-35 jet parts -- including a sensitive stealth canopy for a cockpit -- were diverted to Hong Kong and are now missing, raising fears that Beijing had obtained sensitive American military technology. The parts were headed from Australia to the United States for repairs when the diversion occurred, the US outlet reported, adding that it was unclear why the parts were rerouted or where they are now. Spokesperson for Lockheed Martin, which manages the F-35 supply chain, said the company could not discuss specific shipments because of "security reasons." "Lockheed Martin follows all US regulations established by the Department of War and regulated by the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) regarding the shipment of aircraft components," the spokesperson said.

Russia holds parliamentary vote in areas it seized from Ukraine in the war

World.(Agency)

Russia's parliamentary election for the first time includes residents of regions that Moscow illegally annexed from Ukraine after the start of its full-scale invasion more than 4 1/2 years ago, part of Kremlin efforts to cement its gains. Officials in Kyiv vigorously denounced the action as illegal, and a human rights activist described residents there as being coerced to participate in the election.

While the vote across Russia started Friday and lasts until Sunday to help boost turnout, balloting actually has been underway in the annexed parts of Ukraine and some areas on the Russian side of the border since the end of last month. Officials cited security reasons for the extended period. Russian authorities say the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia territories, often referred to by Moscow officials as the "new regions,"

have over 3.5 million voters. They were annexed by Russia in September 2022, despite not fully being under Moscow's control. The move has not been recognized internationally.

At one polling station in the Russian-held part of the Donetsk region, voters dropped their ballots in a box as an armed Russian soldier stood nearby and watched.

Putin stressed the importance of voting in the regions. In a speech Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized the importance of balloting in those regions for the State Duma, the lower house of parliament. Residents there will be voting for the Duma "for the first time since their reunification with Russia." He noted that Russian soldiers involved in the fighting also will vote.

Voting also is taking place in Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula that was illegally annexed by Moscow in 2014. The first wartime election to the State Duma is

intended to secure the Kremlin's political dominance and showcase public support for the war. "Your choice and resolve will once again demonstrate that millions of



people stand behind our fighters, that we are a united people, bound by shared values, historical memory, and love for the Motherland and that nobody can divide or intimidate us, undermine our statehood and political system," Putin

said. Ukraine urges other countries not to recognize the vote. Authorities in Kyiv called the voting in those territories illegal and urged foreign governments and international organizations not to recognize the election. They warned Ukrainians that taking part in organizing the vote could carry criminal liability.

A coalition of nine Ukrainian human rights groups called on residents of the Russia-held territories to stay away from the polls. "We urge residents of the temporarily occupied territories, above all, to protect their lives and health and to look after their own safety," the coalition said in a

statement. "Holding Russian elections in the temporarily occupied territories is an attempt to use the electoral process to legitimize the Russian occupation and the attempted annexation of Ukrainian territories."

Saudi capital issues first air raid alert since renewed fighting in Yemen

RIYADH.(Agency)

Explosions were heard in Riyadh early Saturday, AFP journalists reported, after Saudi authorities issued their first air raid alert in the capital since fighting returned to neighbouring Yemen. The Houthis have been fighting with Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces since the country's civil war reignited in July, when the group also declared a maritime blockade on Riyadh and began targeting its ships in the Red Sea. This is the first time the conflict has reached the capital, further shaking a global economy already rattled by nearly seven months of war between the United States and Iran.

"The area is under a hostile aerial threat," a message received shortly before 3:00 am (0000 GMT) by residents of the Saudi capital warned, urging them to stay indoors.

AFP journalists then heard two explosions, before the alert was lifted about half an hour later by Saudi Arabia's civil defence agency.

Saudi Arabia is yet to comment on the threat mentioned in the warnings sent



overnight to residents of several regions and has not identified where it originated from. It comes after Riyadh accused the group of targeting Mecca on Wednesday, denouncing it as a "cowardly terrorist attack" on Islam's holy city, which

welcomes millions of pilgrims each year, both Sunnis and Shias.

The Houthis strongly denied the accusation calling it a "worn-out lie".

In turn, the group reported dozens of retaliatory strikes carried out daily by Riyadh since their lightning offensive this month to take over the country's entire Red Sea coast, giving them control over the vital Bab al-Mandab strait. Reduced Saudi exports. The war in Yemen broke out in 2014 when the Houthis seized control of the capital Sanaa and other regions, triggering in March 2015 a military intervention led by Saudi Arabia.

The fragile truce reached in 2022 between the warring parties collapsed in July, when the pro-Iranian fighters defied Riyadh's control of Yemeni airspace by allowing an Iranian aircraft to land in Yemen.

Cuba hit with another blackout as millions across the island are left without electricity

HAVANA.(Agency)

Cuba's power grid collapsed once again on Friday, leaving millions of people across the island without electricity for at least the sixth time since U.S. President Donald Trump cut off fuel to the island in January. The Ministry of Energy and Mines announced the islandwide power outage on its official X account and added that officials had begun "activating service-restoration protocols." "No one can stand these constant blackouts. There isn't enough food, there's no water, there's no electricity -- you have no idea," Mercedes Rodriguez, a 60-year-old worker in Havana, told The Associated Press as she waited for public transportation to return home. "The country is in such a sad state, and there are no words for what we're going through." According to Cuban authorities, a failure reportedly occurred in transmission lines in the

western part of the country, causing the system to collapse in that area -- as far as Matanzas province -- and the eastern section of the island was



subsequently disconnected.

The official newspaper Granma reported that "unstable" weather conditions further aggravated the grid's situation. By dusk, power had been restored to 5% of users in Havana, which has a total of about 862,000 customers, according to official data. Small power-distribution "micro-islands" were

being established in the provinces of Camaguey, Pinar del Rio and Granma. Some systems serving hospitals and other emergency facilities were being reactivated.

Power grid collapses have become increasingly common over the past two years because of the severe economic crisis gripping the island. They have worsened since January, after the United States imposed an energy blockade aimed at forcing a change in Cuba's political system.

The restrictions prevent Cuba from importing the fuel needed to operate its thermoelectric power plants, as well as replacement parts required to maintain infrastructure that in many cases has become obsolete. Just one tanker of fuel has been delivered since, by a Russian tanker in March. The two most recent nationwide blackouts occurred in early August, following others in July and March, as well as several regional outages.

Trump administration begins building border wall in Texas' Big Bend region

COMSTOCK, Texas.(Agency)

The Trump administration has started building the border wall through a west Texas section of the Big Bend region, marking the first major construction in an area of the U.S.-Mexico border where the administration's plans have met heavy opposition.

The start of construction marks an important milestone in the administration's \$46 billion plan to line the border with walls, barriers, roads and technology as it seeks to make good on a key campaign promise by President Donald Trump to finish the wall. And it comes as Customs and Border Protection says it has doubled the pace at which it is building the wall across the U.S.-Mexico border.

Customs and Border Protection said in a statement to The Associated Press that "border wall panel installation is underway" in a 47-mile stretch of Hudspeith County in west Texas known as Big Bend 1. There are a total of five project areas that make up the roughly 500-mile Big Bend region stretching from an area of Hudspeith County south of El Paso to Lake Amistad. CBP said the first panels were erected on September 15. On a map on the agency's website where the agency posts updates of wall construction across the entire southern border, a photo showed a crane lifting one of the 30-foot-tall steel wall panels into place while construction workers looked on.

The new activity was separate from a border infrastructure project in the nearby Big Bend National Park, where the administration has temporarily suspended construction in an attempt to reach out to opponents. Activist plan to keep up their fight

In the broader Big Bend region of Texas, CBP has run up against concerted opposition from landowners, environmental groups, business owners and ranchers who say the remote region isn't a high-traffic area for illegal immigration. Activists said Friday they would continue opposing the border infrastructure projects in the rest of the Big Bend region, even as the panels were being installed. Clara Benson, one of the founders of the No Big Bend Wall Coalition which has been fighting against CBP's plans, said in an interview Friday that the organization had been receiving reports of trucks moving supplies into the remote area along the Rio Grande and that contractors had been clearing yards to stage supplies. But speaking from Washington, D.C. where she and others in the coalition were meeting with lawmakers, she said that the organization and others would continue to fight the wall-building plans across the region.

Danish PM says deal with US on Greenland 'good for NATO and Europe'

Several media outlets have reported that the United States wants to open three new military bases in southern Greenland, in addition to the Pituffik base it already has in the north of the territory.

world.(Agency)

An agreement due to be signed by Denmark and Greenland with the United States on strengthening security in the autonomous Danish territory is "good for NATO and Europe," Denmark's prime minister said Friday. Mette Frederiksen said the deal "strengthens our common security in the Arctic and the North Atlantic area," adding that it was expected to be signed on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly next week. She said the agreement "recognises the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kingdom (of Denmark) and the right of the Greenlandic people to self-



determination." Once signed, the agreement will have to go through the necessary parliamentary procedures to enter into force, according to a statement from Frederiksen's office. Trump said Friday that he had struck an "infinite" deal with Denmark to give the United States control over Greenland's security and bar foreign adversaries from setting up bases there. "I am pleased to announce that the United States of America has entered into an Agreement with The Kingdom of Denmark, and Greenland, that gives the United States permanent control over security, and all other needs.

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.(Agency)

Three generations of a Navajo family were heading home from picking up supplies for an 8th birthday party when their truck got stuck in mud as storms with heavy rain rolled through the area. Kalisi Begay opted to walk home while her mother and 7-year-old daughter stayed behind. The water rose quickly. Soon the grandmother and granddaughter, along with a friend they had called for help, were swept away in the floodwaters while trying to cross a wash.

Elsie Begay, her granddaughter Lucy Allison Mike, and Begay's best friend Dora Franklin died in the flood Tuesday near Newcomb, New Mexico, a community of about 400 people, family members said Friday.

"I think she was just wanting to get home," said Stella Wilson, Begay's niece. Flash flooding across the Navajo Nation this week has damaged roads, forced evacuations and claimed the three lives as a late-season surge of monsoon moisture brings heavy rain to the

Four Corners region. Navajo police said three families in Shiprock, New Mexico, were evacuated Friday evening due to rising water levels and flooding near the San Juan River. Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren declared a state of emergency Friday as some



communities remained isolated by standing water and road damage and rain continued to fall. Multiple roads on the Navajo Nation remained closed Friday. "Please use alternate routes, check on our elders and relatives, and

follow the guidance of our emergency personnel," Nygren said in a statement. About 40 miles (64 kilometers) south of Newcomb in the small community of Mexican Springs, flooding made many dirt and gravel roads impassable, stranding

some families and leaving others unable to reach home. "A lot of ditches are washed out, the culvert pipes are gone. There's big old, massive holes in the road," said Darnell Etsitty, a maintenance worker with the local government who spent Friday building alternate routes to help people get in and out. Etsitty said the Mexican Springs Chapter House had been converted into a temporary shelter and volunteers are using ATVs to deliver food, water and supplies to stranded households. Wilson said the road conditions continue to be bad, and her family still can't get to Wilson's mother. She urged others to be patient and wait for help.